"Democracy" and Negro Segregation

THE American press is practically unanimous in its condemnation of the Mexican people,—their alleged savagery and general all-around uncivilized habits. But the Mexicans have been fighting, are fighting against injustice and oppression, while the American people are devising new forms of injustice and new means of oppression. Just now, our oppression of the Negro has been emphasized by the adoption in St. Louis of a segregation ordinance.

The question was brought before the electorate by means of the initiative, that palladium of bourgeois progressivism, and the ordinance passed by an overwhelming majority. The sentiment for Negro segregation was hitherto believed to be confined to the South; how much deeper the evil is has been proven by St. Louis. It is all disgustingly discouraging, particularly as the vote cast represented all sorts and conditions of peoples, many of whom have only recently fled oppression to come to this country of equal opportunity.

All this brings to mind American criticism of the Russian "pale." How about the American "pale" being forced upon the Negro? Our gallant defenders of all the bourgeois virtues hysterically condemn "autocracy" and "frightfulness" in Germany. How about the white oligarchy of the South disfranchising the Negro and battening upon his helplessness? How about the policy of frightfulness being practiced upon the Negro? It is all a hideous nightmare. We are a democracy, yes; but we are a democracy in the old Athenian sense, an oligarchic democracy superimposed upon a mass of slaves,—the slaves in our case being the Negro and unskilled foreign labor.

The American Socialist movement has criminally neglected the race problem. It is one of the most potent instruments of oppression in this country. It is a serious obstacle to Socialism. The interests of Socialism, of common decency, require an agitation for justice to the Negro and all subject races.—*L. C. F.*