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THE MONOPOLY OF MEDIOCRITY

THE failure of the public school system to provide maximum opportunity for the gifted child has long concerned more thoughtful educators.

As we noted in an earlier editorial, Thomas Jefferson, as early as 1779, urged that the "best and most promising" young people in Virginia be sought out for advanced education.

Dr. Edgar Knight, Kenan professor of educational history at the University of North Carolina, cites other references in his recent article in *School and Society*.

1. In 1877, Supt. William J. Shearer of the Elizabeth (N. J.) schools, wrote in the *Atlantic Monthly* that the organization of the schools discouraged adequate attention to the more promising children. "Thus in chain-gangs are the bright and the slow bound and forced to move at the same pace," he said.

2. In 1913, Supt. J. H. Van Sickle of the Springfield (Mass.) schools charged that "the pupils were being educated on the less able discarded by a system that strived for the same preparation of all pupils, regardless of difference in aptitude and ability."

3. In the 1920's, George E. Vincent, former president of the University of Minnesota, asked: "How long are you going to center our attention upon the 'lame ducks' and take care of the mediocre people to the neglect of the superior child?"

4. And in 1932, Henry Chauncey, president of the Educational Testing Service, warned that "lockstep" procedures in education were delaying the development of critical skills

He urged that all pupils be permitted to proceed at their own pace.

Summing up his joint indictment of teacher colleges and the public schools, Dr. Knight wrote: "... educational institutions of all kinds must learn that they are not retreating from the democratic tradition and ideal of equality of educational opportunity when they pay more attention to the more able child rather than the mechanical training of teachers and give closer attention to the able students all along the line. No other road of escape from the monopoly of mediocrity seems open to American education."

Against that background, it is encouraging to read that the Central Curriculum Council of the Charlotte school system has begun a study to see what can be done here to provide better opportunity for more gifted students.

Admittedly, it is a difficult job to provide special training for such extremes, the backward and the gifted, in a day when school officials can scarcely keep enough teachers and classrooms on hand for the tidal wave of postwar school youngsters. Yet the fact that the objective is a difficult one makes its achievement an even greater challenge.

As they proceed with the study, the members of the Council should not be deterred by any thought that the program has to pay special attention to exceptional children. Equality of educational opportunity is not synonymous with identity of educational opportunity. Rather, it is the highest expression of democracy that each child in the public schools be encouraged to develop his talents to the maximum degree. To that end should be directed the Council's thoughts.

THE SHOE, ON THE OTHER FOOT, PINCHES

ONE REASON why the European Army Pact has not yet been ratified is because of the Belgian constitution. It has to be amended first, to give the European, instead of Belgian government, authority over Belgium troops.

This amendment process in Belgium involves a dissolution of Parliament, new general elections. Some legislators may lose their seats.

Let's do some supposing. Suppose the shoe was on the other foot. Suppose the United States had to amend its constitution to give some international authority control over American troops equipped to be dissolved, and new elections held. Suppose a European foreign minister had just flitted over here and, echoing the demands

of his countrymen, told Americans to get busy with these matters, or else.

Wow! We hear, Congress, the press and everyone else exclaiming.

Actually, while our Senators are telling the Europeans to unite, 62 of them have endorsed Sen. John Bricker's proposed constitutional amendment. Its effect would be the exact opposite of that demanded of European legislators. It would restrict this nation's authority to enter into international agreements.

The Senators, we would say, are not practicing what they preach. A little sober reflection on these practical problems in achieving European Union ought to create more understanding in this country.

BRITAIN AND EGYPT GET TOGETHER

CONTRASTING with the ominous overtones of Russia's diplomatic bark with Israel are more harmonious notes from an important nation of the turbulent Middle East—Egypt.

For several years now, the favorite chant of Egyptian nationalists (when they weren't keeping up a hot word war against Israel) has been "Unity of the Nile" and "Evacuation of Suez."

The first referred to Egypt's ancient concern over Sudan, and the second (967,500 square miles, one-fourth the size of Europe) semiprimitive land to the south of the Egyptian border, where lie the headwaters of the Nile River, upon which Egypt is utterly dependent for its very existence. Since 1899 Great Britain has controlled Sudan under a condominium arrangement with Egypt, and there have been many unsuccessful attempts to work out a permanent status for Sudan territory to Britain, to the Sudanese, and to Egypt.

The second referred to the presence of

British troops in the Suez canal area. Egypt has demanded that all British troops be withdrawn. This week both volatile issues appeared near settlement. Britain and Egypt signed an agreement governing the future status of Sudan, and the British agreed "in principle" to the withdrawal of troops from Suez.

The two progressive steps cannot but benefit the West in its effort to keep the Middle East out of the Soviet orbit. Egypt, one of the strongest of the Arab nations, is an important potential member of the proposed Middle East Defense command. With the two main objects of violent nationalist anti-British propaganda removed, chances of ending the technical state of war with Israel should be materially improved. Gen. Mohammed Naguib's regime should also be strengthened.

All in all, the new accord between Britain and Egypt holds great promise of stabilizing political conditions at the eastern end of the Mediterranean.

ECONOMIC GOSPEL

WE GET a little tired of editorial writers who, professing regard for academic freedom, nonetheless are hesitant to tackle specific cases. The current Tennessee textbook inquiry provides a case in point.

