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The lowdown on prejudice.

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of the subject in the light of humanity and justice.

There are, however, many dangers in racial and religious prejudice that must be considered. Prejudice is contagious; it spreads rapidly. It robs us of minority talents, prevents full expansion of economic resources, and often is merely used to blind us to real conditions. It endangers democracy and all that democracy stands for, thereby endangering the peace and security of the world.

The best methods of eliminating prejudice are the same methods used to eliminate anything that is contrary to American beliefs and ideals. There is but one prejudice worth having—a definite, dogmatic prejudice against other prejudices.

Remember the casualty lists from the late war? The New York Times listing of war dead on March 29, 1945, ran as follows: "Agostinello . . . Cohen . . . Grunwald . . . Hrubec . . . Ivanowski . . . Kuzian . . . Marshall . . . Thomas . . . Warblanski. . . ." Americans all.

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Subcommittee Fraternity Interracial committee

the



Lowdown On Prejudice—
Where, When, How

To All Fraternities

the **L**owdown On Prejudice—



Armed Forces Talk number 210, distributed for discussion purposes under the Troop Information and Education program to servicemen throughout the world, carries an enlightening message against racial and religious prejudice—what it is and how it operates. The “Talk,” in simple, forthright language, makes the following points:

Prejudices are as common as Eisenhower jackets at formal military inspections. They exist everywhere, in all degrees, manners, and concerning all subjects. We can be thankful that most of them deal with little things like the Brooklyn Dodgers or cigarettes. A prejudice against a shirt because of its color is harmless. But a prejudice against a person because of his color, religion, race or nationality can do as much damage as a small-sized atom bomb.

A prejudice is an attitude in a closed mind. It is an opinion or an emotional feeling with no basis in reason or fact. A person might not like oysters despite the fact that he never ate any in his life. In the same way, a prejudice against a Negro might exist in the mind of a person who has had little or no contact with colored people.

Prejudices develop through our experiences in our daily environment. We absorb them through association with others—in school, in the street, at home. We might see one individual with a fault and unthinkingly associate that fault with all persons of his race, religion or color. And impressions formed in this thoughtless manner often develop into lasting prejudices or even dangerous hatreds.

You don't need to study advanced psychology to know that people differ. Take your own group. You know someone who has a big mouth, another who is lazy and shiftless, a third who is a tight-wad. And, of course, you know some darn good guys. Obviously, the same is true of any group anywhere, whatever its racial, religious or national background.

Yet someone will say that all Negroes are lazy, that all Jews and Scots are cheap, that all Irish or Italians are loud, or all baseball um-

pires are crooks. The picture that such foolish talk develops in the back of your mind, if not rationally considered, can easily become a vile, dangerous prejudice.

Prejudices always develop against minorities. A minority is less than half. This means, then, that Baptists, Methodists, Catholics, Jews, Negroes, Chinese, Poles, Czechs, Masons or any other groups you might name are minorities in the United States today.

Some of these units, if not all, are the objects of degrading prejudices. Sometime during their history, all minorities have been persecuted. There are no “puritans” who claim superiority today that were not considered inferior sometime in history.

Prejudice must naturally be directed at minorities. No dwarf ever picks a fight with a giant. When a majority group, or its leaders, wants to change something to its own advantage, it must find someone to pass the buck—always a minority group with no opportunity to retaliate on any great scale. A “scapegoat” is needed. In the same way, ancient peoples thought their guilt and sins could be transferred to other objects, like the goats and cows they offered in sacrifices to their deities.

Hitler, at first, chose the Jews as his “scapegoat.” Early Massachusetts persecuted the followers of Roger Williams. An American political party called the “Know Nothings” chose the Irish in the 1850's. The early Romans persecuted the Christians. Many, in turn, have persecuted the Romans. No one has escaped.

In the United States, although most prejudice is hushed and under cover, the fight against it is open. Much progress is being made. Since Lincoln's proclamation freeing the slaves, the lot of the Negro has slowly but surely improved. Presidential orders and states' legislation have prevented discrimination in civil employment and government contracts.

These are but a few examples of major steps toward the elimination of prejudice. The best weapon is an open mind, and consideration

