

# PERSUASION

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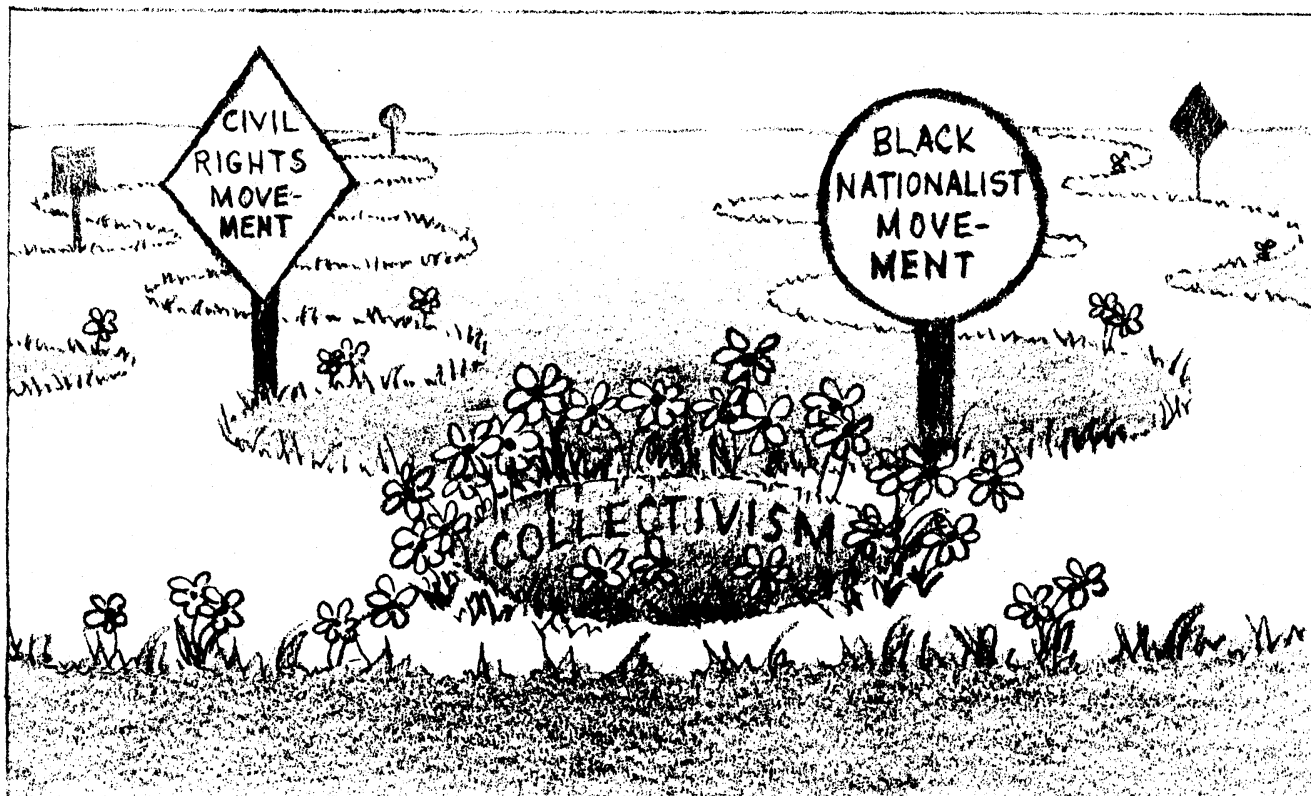
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JOAN KENNEDY TAYLOR, EDITOR



BEWARE THE GARDEN PATH...

