

# Americans?

By CYRIL V. BRIGGS

**W**HILE white people view as a slave that man who has no part in the making of the laws that govern him, there is among sapheaded Negroes a tendency toward accepting the phrase, "American citizen" as a glorified and sufficient camouflage for the inconsistencies of the case. But who and what is an American Citizen? To those who have not read the Constitution of the United States let Dr. Frank Crane, a white man, explain:

*"Whatever rights one American citizen has every other American citizen has.*

*"The right to vote wherever he resides,*

*"Freedom of religion,*

*"Freedom of the press,*

*"Freedom of peaceable assembly,*

*"The right to petition the government for redress to grievances,*

*"The right to bear arms,*

*"Protection against having his house papers, or property searched or seized without due process of law,*

*"No American citizen may be put in jeopardy twice for the same offence, nor*

*"Be compelled in a criminal case to be a witness against himself,*

*"When accused of crime he is entitled to a speedy and public trial by jury, he must be told the nature of the charge against him, allowed to compell witness in his own favor to come and testify, and allowed or provided a lawyer to defend him,*

*"He may not be deprived of life, liberty or property without a fair trial."*

Is that person then an American citizen who is discriminated against, refused the right to travel when, how, and where he pleases, refused the protection of the laws and denied the right to vote in many parts of the country?

When accused of crime an American citizen is entitled to and is given a speedy and public trial by jury. A Negro,—which is quite a different thing by all the facts of the case—is usually strung up by self constituted and unrebuked, and unpunished judges from among his "superiors" and "masters".

An American must be and is protected by law against having his property seized without due process of law. A Negro may be deprived of his property by the simple process of gathering a mob and driving him out of town with a threat to lynch him if he returns. The law does not protect the Negro in his property rights.

An American citizen may not be deprived of life or liberty without a fair trial. There were over sixty Negro women, children and men lynched in the United States last year, and even the white man agrees that lynching does not allow of a fair trial. But they were Negroes, not American citizens. Many others were sold into slavery in the South.

Finally, "whatever rights one American citizen has, every other American citizen has." And this would seem to show plainly enough the difference between being an American citizen and being a Negro in America. "What-

ever rights one American citizen has, etc." Every American citizen has the right to "life, liberty and happiness," the right to vote wherever he resides, to travel where, when and how he pleases, protection against having his property seized. I, as a Negro have not these rights. Therefore I am NOT, in the true and therefore important sense of the phrase, an American citizen. This however is not my fault. Still, for the guidance of the Immigration Officials, who have lately shown a tendency towards deporting all who dare think for themselves it might be well to state my citizenship or subjectship. Let it be understood then that I am a Negro—Negro, first, last and all the time. Negro by birth, choice and by the treatment which denies to Negroes the right of being American citizens. It does not matter where I was born since the place of that unimportant event is of a purely accidental nature and may have just as easily have been the West Coast of Africa or the Southern part of the United States as the West Indies or South America. It would all depend upon the whereabouts at the time of one's mother. Had my mother been aboard a steamship on the high seas, I would have been born on the high seas. What really matters is what one is born. I was born a Negro and have not been allowed to forget that fact. Yet I daily thank the Supreme Being—God, Jahveh, Allah, whichever you will—for the good fortune of being born a Negro when all Negroes should be fighters. Yet this fact would hardly help the Immigration Officials since the Negro has today no country that he may call his own. (That is if he is intelligent and knows the things that a country should stand for.) However as I hail as my true mother land, my only motherland, the mother and inventor of all civilization—Glorious Africa! I stand prepared to be deported—if it should so please the white government in which I, as a Negro, have no deciding voice or part—to that continent. However there is one proviso to such voluntary deportation on my part. And that is based upon the historical fact that my ancestors did not come to this country of their own choice and free will, but were brought here in chains and much against their will who loved the sunny healthful climate of the African continent. I make but one stipulation and that is: that it must be a free Africa to which I am deported.

Pope Bendict recently received Abdul Hazid, a representative of the Moslems and a man of decided African descent. It is the first time in history that the Roman Church has welcomed a Moslem.

The Coercion Acts which have just become law, are causing great agitation and unrest throughout India. Before they were passed public meetings of protest were held all over the country, and all the elected members of the Viceroy's Council were opposed to them.