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PRINTED IN U.S.A.

The Growth of an Idea

EVERYBODY says he's in favor of freedom. Even the leaders of communist Russia claim to be the only real defenders of *true* human freedom. Peace and freedom are their favorite words, just as the same words are used constantly by our own leaders. Yet, freedom of choice in the daily lives of the people is strait-jacketed in both the United States and Russia, and peace describes a period of armed truce between major wars.

Why? Apparently it's because we don't know what freedom is. We don't understand the fact that small-scale compulsions within nations tend to grow into large-scale violence among nations. The person who desires to impose his will and viewpoint upon his neighbors in small ways "for their own good" is well on his way toward imposing his ideas upon all people in large ways, "for the good of mankind."

This is not a new problem. Many civilizations in the past have

perished because they didn't understand the proper relationships of man to his fellow men and were thus unable to stop conflicts between persons and nations.

Search for Solution

Throughout history, persons in groups or alone have devoted their efforts to the search for a solution to this problem of the proper relationships among persons—and the part that should be played by the authority and force of government. Yet, few of the answers are generally known. If they were, conflict between persons and groups would soon become a minor problem.

There have been, and still are, many persons and groups in the United States devoting their full efforts to a study of this problem of freedom — the problem of individuality within society. Some specialize in one area of it, such as freedom of speech or freedom of the press or some other fraction of freedom.