

THE OPEN FORUM

ANGLO-AMERICAN CITIZENSHIP

Last month we published some comments on Winston Churchill's recent suggestion for the establishment of a common citizenship for English-speaking peoples. Others follow:

SIR: My offhand judgment is that a common citizenship for all English-speaking peoples, while it is undoubtedly a good thing to shoot at, would be unworkable in the immediate future. The freedom-loving principles and the principal aims of the English-speaking peoples are much the same, and the closest possible understanding and cooperation are absolutely essential if we are to have a lasting peace. On the other hand, our internal problems, our habits in government, and our points of view are often different — some times very much so.

I am convinced that common citizenship and eventual union ought to come and in the end will come. But a premature attempt now might postpone rather than hasten it. A considerable, perhaps a very considerable, period of discussion and popular education is, I believe, absolutely necessary before either we or the other English-speaking nations could bring ourselves to accept and live with the concessions and adjustments which common citizenship would entail.

GIFFORD PINCHOT

Milford,
Pennsylvania.

SIR: The idea of a common citizenship for English-speaking peoples is particularly provocative to me, for, as a naturalized citizen of the United States, the task of earning my citizenship for which I applied very shortly after I entered this country, brought home to me with full force the meaning of the word. Certainly anyone living in these troubled

times, who has seen the beneficial effects of war-time cooperation between the two great English-speaking nations — the United States and Great Britain — so dramatically displayed cannot help but be attracted by an idea which implies a still stronger bond between these two great nations.

It seems a happy thought to me that these two countries, which already have a closely related culture, similar political institutions, a common legal system, a common language, and, now, today, a common cause, may some day break down any barrier which even slightly separates the people of each nation. But the actual fact of a common citizenship, if the question of its establishment were to become an immediate issue, has such profound implications that it seems to me that there would most certainly need to be grave consideration of every facet of the problem, before such a step could be taken. Complete joint citizenship rights imply a complete political union between the two nations. I should imagine that a modified version of joint citizenship for the people of Great Britain and the United States would be more expedient at the present time than a full exchange of citizenship privileges. Exchange of rights which would, for instance, permit completely free passage of citizens from one country to the other should be acceptable to current public opinion, and would tend to develop a state of mind receptive to still fuller international understanding.

ANDRE KOSTELANEZ

New York City.

SIR: I think we should base our affiliations for the future not on language but on our common objectives.

MARY K. SIMKHOVITCH

Greenwich House,
New York City.

SIR: Whatever postwar organization of an international character may be erected after the war, it will possess the inherent weaknesses of the League of Nations, if there is not some direct responsibility between the individual and the international organization. This would best be established by some form of citizenship in which the citizen owes allegiance to the World State and, as a corollary, has a voice in its organization.

Whether an attempt to bind the English-speaking people together into a common citizenship would antagonize the non-English-speaking peoples is a question. Certainly, it would represent a powerful alliance of peoples whose record on the whole has been peaceful and constructive. Nevertheless, I believe we should look forward and strive for an ultimate World State that would include *all* peoples on a basis of mutual responsibility.

I realize the tremendous difficulties that lie in the way of such an achievement, and the consequent probability of its fulfillment being far in the future. However, I would be reluctant to espouse any step which could not be considered as a step in the direction of such a fulfillment. There already exists so much community of thought and action among the English speaking peoples that perhaps a formal establishment of a common citizenship would be unnecessary and might be regarded as an arrogant assertion of superiority, which will delay rather than advance the Brotherhood of Man.

ALBERT LINDSAY ROWLAND,
President

*State Teachers College,
Shippensburg,
Pennsylvania.*

SIR: There needs to be the greatest possible coordination between all of the English-speaking peoples. An opportunity is open to make English the world language provided we have something that can be understood by all classes of people in all parts of the world.

I think that we have not in any way reached the point where we can establish a common citizenship for all English-speaking peoples.

This would mean a government of world extent, which would be at once viewed with alarm by many other combinations of nations and peoples. We already have in this country too many citizens who have no sense of public duty and who do not accept their share of responsibility in the day-to-day problems of a democracy. Our experience with the absorption of the women voters in the United States would indicate how much of a problem it would be if we had to develop procedures for larger and larger numbers of participating citizens in any mechanism in which a poll is taken. When we here and in Canada have been able to develop our democracies so that we can be safe with them and need not fear the all-inclusive state, then perhaps with new methods of world communication and contact we and the British can get together in some formal manner. Certainly not now.

