

# Intolerance

Susan Hopkins

**I**N ORDER to acquire the kind of world we want, the people of the world must succeed in establishing a solid basis of friendship among themselves. Politics, democracy, and international conferences are important, but the attitude of the people of the United States toward each other and toward the people in Europe, in Latin America, and in the Far East is far more important.

If we cannot establish friendship among ourselves at home, it is unlikely that we shall be able to establish freedom or friendship abroad. It is impossible to talk of friendly relations with other countries when in our own communities people of Latin America, Africa, China, Russia, India, and many other foreign countries are persecuted because of their color, race or creed.

America is supposedly a democratic nation, but what do other countries see when they come to look at it? They see colored people everywhere treated with contempt, shunned like lepers, shut up in overcrowded shacks, not permitted to live in the same neighborhood with the whites, shut out of restaurants, out of employment, forced to ride in special compartments on trains and on busses, imprisoned in prejudice and discrimination.

This is one reason why some of the world's people turn toward the Soviet Union and their Communist machine. To the Negro, denied the most fundamental of all rights as a human being, the question of the other human freedoms must seem rather unimportant.

In ten states during the summer of 1949, Negro children visited white homes, and white children visited Negro homes. The visits, most of which were for two weeks, were part of an important experiment in race relations known as the "Vermont Experiment."

Back in 1944 the "Vermont Experiment" was just an idea that sprang from the breakfast table of a quiet-spoken minister who lived, at one time, with the people of Johnson, Virginia, for fourteen years. Throwing down the paper one morning, the Reverend Ritchie Low now faced his wife. "Look at that headline," he exclaimed. "Another race riot! It's time that something was done!"

Mr. Low decided to do something. Within an hour he was on the train to New York to present his plan to the Reverend Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., minister of the Abyssinian Baptist Church in Harlem. Mr. Powell agreed to select a group of children from his parish to pay a visit to Vermont. Mr. Low was to supervise their distribution among families in his state. A few weeks later the first boys and girls from Harlem arrived in Vermont. The first test succeeded.

This visit was just the beginning of the "Vermont Experiment." The same year eighty Harlem children were visiting Vermont; and since Mr. Low felt that any real experiment in bettering race relations

had to work both ways, a group of white children was in Harlem to repay their visit.

Most important of all, the "Vermont Experiment" has now taken root in cities and states all over the country. In Chicago, where racial tensions sharpened during the war, the Presbyterian Board set up its own plan, sending Negro children from the city to farms of northern Illinois. The Connecticut Council of Churches has sent Negro children from Hartford and New Haven to surrounding farms. New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Maine, Indiana, Minnesota, Colorado, and California have adopted the plan.

It makes one feel good inside to realize that some things are actually being done to eliminate many foolish attitudes toward racial discrimination. The United States, it seems, has just started to take a few cautious steps forward in opening the door of life for many unfortunate and aloof individuals. The steps have been indeed small, but they have finally been taken toward the ultimate good of unifying humanity. Wherever one finds people who open their hearts as well as their minds, progress will be made to abolish racial intolerance and make our world a place of co-operation, complete contentment, sincere happiness, and lasting peace.

## John B.

Alice Appel

**J**OHAN B., my bachelor uncle, has more businesses than the proverbial merchant and the one-armed paper hanger combined. From Monday through Thursday, he travels in North Carolina and Virginia peddling furniture for several manufacturers. He announces openly that he considers only one of the lines worth having, and he would not give two cents for the rest. He and a partner own a dry cleaning plant, cash and carry, so over the week-end he is at what he calls his "little gold mine." There is also a second-hand furniture and antique shop, "Trash and Treasure," which is open only two days a week. "Truthfully, there is lots of trash and little treasure in my shop. The old ladies of the county besiege our place each Friday and Saturday. My partner and I have to keep hopping to replenish the stock. I think our short hours tantalize the old gals, and we bait them with an occasional treasure." John B. has a third partner who helps him in his charcoal producing business, just organized recently to catch the back-yard chefs. Buying and repairing old houses condemned by the public health department consumes much of his free time and vacations. Each week-end he has to go out and collect the rent from his white tenants. He leaves his baby blue, four-door Cadillac at home and sails forth in his little second-hand, red pick-up truck. Trying to pick up an extra couple of dollars, he collects by the week and not by the month. His colored tenants bring their rent to the dry cleaning shop each week. It sounds to me as if there are forty little gold mines right there.