

Dawn of Tomorrow

Published in the interests of and for the Advancement of the colored people of Canada.

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95 Glenwood Ave., London
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Subscription Rates

One year	\$2.00
Six months	1.25
Three months	.75
Single Copy	.05

Entered in the post office at London, Ont., as second class matter.

The Dawn of Tomorrow Publishing Co.

RACE FRICTION ABROAD HURTS WAR EFFORT SAYS WALTER WHITE.

New York—Racial friction between colored and white American soldiers overseas, although corrected to a marked degree by General Dwight Eisenhower, is still hurting the war effort and should be completely eliminated, said Walter White, NAACP secretary, in a nationwide radio talk over the Columbia Broadcasting System Sunday, April 30.

"The division in our ranks and the fomenting of racial and other antagonisms are postponing the day of victory," he declared. "They are creating doubt among our Allies as to our sincerity when we assert that we are fighting a war for freedom for all peoples. Whoever causes the war to last one single day longer than necessary is as much a traitor to our country as one who sinks a troop ship or reveals military secrets to the enemy. If for no other reason than to win the war as soon as it is humanly possible and to save the lives of American men—perhaps among them the life of your son—it is imperative that any person, whatever his race, who causes trouble should be stopped. That will be done only if the people of America and their government stop evading or temporizing with this fundamental question whose solution is imperative if we are ever to have a world of peace."

White, who spent 15 weeks in Great Britain, Ireland, North Africa and Italy, said he had travelled more than 20,000 miles and had talked with many officers, soldiers and civilians.

"The majority of American soldiers abroad have been decent Americans interested in but one objective—winning the war as speedily as possible and returning home. A surprisingly large percentage of them—both officers and enlisted personnel—are concerned over the bad name being given to the United States by the friction which some of their number have caused. A gratifyingly large percentage manifest deep concern about the world problem of race and the necessity of working out a solution to it. Many of these are from the South. But, unfortunately, a highly aggressive and vocal minority has sought to transplant patterns of racial behaviour like that of the most backward states of the South to the countries where

they have been sent as soldiers to fight a war against Nazi racial theories.

"Some of them have sought to poison the minds of British, Italian, North African and other peoples against Negro Americans. They have told such stories as these: that Negroes are inferior, illiterate, diseased, and savage. Some of them have even used physical violence to prevent the association of Negro soldiers with British, Italian and other people. They have objected to the use of places of public accommodation such as pubs and restaurants by Negro soldiers.

"Such behaviour has puzzled and antagonized many of the people of these countries. They have found it difficult to understand why some American soldiers should be so violent in their hatred of other American soldiers, especially when all of them are fighting in a common cause. They have resented the action of visitors presuming to dictate to them who they should or should not invite into their homes or associate with. Many of our allies are puzzled too, by the American pattern of segregation. Repeatedly I was asked why the United States, fighting a war for freedom, should send abroad two armies—one white and one Negro."

Generals Eisenhower and John C. H. Lee of the European Theatre of Operations were praised by Mr. White for issuing "unequivocal directives and taking other steps to eliminate the cause of trouble."

White scored the events of the past few months on the home front, saying, "certain members of Congress have poured forth hate-filled tirades against the Commander-in-Chief of our nation and against racial and religious minorities, as vicious and intemperate in content and tone as any sent out by Goebbels from Berlin." He cited the politics in the soldiers' vote bill, the boasts of filibusters against the anti-poll tax bill, and the statements of defiance against the supreme court for its opinion in the Texas primary case. He also hit Congressman Andrew J. May of Kentucky for his threat against the War Department which caused it to cancel its plan to distribute the pamphlet "The Races of Mankind."

White said, "As men approach actual combat and face the dangers of combat, they tend to discount many prejudices," and he praised the combat record of the 99th Pursuit Squadron and the work of Negro supply troops on the Anzio beachhead.

The radio talk inaugurated the nationwide membership campaign of the NAACP which opened May 1 and will close June 30.

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