

## THE DEMOCRATIC EFFORT

MRS. FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT

IT IS important to that little-understood and intangible thing called civilian morale that we should apply ourselves to the task of drawing our people, in whom there are so many different racial strains, closer together instead of letting them drift apart and be divided by their backgrounds because of the war. We have prided ourselves for years on our ability as a country to live and work together peacefully, regardless of where our forebears came from, or when they came; and we have felt our success in this an example to the world.

There is one large group in the United States which now can help us greatly on morale—the people who have lived through some years of the war in other countries, or the years preliminary to the actual war. Their experiences can be of great value to us, and we should not fail to make use of them.

Most of these people, of course, come in the category of aliens under the law; yet they are here in our country with us, and their morale is therefore just as important as that of citizens. It does not help this morale for us to be thinking of them as aliens and treating them as such. As citizens we must keep reminding ourselves that at one time our ancestors were also newcomers to this country and “aliens” too, that most of the people to whom the term now applies came to the United States many years ago to make their homes here. The more recent comers are with us because they were considered the enemies of their undemocratic governments and were therefore persecuted.

Here they are eager to join in the fight for democracy.

Yet in spite of their eagerness to help and be part of us as a united nation defending ourselves against aggression and oppression, we read in the Help Wanted advertisements that “Aliens need not apply.” We hear of employers who are discharging admittedly loyal and efficient workers merely because they are not citizens or because they have foreign-sounding names. We hear of communities where those who are not citizens under the law are not permitted to take part in local civilian defense activities. In addition to this, now come the rigid war-time regulations and restrictions upon the conduct and freedoms of those who came here from nations with which we are now at war.

We know—and so do they—that the greatest care must be taken in these perilous days. But I am concerned with the possible consequences if we do not make every effort to differentiate between the many loyal American non-citizens and the comparatively few who may be truly alien to our way of life.

A similar problem of morale concerns us and our citizens who stem from German, Italian, and Japanese backgrounds. The war situation is very difficult for them and for us. A small minority in these groups have not been loyal; and this, of course, puts the loyal ones on the defensive, and the suspicion with which they are regarded alienates them from the democratic effort. As citizens of a democ-

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racy we must not set ourselves up as judges of other individuals. Being bitter against an American because of the actions of the country of his predecessors does not make for unity and the winning of the war. We must learn to think of the people in these groups as individuals, not as groups; we must treat them as individuals. They, on their part, have an obligation to refuse to listen to arguments and false statements made by agents of our enemies who will try to trade on any unfairness or bitterness. They have an obligation equal with the rest of us of making sure of the sources of their information.

The same Bill of Rights covers all our citizens, regardless of the country of origin. For basic civilian morale we need to stress, through every medium of expression that we have, understanding and consideration and acceptance of people as individuals. We cannot afford to have any number of our citizens in a position where it is hard for them wholeheartedly to accept and endorse democracy as a form of government and a way of life. The Gov-

ernment has agencies which can be trusted to guard against the few who will be disloyal. We must remember that we cannot tell the difference between a loyal and a disloyal citizen or between a citizen and a non-citizen just by looking at him or his name, by seeing the color of his skin, or by hearing him talk.

We have a great task ahead—the winning of this war. We have the even greater task of proving to the world that democracy does work—can work for all the world—in order that we may hold out hope for the future to oppressed people everywhere. Walt Whitman wrote years ago that America is “a nation of nations.” Therein lies our strength. If we do not want to create “nations within a nation,” if we wish a united spirit and united defense so essential to ultimate victory, we must judge and act only on the true tests of loyalty, usefulness, and love of America.

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*Mrs. Roosevelt is Honorary Chairman of the National Committee of the Common Council for American Unity.*

## THE JAPANESE AMERICAN CREED

MIKE MASAOKA

I AM proud that I am an American citizen of Japanese ancestry, for my very background makes me appreciate more fully the wonderful advantages of this nation. I believe in her institutions, ideals, and traditions; I glory in her heritage; I boast of her history; I trust in her future. She has granted me liberties and opportunities such as no individual enjoys in this world today. She has given me an education befitting kings. She has entrusted me with the responsibilities of the franchise. She has permitted me to build a home, to earn a livelihood, to worship, think, speak, and act as I please—as a free man equal to every other man.

Although some individuals may discriminate against me, I shall never become bitter or lose faith, for I know that such persons are not representative of the majority of the American people. True, I shall do all in my power to discourage such practices, but I shall do it in the American way: above-board, in the open, through courts of law, by education, by proving myself to be worthy of equal treatment and consideration. I am firm in my belief that American sportsmanship and attitude of fair play will judge citizenship and patriotism on the basis of action and achievement, and not on the basis of physical characteristics.

Because I believe in America, and I trust she believes in me, and because I have received innumerable benefits from her, I pledge myself to do honor to her at all times and in all places; to support her constitution; to obey her laws; to respect her flag; to defend her against all enemies, foreign or domestic; to actively assume my duties and obligations as a citizen, cheerfully and without any reservations whatsoever, in the hope that I may become a better American in a greater America.

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*Mike Masaoka is national secretary and field executive for the Japanese American Citizens League. This creed was read before the United States Senate and printed in the Congressional Record, May 9, 1941.*