

much during the past hundred years and have practically lived in harmony and in peace.

Whenever the direct interest of the consumer has been concerned the profit motive has been abolished. It is a process of socialization that has progressed quietly and steadily. The object has been to lower the cost of living. The slogan of the Social-Democratic Party in Sweden is "comfort in the home for all classes."

The standard of living in Sweden and Denmark has been the highest in Europe. Although it is difficult to make an accurate comparison, it is probable that the standard of living of the mass of people in Sweden and Denmark has been and is higher than that of other countries.

In order to achieve something and get ahead, the spiritual things must be placed on a higher level than material values. Our social relations are behind. Inventions and discoveries have been used in making more products and in helping to make life easier, but they have not yet been applied to human relations in the proper manner. It is, therefore, necessary for us to use some method such as one which is used in Sweden in order to raise our level of living.

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G. B. WYNNE

PILATE WASHED HIS HANDS

THE issue of freedom of speech in the schools and colleges has been much debated in the past few weeks and we fear that the controversy, far from being

on the road to settlement, is just beginning. The issue is not so clear, or at least not so well understood in respect to school education, as in respect to books, magazines, and newspapers. But everywhere freedom is in danger.

Everyone seems to want Americanism inculcated in our educational institutions. But what is Americanism? The American Legion, the Hearst Press, and the D. A. R., spokesmen for one attitude, understood Americanism to be what they assert to be the status quo or the status quo ante. They wish nothing taught that was not believed in by the last generation. The danger, here, is, first, that the schools become, as in Germany, Italy, and Russia, organs for teaching a political policy, which in the United States will certainly not be what our forefathers believed, since these advocates of a dogmatic education are quite unhistorical, but rather what the dominant political party or pressure group wishes children to believe. The second danger is that American education (like the Russian) will ignore other political and economic systems, leaving the student like a too much sanitized child, ripe for any germ of wild thinking. One needs only to read the impassioned letters from John Smith, '94, now being printed in the college alumni magazine, to learn that there are plenty of fools who believe that the best protection against, say, socialism, is never to mention it in a college curriculum.

The liberal educators go too far in the other direction. They argue that youth should be exposed to all the winds of doctrine and so taught to think for themselves. Unquestionably this is right for the colleges. But the teaching of children must retain some dogmatism or be ineffective. If the pressure groups who wish to control our education for their own purposes, would let professional scholars and teachers determine Americanism for themselves, and

make that the basis of their education, both consecutive and progressive might have complaints against our education, but at least the problems would be worked out in a compromise which would represent the judgment of those directly responsible for teaching. At present teachers are frightened, or at least many are trying to frighten them. Our pressure groups will not let them work out those principles which must be agreed upon and can be taught.

Unfortunately, only the educators seem interested in teaching that very difficult subject called truth—a subject which must always have wide margins, and whose pursuit requires the delicate conduct of an immature mind through principles known to be sound, up and on into the area of debate and confusion where the power of independent judgment is all that can be taught. And once again sinister influences, calling themselves patriotic, are marching upon the educators. It is the old story—sometimes a party, sometimes a church, sometimes a government, has captured youth for its own purposes, using the schools as a net. There is no remedy except resistance and clear thinking. Ask yourself, Why are teachers singled out to take the oath of allegiance? Ask yourself, Why would Mr. Hearst have only his conception of America taught? Ask yourself, Why this concerted attempt to have even an analysis of our economic system branded as "Communism," and all criticism of the status quo called Red?

But the issue in books is much simpler than in teaching. Books represent adult education. The pernicious bills, now in Congress, of which a baleful example is the Dobbins Bill (H. R. 9495) at present under debate, when analyzed prove to be attempts to make the terms "indecent" or "seditious" so broad that any book objectionably to either a pressure group or the government can be made dangerous for author to write or publisher to publish. We have been un-

discriminating in this respect, have indeed been so appalled by really indecent books, and truly violent publications, that the simplest way has seemed to be to give more powers of suppression. You cannot stop suppression, once it begins. The adult American is no child to be protected against the confusion of too many doctrines. His very existence as a potential citizen of a democracy, even such an imperfect democracy as ours, depends upon access to the flow of opinion. It is not realized how easily that flow can be stopped. Clamp down on elementary education, and the youth still can read. Clamp down on the free expression of opinion in books, and you clamp down on that individualism which is the essence of any state not purely despotic. These be platitudes, but they are also prophecies.

The inner citadel of freedom of speech and freedom of thinking is the printing press. In all this talk of government ownership there has been no mention as yet of the publishing business. If a beneficent government should take over the publishing business (which we do not advocate) it is probable that its first step would be to reduce the price and extend the circulation of books, always assuming that its purpose was to strengthen democracy and not to further a despotism. This would inevitably be at the cost of the tax-payer, perhaps a justifiable cost. Such a hypothesis is fanciful, but there is nothing fantastic in the idea that the pressure groups now trying to control government may attack the indispensable adult education of literature under any and every excuse that can be made plausible to a well-meaning but not too clear-thinking public. What is truth?—said Pilate, and washed his hands of the matter. What is freedom of speech, is much easier to determine. Shall we wash our hands of that also?

—*The Saturday Review of Literature.*