Tennessee state legislators scrutinized, among other University of Tennessee textbooks, Theodore Morgan's *Introduction to Economics*. It noted this statement by Mr. Morgan:

"... The expansion of debt at a rate sufficient to absorb the nation's savings is both sound and necessary.... It is ridiculous to think that debt in general must be repaid. The mere act of issuing debt, if it is around.... would result in complete economic paralysis."

We believe the professor's theory is unsound. This nation's legislators, who do all the Federal apportioning and levy the taxes, have nevertheless proceeded for some years as though they agreed with this theory. This

has been a bipartisan proposition, liberal Democrats wanting to spend and spend and tax and tax, conservative Republicans wanting to cut taxes rather than balance the budget, and so on.

But the Chattanooga *News-Free Press*, noting this quote, is alarmed. This "faustly and dogmatic text" it finds "an example of the kind of book that should never be admitted into a text and which certainly should not be continued in use." The paper does allow that students should study such theories, but are afraid they might accept the author's ideas as "gospel."

Given a healthy diversity of economic "gospels," from Adam Smith and Marx to Raymond Moley and Keynes, college students have enough sense to arrive at thoughtful ideas, as nation's legislators do. But the restriction of the variety through provoking material would produce dull citizens—and poor economists.

From The Little Rock Arkansas Gazette

BUZZ WITHOUT BITE

AFTER five years of painstaking selection which was a tedious task, the West-Sussex Beeskeepers' Association was able to announce at Chichester, England, the other day that it has developed a stingless bee that won't sting. The new strain's major importance will be in the classroom, according to Association officials who plan to utilize it in beekeeping instruction.

The thought that there is now a bee that can be used in the classroom without stinging either to or from it is heartening, and we are happy to pass it on. Now let us suggest

a few additional items for the researchers—such as a tackless desk, a howl-free cat and a nagless, wife. There are untold opportunities here and if such a major variety of strain can be achieved in bees aural it could be arranged for such larger animals as dogs, cats and wives. Anybody know where we can get those microscopic instruments?

Men will die with their boots on—the accelerator—*Carleback* (N. N.) Currents—*Argus*.

Colleges And Communists

Unorthodoxy Is Not Subversion

By DR. JAMES BRYANT CONANT
U. S. High Commissioner To Germany
(In His Final Annual Report As President Of Harvard University)

THERE is justable concern today in academic circles about certain malicious misrepresentations of the nation's colleges and universities. But there is nothing new in the phenomenon. Mr. Lowell in his day had to meet legitimate demands of certain faculty members because of what they said as citizens. For the whole of my term of office there have been of and on recurring attacks on Harvard as well as other universities.

At the moment the charges range from that of harboring members of the Communist Party to teaching economics in such a way as to convert to the political doctrine of nationalization of industries or to supporting socialist schemes for health insurance. However, I am inclined to think the proponents of the ridiculous charge that our colleges are a seditious subversive agency are more than a day's ride from the political department and Congress. Instead, I believe it is the failure of colleges and universities to demonstrate the nature of their primary task. For example, the public entertainment business in which almost all of us are engaged has become so competitive as to generate public scandal. Let us remember Harvard was the first college to build a stadium, and if President Lowell had not stood steadfast against alumni pressure, we would have today a giant stadium built in the year '20s on borrowed money.

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Among the reasons for this change in the popular attitude towards institutions of higher education is the failure of colleges and universities to demonstrate the nature of their primary task. For example, the public entertainment business in which almost all of us are engaged has become so competitive as to generate public scandal. Let us remember Harvard was the first college to build a stadium, and if President Lowell had not stood steadfast against alumni pressure, we would have today a giant stadium built in the year '20s on borrowed money.

Another reason, perhaps, for public suspicion of the nation's colleges and universities has been their failure to demonstrate the nature of their primary task. For example, the public entertainment business in which almost all of us are engaged has become so competitive as to generate public scandal.

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Yummy!



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TUESDAY of this week is likely to go down in history as the first major turning point of the Eisenhower Administration since the day when the hard fact was faced that there are no cheap, makeshift solutions of the world problem and especially of the Far Eastern problem.

President Eisenhower and the State Department have made it clear that they do not intend to force the consequences of their psychologically ill-considered and unwise gesture of "unleashing" Chiang Kai-shek. Plainly, they did not expect the ensuing orgy of wild talk and irresponsible talking about painless, miraculous ways to end the Chinese Communist and end the Korean War. At any rate, it can be said that the orgy had not gone far for long before the President decided it was high time to apply a corrective.

Under the President's instructions, the corrective has been applied by Gen. Omar Bradley. The chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff followed by Secretary of State John Foster Dulles on the stand of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on Tuesday.

Although the assembly of Senators only wished to talk about Far Eastern solutions, Secretary Dulles and the other members of the committee were not so easily deterred. As to such much-discussed expedients as the blockade of the Chinese Communist, General Bradley with saying that no adventures of this sort were planned, so far as he is concerned. That he was not so easily deterred by the disinterring of the Senate, several of whom had worked themselves up to demanding a blockade tomorrow morning, Bradley made the following points.

First, international law forbids a blockade without the declaration of a state of war. If we declared ourselves at war with Communist China, the character of the Korean War would be instantaneously transformed and we might find ourselves fighting alone, with our allies holding aloof. Incidental-

ly, the blockade could not include Hong Kong without a declaration of war on Great Britain, but could include the Straits Settlements, since these ports technically belong to China.

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Under the circumstances, it is not surprising that the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, headed by Senator RAYBOLD AGREED.

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Bradley Disillusioned Senators

Who Sought Blockade Of China

By JOSEPH E. STEWART ALSO

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