To A Jewish Friend

By Dorothy Thompson

My DEAR FRIEND: I could find no words when we spoke on the telephone this morning. Should I endure and bear the pain of your grief and loss? And would you listen to it, in any case, through all the bitterness that you feel? I hear in your voice your cry: "What will become of my child if this goes on?"

And I belong to one civilization, we have the same book, the same mind, the same beliefs, the same virtues, the same limitations. We both love freedom and we both love peace.

When I read the papers this morning I remembered the words at one of your great oratories [said], which we call orators Christian, hold the center of the coming of the Savior. You will remember the words:

"Surely he hath borne our sorrows and carried our sorrows; yea, we did esteem him stricken of God and afflicted."

"But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed."

I thought of the present peace. The achievement of it is upon your race, wounded and bruised for our wrongs, but do not think that by your stripes we are healed.

It is perhaps hard for you to believe that the same cry that you uttered in your heart, "What will become of my child?" You fear that this malady will spread, and I share your fear. The example is attractive for those who see a springboard for their own personal, national and social frustrations. But, if it does, what will become of our child, as well as ours?

Would you have your child be brought up to be a pacifist to be killed by violence? Would you like him to be taught to be a victim, to be used, and to be abuse, and to be abuse? Would you have him commit himself on his hands and knees as a sacrifice for his existence and his actions? Would you have him to be trained in pacifism and brutality and violence? You would not, and you seek to protect your child, so I seek to protect mine, and we are, as we are always were, on the same side, standing for the same thing, and my position is exactly the same as yours.

My passion for yours is for those principles of civilization, that have elevated people through the ages, the most precious, that give them the right to call themselves human. And if that name is dearer to him than the concept that the individual must be judged according to his own individual actions and recorded or punished or law, and society according to them, that shows the hope.

The more noble the race, the more likely he is to change to a little higher than the animal.

If we lose these, we will lose the heart, and it is not only the next generation that is lost, but everything to which we belonged.

You said, "I feel depreciable, depreciable." But I cannot share that concept of honor. No one is depreciable by what is done to him. He is depreciable only by his own actions, and if we are to put this question on racial grounds then I, as what is called an "Aryan," in the same category as the rest, have more reason for furious protest than you against discrimination.

For my people have never appealed to your people in va lais in behalf of any of the things that constitute our common heritage of culture. And in all this violence our race has consented itself with a lack of violence which is unparalleled. Its victims for fifty years and despairing years have revolted into violence only twice—once in Switzerland, and the other day when a poor, distressed, 18-year-old boy has "revenge" at the positive risk of his own life and in preventable defense of his existence.

And now I read that for a political crime which score of others on this soil, who belong to many races and follow many creeds, had yet been loyal over the years to the essential principles from which our institutions are derived in the first place.