RAY LYMAN WILBUR,
Chancellor

*Stanford University,
California.*

SIR: While, speaking generally, the English-speaking people have the same ideologies and many common interests, I cannot see how it is feasible for one to become a citizen of several countries which have different forms of government to which their citizens are bound by different and inconsistent obligations.

SILAS H. STRAWN

*Chicago,
Illinois.*

PEGLER ON SPELVIN

SIR: I have read Swan's piece ("Who Is George Spelvin?", November issue) and enjoyed it very much. His account is accurate according to my information and I assume he got it from John Goldwyn who filled me in for a somewhat similar piece that I did several years ago. However, perhaps because of space limitations, Swan omitted something that I think is extremely interesting about Spelvin:

Goldwyn said that Abeles used to drive other fellows crazy by saying "Pete" or "Joe"

or "Harry," as the case might be, "I can't tell you how sorry I am to hear about that trouble between you and your wife and I hope you catch that dirty homewrecker and shoot him dead." Of course there would be no such trouble between the couple and the husband would fly into a rage and demand to know who was spreading the report and Abeles would say, "Why, George Spelvin told me." The husband would then go tearing around all the saloons on Broadway looking for Spelvin.

It is mere lint picking but I am almost certain that the author of "Via Wireless" was Edwin Balmer, at present editor of the *Red Book*, and not Gillette. It was founded on Jack Binn's exploit on a ship called, I believe, the *Florida* when the distress signal was CQD, not SOS.

WESTBROOK PEGLER

New York City.

DEFENSE OF JAZZ

SIR: Mr. Sargeant in his article, "Is Jazz Music?" (September issue), has definitely hit upon some truth. It was evident from the start, however, that the article could not be entirely true, since the object was to prove that jazz is *not* music. But how could this be, when the dictionary (I quote from *Webster's New International*) states that music is "Lyric poetry set and sung to music; a tone or tones having any or all of the features of rhythm, melody, or consonance. . . ." Obviously, jazz fulfills these basic requirements.

There were certain special points Mr. Sargeant made, with which I differ very much. He states that jazz "grows like a weed or a wild flower, exhibits no intellectual complexities," and that jazz is not subject to intellectual criticism because it doesn't contain "the creative ingenuity and technique of an unusual, trained musical mind." Mr. Sargeant has evidently not been exposed to some of the more intelligent jazz, nor is he aware of the amazing musical background of some of our foremost composers and arrangers, in the popular field.

Again, he says that "harmony in jazz is restricted to four or five monotonous pat-

terns," and names the blues, to substantiate this strange statement. I would be interested in knowing how he has managed to arrive at his classifications. Everyone knows that the blues is built upon a set pattern, as is, for example, the sonnet form in poetry. Yet this hasn't seemed to limit poetry to four or five monotonous patterns, nor, do I think is jazz so limited.

But it was when Mr. Sargeant remarked that jazz doesn't encompass such emotions as tragedy, romantic nostalgia, wonder, delicate shades of humor, etc., that I felt badly. Either Mr. Sargeant stuck his neck out, in making such a statement, or we composers in the popular field have in trying to write music that expressed these particular emotions.

Mr. Sargeant is definitely correct in his remarks concerning much of Hollywood's musical products, and I was amused at his use of the term "colorful awkwardness." Part of the tone-poem *Black, Brown and Beige* contains a theme called "Graceful Awkwardness."

Most of all, I was struck by Mr. Sargeant's concluding statement, that given a chance to study, the Negro will soon turn from boogie woogie to Beethoven. Maybe so, but what a shame! There is so much that is good in a musical expression in the popular field.

DUKE ELLINGTON

New York City.

AN OPTOMETRIST PROTESTS

SIR: I have just read the article, "Are Eye Glasses Necessary?" by Edward Robinson in the September issue of THE AMERICAN MERCURY. I am astounded that one who must have done considerable research before writing the article, should so completely ignore the largest group of men engaged in serving the American public's need for eyesight care and rehabilitation, namely, the optometrists.

It could hardly have been an oversight, then why the discrimination? There are over 2000 authenticated cases of young men barred from the Navy Air Force and other branches of the United States' forces that have been rehabilitated by optometric procedure and

successfully enrolled for service. Daily there are hundreds of school children and students who are being re-conditioned by optometric procedure; their progressive myopia retarded and in many instances eliminated; glasses are removed and vision restored to normal. Why was this not included in the article? Did the writer consult an optometrist before writing? The whole article has all the earmarks of the baneful influence of the medical monopoly.

