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DISCIPLINE

by

Colonel E. B. Crabill
Infantry - Retired

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The Great Society, while noble in concept, and possibly practical in application, will probably achieve only a mediocre success. It is based upon the theory that all the poor are poor because they have been unfortunate. That juvenile delinquents are law-breakers because they come from squalid backgrounds. That the uneducated will acquire an education if they are given an opportunity. That the unemployed would rather work than live in idleness on relief. That all college students are seekers after knowledge when many of them are just dodging the draft. That high school "drop-outs" leave school because the teaching facilities and the teachers are not satisfactory. That the mobs of juveniles in the streets are "angry" instead of just using the protection of mass to loot and burn property, or for excitement. That all the leaders of mobs are crusaders instead of being publicity-seeking demagogues.

These misconceptions will cause any program to fail because the programs are not accompanied by the most necessary ingredient in any mass program. That ingredient is discipline.

To millions of Americans, discipline is a dirty word. It is classified with regimentation, police brutality, and law and order, as repugnant to liberty. Yet no nation has long existed without discipline. Greece, Rome, even the enormous empire of the Mongols failed because they became soft from lack of discipline. The United States has little to fear from outside aggressors, it is the lack of discipline that will cause it eventually to fall into a dictatorship.

The best kind of discipline is that which is self-imposed, and if this kind of discipline were universal there would be little need for other kinds. The home, the school, and the church, are the training grounds for self-discipline, and it is only when one or all of these have failed that outside discipline must be used. The chief instruments for replacing self-discipline should be the courts of law, but these instruments have become so impotent that their force in preserving law and order have become negligible. Unless some more effective disciplinary means are found, The Great Society will spend its billions, only to find in twenty years that the only change is that there are twice as many needing help.

Discipline is really no problem, and the attitude of helplessness on the part of law-abiding people in the face of our increasing crime rate is completely absurd. Any police commissioner, given proper authority, could reduce the crime rate in a few weeks, and cut it in half in a year. But he would have to be given proper authority and support. As long as the people, and the press, are more concerned with "Police Brutality" than with law and order, no progress will be made. In fact millions of law-abiding juveniles seeing other juveniles getting away with murder, will probably be prone to try it themselves. On the other hand a battalion of police or soldiers armed with riot shotguns loaded with birdshot could probably have stopped the Watt's City riots in a few hours if they had proper authority. A few pellets of Number 4 shot in the seat of the pants would be much more effective than a ride to the jail.

Discipline is founded on fear of punishment. If you do not believe this go to any town that has a reputation for being a "speed trap", or tough on speeders, and watch the difference between the way people drive through that town and through other towns. A few years ago the city fathers of a small town in Georgia, that sat astride the main north-south highway, got tired of dodging speeding tourists and set up an electronic speed trap. The tax was a dollar for each mile over the posted limit. It took only about a week for the news to get from Miami to Boston. The results were dramatic, reaching even to the AAA. But the tourists complied with the posted limit.

In the 1920's and 1930's most of the recruits in the Army were seventeen and eighteen year old boys. Many of these had been given a choice, by a judge, of enlisting in the Army or being sent to reform school. The Army wasn't so fussy about its personnel in those years. It took anybody it could get and made soldiers out of them. When they reported to a company they were not told what the Army would do for them, but were told in unmistakable terms just what they would do for the Army. As soon as they found out that a dirty rifle at Saturday inspection meant KP on Sunday, and that AWOL put them on garbage collecting detail, they quickly learned to conform. Rebels who deserted were picked up by sheriffs for the twenty five dollar reward and usually spent a year or two in Alcatraz^z. There were not many. When World War II broke out these same ex-juveniles moved up to command the platoons, companies, and battalions, of drafted men, and wrote some of the most glorious pages in the history of the United States.