### "MY NAME IS ISHMAEL": SOME THOUGHTS ON RACIAL COLLECTIVISM

In a limited, but important, respect individuals in a society who are members of a fringe or "out group" may view and even understand that society from a different perspective. Particularly if the society in general is one in which many group pressures are brought to bear by the majority on its own members, the member of the "out group" may have the advantage of, for all practical purposes, disappearing from the view of those who would assert the pressures. This author, being a Negro, finds that being classified as an outsider gives him the advantage of having less pressure on him to conform, to become an "organization man." He is therefore freer to stand back and choose his friends, his interests, his after-hours activities, without having to worry about the possibility that he might be jeopardizing his job.

This is not to say that the individual who is a member of a minority group has no problems. He, in a sense, lives in a somewhat hostile environment. The development of his perception of and understanding of his environment becomes necessary to his survival in it. Possibly the most important point for him to grasp is that if he is to protect his individuality and his enjoyment of life is the danger of accepting any variation of the idea of collectivism. In the world today there is the belief that man is by nature a collectivized animal, that his humanness comes from being socialized by the group. This doctrine holds that man is not only morally and politically but psychologically subordinate to the group, the state or the majority of his fellow men. An essential characteristic of collectivism is its antagonism to the idea of the importance of the individual. For each person subscribing to the tenets of collectivism, the nature and meaning of his life therefore has to be determined by the majority of others. A collectivist deals only with men as members of particular groups, such as race, sex, age, status.

But the American Negro is in an impossible position if he allows himself to give any credence to the point of view that it is the majority of others who determine truth, beauty and value. He is a member of a minority--he can't win. If he tries to submerge himself in his own group, he still knows that there is a larger group somewhere outside that does not agree with his values. And since collectivists in the society as a whole hold derogatory opinions regarding his race, uncritical acceptance of these opinions will force him to regard himself in the same manner as do the majority, which will necessarily put him in serious conflict with himself.

In our time, this issue of race has assumed monumental proportions, and the individual Negro is in danger of finding himself submerged by what is called the Negro revolution.

During the early years of this revolution, Negroes and their leaders fought for the rights belonging to any citizen in a relatively free state. They fought for the right to vote, to abolish legally enforced segregation, and against laws infringing their rights as citizens. But more recently, with the support (moral and physical) of society at large, the small landslide of protest has roared into an avalanche of indiscriminate demands, intimidation and insistence on many so-called rights, which would require the violation of the rights of other citizens if they were to be realized. A graphic illustration of this last point is a recent speech by Martin Luther King, Jr. On a national television hookup, in early December 1966, he advocated a guaranteed minimum annual income for all citizens, white and Negro. His audience did not ask who would be the source of this income; it rose and gave him a standing ovation.

The failure to make explicit what individuals, groups and governments may do to each other, and where one draws the line, has resulted in the dumping into the civil rights movement of a chaotic mixture of goals, desires and purposes. At the present time, this area is a shambles of bitterness and mixed goals, diluted only by the hurt disillusionment of the "liberals" and the shocked indignation of the general public (both Negro and white). "Public support for the Negro and his problems is waning, white opposition is growing, and the civil rights movement is falling into increasing disarray. . . . In Washington, Congress is ready to kill a civil rights bill for the first time in three years, and some Presidential advisers say Mr. Johnson is convinced that the public mood will not permit any 'big and bold' programs for Negroes." ("Civil Rights: A Turning Point," The New York Times, September 19, 1966. First of a series of three articles.)

One reason for this turning away is the increasing importance which force and violence is assuming in the movement. However, a more pertinent reason from the point of view of this article is the announcement by civil rights leaders of the concept of Black Power. This is, in effect, an announcement of the intention to fight racism in the society as a whole with Negro racism. It is a racist approach applied to the economic realm, in which it is assumed that money, land and wealth, and political power should be concentrated in the hands of one group (Negroes) instead of another (whites). The announcement may be recent, but the concept is an activist form of a more general racial mystique which is a powerful force in any Negro community.

