

COGS IN A WHEEL

MY GREATEST DESIRE for you graduates is a world in which you can amount to something as individuals and not just be cogs in a wheel, numbers on a Social Security record, names on little white crosses in some distant cemetery. I wish for you a world in which you can become the individuals God intended you to be. But I would certainly be over-optimistic to promise you such a world—for the spirit of Procrustes is abroad, and replicas of his iron bed are now in mass production.

The standardization of human beings is known as regimentation. The results of regimentation have been witnessed only recently in Japan, Italy, Germany, Russia and her satellite countries; and those with eyes to see can witness it going on in these United States.

There is ample evidence to show that in America we are following, slowly but surely, the pattern of the fascist, communist, and socialist countries of the world. We are putting a premium on conformity, regimentation, and group action; a penalty on originality, ingenuity, and personal initiative. The greater tragedy is that we are following the pattern blindly—even willingly—because it is the path of least resistance, because a

whole generation has arisen in the past 20 years that knows nothing different, and because there is a mirage on down the trail which beckons to us.

We seem oblivious to the fact that this same mirage has beckoned many a nation to its doom. Nor can we seem to understand that a social group which does its thinking by ear and its acting by imitation can never do more than travel in circles—like elephants in a circus ring, tail to trunk and trunk to tail. Coerced conformity is a sure road to national suicide, and the blind acceptance of the role of an exact duplicate of everyone else is self-condemnation to mediocrity and oblivion.

A LOOK INTO THE FUTURE

CONSIDER what the insistence of our leaders that we all be forced to fit *their* standards of perfection—their little iron beds—means in terms of your future. Perhaps you have noted how, in your school life, you readily conform to the latest fad in dress, manner, or speech. You adopt the latest slang because if you do not, you're an "odd ball"—somebody will think you've "flipped your lid" if you fail to conform to the prevailing patterns. But that is only a minor symptom of the disease; the conformity in