The premise of The Great Society is that if the donkeys are given enough carrots the use of the stick will not be necessary. Such a premise has never been successful in the past and there is no reason to think that it will be any better in the present. As a matter of fact the problems of population explosion, illegitimacy, crime, juvenile delinquency and school dropouts, have made the situation more critical, and more carrots will only inflate the problem. The various psychologist, psychiatrists, do-gooders, bleeding hearts, and political aspirants are facing problems that are beyond their capabilities. The ills of The Great Society are primarily disciplinary ills and only disciplinary measures will cure them.

The high school drop-out is a perfect example. All kinds of excuses for his drop-out are given - bad home conditions, poor schools, ineffective teachers, lack of interest, antagonism. It never seems to occur to anybody that what the high school drop-out really needs is a good swift kick in the seat of the pants. He should not be allowed to drop out. If the law can require a boy to go to school until he is sixteen, it can require that he go to school until he is twenty one, or until he graduates. Every large school district should have separate classes for the stupid and recalcitrant, with the instructors having authority to use physical means when necessary. This would cost more but not as much as keeping the boy on relief or in prison the rest of his life. To add some carrots to the stick, driver's licenses should be issued only to juveniles that bring a certificate from the school that his grades are satisfactory, and licenses should be revoked if the boy drops out. Since all boys want to drive cars such a regulation would keep most of them in school.

The problem of juvenile delinquency, like the high school drop-out, stems from the same source - lack of discipline. When the teenager gets big enough to defy his mother and perhaps challenge his father, some other form of discipline should enter the picture. Jails and impotent judges are not the answer. The juvenile may even brag about being a one-time loser or a two-time loser, but he is not likely to brag about some tough cop beating the hell out of him - the appropriate punishment for a tough juvenile who has beaten up some old man or attacked some woman. The time-honored custom of shooting looters should be resumed. A shotgun loaded with bird shot won't kill the looters but it will discourage them. The thrill-seeking students and juveniles who lie down in the streets should be flushed into the gutters by a water cannon similar to the ones the Russians have.

The crime rate in the United States can be laid directly upon the doorstep of The Supreme Court and its subordinate courts. Any assembly of guard-house lawyers, like The Supreme Court, can, by assiduous use of a microscope, find some unintended meaning in the law, and use it to set free upon the law-abiding public, a horde of criminals, whose guilt is unquestioned, even by the criminals themselves. The deterrent of crime is fear of punishment. There is no such deterrent in the United States - The Supreme Court has seen to that. The fact that the original idea of preservation of law and order as the reason for their existence never seems to occur to the court members.

Locally the city fathers could do a great deal toward reducing crime. In World War II, our stockade was a bare field surrounded by a high barbed wire fence. It contained nothing except a few water outlets and some pit latrines. When a soldier returned from AWOL

he took his pup tent and blankets and moved into this stockade. He trained with his company but was marched to the stockade every night, where he slept on the ground, no cot, no springs. He usually spent three days in the stockade for each day he was AWOL. There were not many repeaters. A similar set-up might discourage some of the cities' star boarders.

The outstanding weakness of The Great Society, and the one that will cause its eventual collapse is its encouragement of relief and dependency. The exodus from the land to the cities is very simple - why work when the government will support you in idleness? With a cabinet officer to see that they are well taken care of, a one man, one vote, to give them political control, it will not be hard for the relievers to control the way money is spent. The exodus has just started and will grow greater.

The effects of the population explosion may soon require heroic action, but the populace, now riding the crest of the wave, is not ready for really effective measures. Such measures might be the performance of a simple operation on fathers, who abandon the support of their families, so that they couldn't father any more children. Women who make a profession of raising illegitimate children could also have a simple operation performed at their second pregnancy that would stop their contribution to the tax load. These measures, however desirable, could not possibly be inaugurated under The Great Society. Instead, those who are causing the problems will be encouraged to greater activity by financial help from Washington. The strangest part of this situation is that it is encouraged by the very people that will have to pay for it - the taxpaying public.