In many discussions on race, this writer has invariably had this mystique of race offered as a reason for minority group members supporting their racial group's common interests. In an article in the May 30, 1965, New York magazine section of the New York Herald Tribune, "The Negro Career Girl: Between Two Worlds," Bernadette Carey describes the plight of the Negro girl who is carving a career for herself: "But in the world where her roots are, a world where she is often called selfish and accused of turning her back on her own--pressures that are hard to ignore--she must insist to well-meaning people that she wants to use her education, talent, skills and energy as a lever out of the black bourgeois, not as a comfortable cushion."

Miss Carey quotes other such career girls: "My family and old friends still feel I should be a social worker or a teacher so I could stay close and contribute to the Negro community they live in. . . ." and "I decided there is other work--harder work--to be done besides demonstrating." But the impact of the racial mystique is perhaps best summed up in the following quote: "Dorothy Peterson, an actress who has played small roles in European movies, is now a secre-

tary for a national magazine. She discussed one of the old escape hatches. 'I really don't know how I feel about color,' she said: 'I know it shouldn't have to mean anything to me, and it strikes me we're falling into a snare by making it so damned important. I used to think color was what white people used to rob us of our identities. Now, we're doing it to ourselves. The only way a Negro could forget color was to leave here and live in some other country. Now I know that those expatriates were escaping as much from other Negroes who wouldn't let them forget as from whites.'"

Two weeks later, New York published a letter received in response to this article from a Negro man who said he read the article with "mixed feelings of disgust, pity and anger," and that the article "gives the impression that the Negro career girl is a special, superior breed, sprung self-made, full-grown upon the scene with no obligations, no loyalties, no responsibilities to anyone except her brilliant, lovely self." He then advised all the Negro career girls whom Miss Carey had discussed to thank not only CORE and the NAACP for their jobs, but also Martin Luther King "and those real heroes, the kids who faced the dogs, firehoses and cattle prods, armed only with songs and prayers."

Almost every fairly ambitious Negro contends with some form of this racism. "If it were not for the civil rights organizations or your people, fighting for you, you wouldn't be where you are today." The implication is that the person in question owes some kind of unpaid (and unpayable) debt to those who make his position possible. What they want to be repaid with is the person's automatic acceptance of some mystic bond of brotherhood with other Negroes only because they are of the same race. The idea that members of racial groups may have few or no significant interests, values or goals in common with others of the group is unintelligible to them. It is certainly obvious that if a man were persecuted because he had red hair, for practical reasons he would join with other red-haired people to combat this irrationality; but this does not mean that he should have anything else in common with them. In obtaining any position, this red-haired person must still possess those personality, character qualities and occupational skills necessary for filling the position. If there were no prejudice, he still would not get the job without them. That fundamental responsibility for making himself a competent human being and citizen remains with him. For the member of a minority group seeking to acquire broader, rational values and goals, his worst enemy may be not the majority group or society at large, but his own group.

A less vicious, but still damaging, form of this belief in a mystical racial bond is the Negro who does appear ambitious, buys his own home, provides his children with a good education and generally adopts all of the virtues rational men admire; but he does it because he wants to improve the image of his

race and, through this, his own image. He sees his identity as determined by the group and, since he disapproves of the group's status, he works to change the group. His anger at the misbehavior of other members of his race is the result of his perception that it makes him look bad.

H. J. O'Gorman, Professor of Sociology at Hunter College, in New York City, remarked in one of his classes that Negro professionals (especially lawyers and physicians) had irresistible pressures put upon them by their communities, which expected them to take leadership positions in civil rights and related activities even at the expense of their own practices. As a result, many of these professionals do have heavy community commitments which often lead to their full-time involvement in them. The fact that their practice is private and depends largely on Negro patronage is an important factor in urging them into these activities.

To those who are unsure of themselves and of their ability to survive alone, this appeal to race is almost always effective. It appears even in what may seem to be trends within the Negro community in opposition to the civil rights movement, such as the Black Nationalist movement.

