

WHY BE PATRIOTIC?

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As soon as a Negro youth becomes old enough to think for himself he becomes startlingly and shockingly aware of the fact that his racial identity is a decided handicap for him. He goes to school and hears all about him such flowery sentiment as: "Every American mother expects her boy to be President," or "There is always room at the top," or "From messenger boy to president," all of which sounds nice, but at which the colored lad must sit back and smile cynically. With theoretical knowledge in his head and a college diploma in his hand the Negro graduate goes out ready to conquer the

world, but no sooner has he neatly folded his graduation gown away than he finds that not only is there not that first rung of the ladder but that there actually is no ladder.

Seeking a Job

He may be a Harvard graduate and a specialist in his work, but nearly every time he seeks a job in any large enterprise he is greeted with taut refusals or, "We're filled up, at present," or "We don't employ your people," or "Come back, next week." If he is so fortunate as to get into a firm or large bank and starts at the bottom—usually as porter or elevator man, he, after several



Here is another patriotic scene. Realize what these sheet covered gents are doing. They are taking a new candidate into their secret order and compelling him to take an oath under the flag, to do what? To keep Negroes out of jobs, and away from the ballot box.

In the March issue of the Lincoln "News" there was an editorial in which the writer questioned the possibility, at least the plausibility, of the American Negro's efforts to express a real, deep-seated, patriotic feeling toward America. The writer has been asked to defend himself, a challenge which is the occasion of this article.

Let us, therefore, call a spade a spade, and without any conscious attempt at the sentimental, look at the Negro and his peculiar position in American life. Through no fault of his the Negro has physical characteristics which clearly differentiate him from the dominant group beside and with whom he lives. This marked physical difference makes him a marked individual who, as the so-called "submerged tenth," is shunted off to himself into a social, economic, and spiritual world, entirely his own.

years, sees the irony in the "office-boy-to-president" fables, because, starting as porter or doorman, he finds himself in that same position forty years later.

Before he courts of justice, equality and fair play become virtually foreign words to the colored man, especially so in the South. In that same section, and, to a lesser degree up North, the Negro is disfranchised, segregated, lynched, imposed upon, shut off from economic and educational opportunities, and virtually held in physical and mental peonage. He pays the same relative amount of taxes, said money supposedly going for schools, education, and general public good, but the Negro schools get only a pittance, a mere fraction of the number of well-equipped schools which his share of taxes entitles him to. The school term is usually much shorter than that for the whites and the teachers get disgraceful salaries for doing the same work as the white teachers who get as much as double and triple the salary of the Negro teacher.

Social Equality

Furthermore, the fact that the whites too frequently take the law

especially in the South, preach race separatism and make racial barriers almost a religion. The trouble there is that it is only a one-sided affair. That is, the Nordic cries for social segregation of whites and blacks by day, but practices social equality under cover of night. This can't be denied, for, if it were not true there would not be so many hundreds of huns and colors in the race, ranging from coal black to snow-white. It seems all right for the white man to have his colored mistress and have children by her, but the colored lad had better not even look at the white girl. It proves the old saying as to "whose ox is gored."

Then, furthermore, many a Negro has worked hard, saved his money,



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