The closing paragraph reads, "The ideal procedure would be to consult a physician who has been trained in orthoptics, or exercise therapy." There is the same or even a greater proportion of optometrists trained to do orthoptic work as there are physicians, so, the fair thing would have been to say, "Consult an oculist or optometrist who is trained in orthoptic work."

DR. E. L. YATES,
Optometrist.

R. H. Macy & Co., Inc.,
New York City.

RACE RIOTS

SIR: In "How to Prevent Race Riots," which appeared in *THE AMERICAN MERCURY* for September Miss Raushenbush went out of her way to blame us for the Detroit race riots. On page 306 she says, "Perhaps a majority of the city's policemen are Southerners," etc. Very surprising thing to find a majority of Southerners on Detroit's police force. How about the police force in Harlem? Were they Southerners, too? That's funny! And Los Angeles? Did you poll that police force?

As a matter of fact, we Southerners seem to be able to live and get along with the colored people pretty well. Don't you Northerners wish you really knew how to get on with them?

R. G. MARTIN

Pensacola,
Florida.

BOUQUET FOR ALAN DEVOE

SIR: Alan Devoe's "Brookside" in the July issue is one of the finest essays in the language. I know of nothing so condensed in

its personal exposition of pantheism and mysticism—the real thing, not the phony things that go by that name. It is, indeed, a great masterpiece of prose and prose-poetry; and I am certain that Spinoza, Thoreau and Whitman are reading it to one another at the present moment in their eternity.

BENJAMIN DECASSERES

New York City.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

SIR: *THE MERCURY* is a publication of superb excellence. But the new plan of putting on the cover pictures of prominent men that are only hideous caricatures is unworthy of your magazine. It is to be hoped that a practice in such bad taste will be abandoned.

WILLIAM S. HARPER

Hamden,
Connecticut.

NOT A "NATIONALIST"

THE article on "Chicago, The Munich of America," in our November issue, included the statement that "another newcomer to the 'nationalist' cause is Dr. Albert J. Haake, who shows up at the Citizens U. S. A. rantings and thereby, no doubt, embarrasses the decent people associated with him in the American Economic Foundation." The name should have been Dr. Alfred P. Haake. But aside from the error in the name, Dr. Haake disclaims any identity with the "nationalist" cause.

He states that he addressed this organization as a professional speaker who does not identify himself in any way with the purposes of any meeting merely by addressing it. Indeed, in his address to the Citizens U. S. A. Committee, he points out, "I was subjected to expressions of disfavor at the point where I made clear that the United States had to take its place in the world of which it was a part."

We are pleased to bring this information to our readers, and express our regrets for any injustice done Dr. Haake in the statement made with reference to him in our article.

THE EDITORS

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CHECK LIST

(Continued from page 121)

whole cloth. Not one of the characters comes to life, the dialogue is contrived and the action is mechanical. Altogether, a piece of intellectual pulp.

SOUND OF REVELRY, by Octavus Roy Cohen. \$2.00. *Macmillan*. A dancing couple overhear the shot which kills a rich bachelor in a penthouse. The man tries to solve the mystery because he feels the police are not doing anything. His adventures lead him to several more murders but he finally is able to bag the whole murder gang and win the cordial thanks of the FBI. Slickly and entertainingly written.

THE WOMAN IN RED, by Anthony Gilbert. \$2.00. *Smith & Durrell*. The heroine takes a position as secretary-companion to an eccentric old woman and finds herself kidnapped. Guaranteed to make your hair stand on end and hold your interest to the bitter end.

INDIGO, by Christine Weston. \$2.50. *Scribner's*. A remarkable first novel about British and French colonials in the Indian village of Amritpore in the years before the first World War. *Indigo*, often suggestive of E. M. Forster's *A Passage to India*, is often as good.

THE WALSH GIRLS, by Elizabeth Jane-way. \$2.50. *Doubleday, Doran*. The story of two sisters, one of whom marries, one of whom teaches school, and of the life, outwardly calm, inwardly coldly distraught, in a New England village during the thirties. There are also glances at Europe. A strenuously careful job, *The Walsh Girls* is in finished form a surprising first novel. It lacks the spontaneity and looseness of life and spontaneous writing about life.



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