



nile world: "Don't be a square!" "You're chicken!" "Join the crowd!"

But teen-agers who have a strong set of standards to fortify their native intelligence do not fall prey to the smut merchant, the narcotics peddler, or the rest of the rodent swarm which fattens commercially upon the inexperience and natural curiosity of youth. These young people have developed, with parental aid, the moral restraint to rise above temptation, to turn their backs on the "smart set," and to remain true to their ideals.

Today, too many young people are developing neither the moral standards nor the restraint necessary to get along in a free society. Every community has its share of these youth. They are the members of teen-age gangs who belligerently roam the streets in search of "a rumble"; the school "drop-outs" who waste endless hours in unproductive idleness and, often, wrathful despair; the juvenile thrill seekers whose early delinquencies inevitably lead them to progressively more serious crimes.

These are unhappy youth. Their arrogant defiance of authority is a pitiful pose that seeks to conceal the tragic fear and insecurity which they feel. This fear, this insecurity exist because we have failed to prepare them to meet the personal demands and responsibilities of life in our American republic.

The way out of this dilemma is for youngsters to acquire a *sense of discipline*. But before a boy can practice self-discipline, he must learn discipline from others. We must establish for him standards of acceptable behavior—and we must enforce those standards.

"I tried to do the best I could, but I can't

control him . . ." This was the weak lament of a doting mother whose 15-year-old son had been arrested for assault and robbery. How familiar her words are to every law-enforcement officer.

Children need guide lines. We owe it to them to spell out what they may and may not do. We must hold them strictly accountable when they breach the rules of decent conduct. When we are weak or inconsistent, when we pamper or over-protect—even in the preschool years—we set a pattern of confusion for our children. In the years ahead, our mollicoddling can lead only to their resenting and despising authority.

A youngster also must be taught to have a *pride in his heritage*. Theodore Roosevelt, a man of great strength and discipline, had boundless love for his country and her ideals. "Americanism," he said, "means the virtues of courage, honor, justice, truth, sincerity, and hardihood—the virtues that made America. The things that will destroy America are prosperity at any price, peace at any price, safety first instead of duty first, the love of soft living, and the get-rich-quick theory of life."

Know the Enemy of Freedom

President Theodore Roosevelt knew that America was born of adversity. He believed that her people have risen to their greatest heights in the face of grave challenge. He knew also that softness—mental, physical, or spiritual—is the mortal enemy of all who cherish freedom.

Has a "softening process" begun to set in for this generation and its elders? I earnestly hope not. Still, the danger signs are clear. They signal the growing need for all of us to increase vigilance against this disease that eats from within.

Finally, I want to stress the importance of *challenge*, which is the indispensable compatriot of free men. It is a wellspring of alertness and vitality for nations which find themselves tempted to grow complacent and slothful.

Our youth need challenge. We must destroy the false conception which today increasingly saps their spiritual stamina with the lie that life in a democracy is a mere jumble of rights and privileges without responsibilities. From their very early years, young people should have individual chores, specific goals, constructive projects to help sharpen their capabilities and develop strong character.

Above all, our youth need our help to insulate them against the negative forces—immorality, overindulgence, apathy, neglect—which prevail in so many areas of modern life. For doing this vital job in a way that will last a lifetime, there is nothing like a healthy home.

By no choice of our own, we Americans find ourselves facing a deadly situation—the most critical in the nation's history. Communism, a treacherous international conspiracy which now controls nearly one-third of the earth's peoples, challenges our very right to live in freedom under God. Coupled with it is the menace of a growing crime problem, one that flourishes in—is, in fact, largely caused by—the prevailing atmosphere of adult aloofness and indifference.

Today the bright burden of freedom rests squarely in our hands. Tomorrow we must pass it on to the new generation—to the boys and girls I have been talking about here. It is up to us to make sure that we hand it over to strong young citizens capable of meeting the test that lasting freedom imposes daily.