

Significant Books in Review

Column Editor: Paul M. Halverson
Contributor: Robert S. Harnack

Communism, Conformity, and Civil Liberties: A Cross-Section of the Nation Speaks Its Mind. By Samuel A. Stouffer. New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1955.

Threats of communism have not made us a nation of neurotics who harbor secret fears. We, the people, will not destroy our civil liberties. At least, these are the tentative conclusions of a well-designed study authorized by the Fund for the Republic. The field work was done by the American Institute of Public Opinion, the Gallup Poll and the National Opinion Research Center of the University of Chicago.

A national cross-section of 4933 interviews, as well as interviews of 1500 selected community leaders, provides the reader with a status picture of what Americans were thinking in the early summer of 1954 regarding communism, conformity, and civil liberties. Interestingly, the Army-McCarthy hearings were in progress when the study began.

The author presents the data and the cautious interpretation and conclusions which should be examined along with the appendix. All this makes for interesting reading for those persons "whose major concerns [are] with great issues of the day and whose occupations are somewhat remote from the rank and file—for example, for academic people, for executives in

government or business, and for some professional writers concerned with analyzing public issues."

What does this report show? The study found no evidence "that the country as a whole is suffering from quivering fear or from an anxiety neurosis about the internal Communist threat"; also "great social, economic, and technological forces are working on the side of exposing ever larger proportions of our population to the idea that 'people are different from me, with different systems of values, and they can be good people, too'"; and "the mechanisms in American social change which are tending to facilitate tolerance are far more potent than the mechanisms which impede it. The relationships of education, age, and civic responsibility with tolerance, as shown in this book, are more consistent with this conclusion than with its opposite."

—Reviewed by ROBERT S. HARNACK, associate professor of education, University of Buffalo, New York.

Minorities and the American Promise. By Stewart G. Cole and Mildred Wiese Cole. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1954.

The purpose of this book is to define the acute problems of human relations within the broad perspective of carefully analyzed principles of American citizenship. A thorough reading should help to resolve "the dilemma between American creed and deed."

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The authors have critically analyzed the scientific and philosophical framework of the American way of life. Their documented analysis leads to a better understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the attempts of individuals and groups to live together. Their discussion of the historic principles of democratic human relations, as well as their review of American culture and the dynamics of group relations, lead the reader to a soul-searching examination of his own concepts and values (as well as those of his neighbors) as he reads further about the social realities minority peoples face in the United States. The next obvious step is to consider these realities in terms of improving world neighborliness.

However, the authors have hope for

the United States in meeting the baffling challenge of world neighborliness.

But individuals, groups (people in education), have a long row to hoe. Although the problems and the varied solutions in this area have been stated many times, the challenge is still there: to understand the background of the "American Promise," and to recognize and solve the live issues and problems that exist. This is further complicated by the role present and future generations face regarding world relations with so-called "minority" groups.

Do people in education have a distinct responsibility? Yes—"to educate our youthful citizens so that they do not become . . . illiterate and misguided adults" in human relations.

—Reviewed by ROBERT S. HARNACK.

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