In the early years of the reign of Franklin Delano Roosevelt the Civilian Conservation Corps was organized, and companies of approximately two hundred men each were sent out into the woods for various conservation projects. Orders issued from Washington directed that the enrollees would be given no military training. Most of the companies were commanded by experienced regular army officers, who were smart enough to pay no attention to such orders. They organized the companies along military lines, using ~~as non-commissioned officers~~ those who displayed leadership, had regular formations for reveille, retreat, and for meals. Each morning the company commander inspected the tents to see that they were in order. The enrollees appeared to like the military training, standing very rigidly at attention while the flag was lowered on its extemporized flagpole while an enrollee blew "To the Colors" at Retreat. Companies with less experienced officers who complied with the "No military" orders, and did nothing to discipline their enrollees, usually ended by having a mutiny or a riot on their hands and had to be replaced by someone who was tougher.

In April of 1945 the American Army was driving across Germany from the Rhine river to the Elbe. The country was thickly populated with many towns and villages. It would cause too much delay to search out the houses, so after capturing a town the combat echelon would proceed to the next resistance. This caused some trouble at first. Recalcitrant Germans would hide out in their houses until the combat troops had passed, and then take pot shots at communications and supply people that were following. When flushed out they would raise their hands in surrender. The regimental commander issued orders that any Germans that fought the combat troops

would be taken as POW's when they surrendered, but any who let the combat troops pass and then shot at the communications troops would be shot down when they offered to surrender. It took only a few days for the word to get along the German grapevine; then the roads were safer than our highways.

The answer to force always has been, and probably always will be, greater force. Humanitarian actions may be applied later, but first law and order must be restored by discipline.

The Boston police strike was put down by Governor Coolidge so firmly that the people, who always seek a strong leader, elected him President of the United States.

The French Revolution had gotten completely out of control until an artillery captain named Napoleon stopped the rabble in their attack on the acting government in The Cite with a few rounds of grape shot. This stopped the disorder and eventually made Napoleon Emperor.

The foregoing examples all tend to prove one fact - No matter how vociferously the mass of the people may denounce regimentation, police brutality, and law and order, when those who are selfish enough to take advantage of the law-abiding are properly disciplined, everybody is happier. If the law breakers really feared punishment, there would soon be little need for discipline.

A national columnist recently reported that the Watts City negroes are planning another uprising; this time with weapons. Had a few looters and arsonists been shot at the beginning of the first riot there would have been no serious problem then or now.

In most socialistic planning the idea is good; it is the execution that causes the plan to do more harm than good. Most people will agree that social security is a good idea because it is based upon the irresponsibility of the mass of the people, who consider present entertainment more important than future security. Social security is discipline - it makes people save for their future whether they want to or not. It puts the collection of social security taxes in the hands of the employer, instead of leaving it to the individuals, most of whom would never save.

The idea of work relief was good - a means of tiding a man over between jobs - but the execution is poor and will become worse. It was hardly intended originally that work relief would be used as an additional weapon on the side of labor in it's already preponderant arsenal, nor to support the ghetto loafers in our cities, while crops spoil in nearby fields and orchards for lack of harvesters.

For every veteran who is deserving of veterans' relief there are probably ten who never heard a shot fired. If farm relief payments were taken from wealthy farmers and distributed in the form of crop allotments to the poor farmers, the exodus to the ghettos of the cities might be reversed. If dependency payments were limited to two children, the professional bastard raisers might reduce their output. If educational appropriations were limited to students who are making passing grades, the number of bums and traitors around our colleges would be reduced. If the executives of various programs did not latch onto the mass of the money appropriated, to pay salaries to deserving Democrats, some might be left for the purpose intended.

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Any enterprize, whether leading soldiers into combat or feeding the starving, requires discipline, and without discipline it will fail. Business enterprizes are disciplined by the necessity of making a profit. Our forefathers were disciplined by a root hog or die economy. The Great Society, instead of solving our social ills, will only succeed in multiplying them unless a much greater degree of discipline is brought into the operations.

A few years ago an American investigator was in India to find out what had been done with a hundred million dollars that had been donated by The United States for their starving multitudes. He found that the money was being used to build a steel mill. When a government official was asked why the money was not being used for food for the starving people, he replied, "If we use the money for food, in ten years there will be just as many starving as there are now, and we will not have the steel mill."