The so-called Black Nationalist movement in America appeals to a very large number of Negroes, in varying degrees of intensity. This ranges from full philosophical and psychological commitment to its basic doctrines (in which case, a religious orientation is a key component) to the vague, psychological appeal it may hold for the average Negro. The letter to Miss Carey referred to above said of the Black Nationalists, "without their prodding and threats, the programs of the acceptable moderates would never have stood a chance of being adopted." Actually, the Black Nationalist movement is composed of various groups holding different but related views centering on race and its significance in society.

The Nationalists recognized the Negro's need to feel good about himself as a person, while simultaneously holding the fact of his race as something natural, though not significant morally or existentially. But they distorted this need by making Negro-ness a superior physical attribute, making a virtue of that which before was wrongly considered a vice.

This movement is also characterized by a militancy that extends itself into the everyday routine of the lives of the children of its followers. On certain days of the week, young boys from the ages of six to the mid-teens may be seen marching through the streets of Harlem. They wear military uniforms and carry imitation weapons. They march in groups of thirty to forty with young men barking commands at them. This militarism seems to be the expression of a kind of institutionalized hatred of the white man and a concern with force and violence.

Black Nationalists hold this hatred along with a general belief in the innate prejudice and irrationality of the white race. The literature of the largest of these groups--the Black Muslims--refers consistently to the Caucasian as "white devil." Such collectivists need the white man as a scapegoat in the same way that white racists need Negroes. To be able to name an external cause for one's failure gives one the illusion that he has an objective justification for his abdication from life, and also gives one a repository for his resultant guilt and hatred.

One reason for the psychological pull of the Black Nationalist movement is exemplified in the often-repeated saying by minority group members that no one who is not a member of the group could understand its problems. Those who make this point (and it is always mentioned) do not recognize that group membership does not ipso facto qualify one as knowledgeable about its problems. What is actually meant is that this person has had experiences, emotions and customs in common with others in his particular group. He knows how it feels to be a member of this group; but he may not claim, therefore, to be knowledgeable about it unless he possesses facts and scientific principles that would enable him to interpret, judge and generalize from his situation to larger ones.

The Negro in a white society lives in a universe in which he is directly and continuously reminded, in negative terms, of the fact that he is different. And for this reason, he must uphold, in principle, the naturalness and rightness of this fact. Just as a common racial heritage in and of itself provides no bond between people, so racial differences are not the important differences among them. The physically different individual is an embodiment of this fact, and so is in a sense a symbol of individuality. He is always present, always identifiable, always a reminder that the individuality in human beings is a thing essential and unquenchable; that in less obvious ways, everyone is different. Any Negro in America today, unless he hides himself in a sea of black faces, must live and work and deal with many people who do not resemble him in appearance, and yet he knows that they are people, just like him. He can hardly avoid knowing that men are primarily individuals and only secondarily members of a particular racial group; he can see members of other groups functioning and succeeding all around him. He also ought to know that there are inalienable rights of life and property implicit in the concept of individually different human beings. If a Negro did not begin his life as an individualist, he should, in all reason, end it as one.

In this context, writer-philosopher Ayn Rand succinctly captures in one sentence the essence of individualism. "A genius is a genius regardless of the number of morons who belong to the same race--and a moron is a moron regardless of the number of geniuses who share his racial origin." ("Racism," The Objectivist Newsletter, September 1963, p. 35.)

On the fundamental and personal level, no Negro, no Puerto Rican, no minority group member can come to terms with himself or society unless he challenges, to its roots, the entire doctrine of collectivism. He must understand how and why the belief that groups or collectives are somehow superior to and determine the very nature of individual men is a vicious travesty of that very nature. For the black man, there is no real hope that he can preserve his integrity unless he specifically advocates and defends the rights of every individual in society; it is nothing less than this that can give his cause the moral justification and fervor it could deserve. The Negro, literally, does not have any choice. To preserve what he is, he must fight for the doctrine that would not only protect his right to be different, but prevent the reoccurrence, in any form, of the collectivist ideology that is currently enveloping us.

