

Missing The Point

There is hardly a learned, or governmental group that has not spent some of its recent waking hours drafting plans to combat riots. Congress, assorted state legislatures, city councils and even recently Republican governors indulged in this effort.

The Republican governors resolved that the way to combat riots involved nine points: Maintenance of law and order, transform slums into decent communities, increase job opportunities, improve public service to individuals, improve educational facilities, expand cultural and recreational opportunities, encourage individual citizen and private institutional participation, assure state governments' capacity to meet urban problems and encourage flexibility, speed and adequate funding of federal programs.

This is neither the best nor the worst list compiled since "Burn, Baby, Burn" was etched into the nation's soul in Watts. But it overlooks the most basic factor in combatting crime; whether it is crime by the individual or the "syndicate" or the mob.

Of course, in this mixed up season to talk of punishing the guilty is to raise whines from Berkeley to Boston. But crime prevention cannot be accomplished without punishment of criminals.

For the terror of Watts and Newark and Detroit and hundreds of other cities across our nation so few have suffered punishment that the criminal can easily persuade himself that the riot game is worth the chance.

But quite aside from the eager participation of the greedy and thievish in these recent exercises in anarchy the most fundamental oversight of our authorities has been their willingness to put out these fires at their source.

International communism has used ethnic blocs over and over again to create violence in the streets. But our leaders of recent vintage have been too blind, or too involved to make an effort to control this fire at its known source.

All of these other high resolves are just so much rhetoric until our leaders are willing to accept reality, or until we, the people, are able to get new leaders who recognize communism for what it is.

Medicine Man

The chief medicine man of the federal reservation came to North Carolina Tuesday and danced around the microphone, casting out devils and excoriating tobacco.

There was a time in the history of medicine when similar gourd-shakers practiced their healing art on all the aches and pains of old Homo Hypochondria.

Today this federal voodoo doctor lumps all diseases for which the cure or cause are not known into one huge medical encyclopedia and blames them all on an old, dirty, gummy, wonderful weed called tobacco.

Not so very far from now a more practical man of medicine will desert the statistical tables, the mumbo-jumbo of computerized medicine and find the cure for cancer, after first finding the cause.

Then the incantations of the surgeon general in the year 1967 will sound as absurd as the medicine chant of a cro-magnon shaman.

Meanwhile, reliable sources discount the latest rumors set afloat by the surgeon general: that tobacco may cause pregnancy; a conclusion based on the finding that 43.5 per cent of pregnant women were found to be cigaret smokers!

'What burns me up is being blown off the road!'



PERSONAL PARAGRAPHS

BY JACK RIDER

For one just recently past the 50th milestone in the journey through life a series of short articles in the current issue of Harper's is at the same time fascinating and frightening. "Dialogue Between The Generations", includes thoughts from well knowns such as Lippman and Kazin, and several college editors, who have yet to find their place in the national sun.

One such collegiate editor, Rita Dershowitz, from Yale, throws the calculated shocker to a parent with a daughter in an ultra-liberal college. "I am comfortable with interracial social situations, casual use of marijuana and the mind expanding drugs!", and concludes: "The range of possibilities is enormous: with unprecedented economic abundance, one has the real choice of self-imposed poverty; with higher education easily available, one can chose to reject academic learning in favor of other kinds of experiences."

But is Miss Dershowitz breaking any new ground? People have fled such abundances as have existed since time began, and formal learning has never been accepted by any but the smallest minority, whether in or out of classroom. But she dignifies her "discovery" by claiming, finally, "The younger generation is in the process of synthesizing a new wisdom, and that is the real education."

Is there any NEW wisdom? Or only old wisdoms being found by a new group. Publisher William Jovanovich (president of Harcourt Brace & World) concludes his middle-age contribution

with Gandhi's reply when asked what he thought of Western Civilization: "I think it would be a good idea". This confession of our western youthfulness, as civilizations go, is both sobering and soporific; in that it reminds us that other civilizations have flourished, though none ever brought so much to so many.

But this immediately turns one down that Bohemian path, which questions the value of so much for so many. The non-conformists embrace poverty in a world of affluence and worship anti-art, anti-music in a world that has come to afford art, esthetically and financially.

Undoubtedly for those of all ages this is a mixed up season in the affairs of men, but there has never been another kind, and hopefully there never will be. The most deadening spirit, and the one we all seek some escape from, is certainty. Even those who place the greatest stock in "security" rarely are able to identify their shangri-la.

Those with the brightest minds never have been, and never will be capable of accepting without question anything passed along to them. Whether it is a simple machine, a subtle philosophy or an "ageless" principle each generation, and each individual will want to know what makes "it tick", and if it cannot be made better. When an age accepts the Model T as the end of the line nobody gets to ride in a Thunderbird.

But it is as useless for one generation to try to communicate with its successor, or predecessor as for the Wright Brothers to talk to the engineers who design spacecraft. Amusement, confusion and anger result more frequently than understanding. The parent whose mini-skirted shock cannot be lived with only succeeds in making himself and his children unhappy. This is the tiniest fragment of that dialogue between generations that never has had, and never will have an adequate interpreter. Sympathy, Si; Understanding, No!