--Aubrey Thornton Robinson

## R E V I E W S

### POLITICAL EDUCATION IN PRINCIPLE

Citizenship Education, by Joyce F. Jones  
Monarch Press, New York, 1966

It doesn't often happen that a reviewer is given as pleasant an assignment as this one. The book I have been given to review was written by a respected and valued colleague on the Persuasion staff, Joyce F. Jones. It is an outline study guide or review book, and ordinarily it would not be reviewed in Persuasion --ordinarily, there would be no reason for doing so. Such books are designed to give the student a concise survey of the subject matter in a particular field, and usually that's all they do. Citizenship Education, as its name suggests, is designed to cover the material currently being taught in high school and junior high school civics-social science classes throughout the country.

Given this, you might think that this book would be of no particular interest to anyone but students in need of a study guide in this subject. However,



readers of Persuasion, who have been enjoying Mrs. Jones' articles for the last two years, will not be surprised to hear that she has managed to make her book a uniquely interesting and important one. She has given us a small but exciting demonstration of integrity in the field of political education for young people --and in the process has given one of the most interesting demonstrations of American citizenship at its best that it has been my pleasure to see.

In the field of political science, integrity in education has been interpreted in a variety of ways. In 1954, the International Political Science Association (of UNESCO) stated that the teacher should not waste his time trying to attain an objective outlook. "His efforts are likely to be better employed in recognizing his own bias, admitting it, and warning his students to allow for it as a rifleman allows for the wind." (Quoted in American Government, by P. E. Harenberg, Monarch Press, 1966, p. 18.)

Evidently, this statement has been widely accepted and acted upon, not only among writers of college texts, but also by writers of high school and junior high school texts. Practically every one that I have seen includes some discussion of propaganda and how to avoid being affected by it. "Concern yourself with the growth of propaganda today and doubt that your opinions are ever your own." (op. cit., p. 20.) The authors then state that they are as biased as everyone else, openly, or in the form of a hint such as the quotation mentioned above--after which they feel perfectly free to go on, writing in terms of their own bias, with little or nothing said about those who are in disagreement with the principles and practices under discussion.

While I would most certainly not subscribe to such a view of integrity, still it does point up a generally recognized but seldom identified fact: political science is not like other sciences and cannot be treated in the same way that other sciences are.

For one thing, there is not a single body of general principles accepted by all who work and teach in the field, as there is in chemistry or physics. Instead, there are numerous bodies of general principles variously labeled liberalism, conservatism, socialism, etc. Each differs from the others in various ways, some fundamental, some not. Each has different solutions to the problems of the nation and of the world. In effect, the thaumaturge and the alchemist and the sorcerer and the scientist are all still in open and unresolved competition, and it is no easy matter for the layman to decide which is which.

Yet he must decide. His own life and well-being and those of everyone around him depend to some degree on his being able to decide. If 51% of the population goes to alchemists to have their household appliances repaired and to

sorcerers for medical care, the remaining 49% who prefer electricians and doctors need not suffer for it. But if 51% of the population goes to thaumaturges and alchemists for the solutions to the political and economic problems of the day, we are all in trouble--and we can expect the trouble to go on getting worse every election day.

The vast majority of the people in this country study political science and economics only once in their lives in any organized fashion--in high school and junior high school civics and social science classes. What they learn there must be what they need in order to make the best possible choices among all the political viewpoints and solutions that will be presented to them. This is not the field in which the educator can casually write off responsibility for being objective on the grounds of an uncontrollable bias. It is not enough to state (let alone to merely hint) that one is prejudiced and that the student must beware, and then let it go at that.

The thing that makes Joyce F. Jones' book as good as it is, and as important as it is, is that she fully recognizes this. She understands that integrity in education in the field of political science and economics requires the utmost in honesty and objectivity. The reasonably astute reader will have no trouble discovering what her views are in principle--there is one clue that pervades the book: she repeatedly refers to rights. Except when modified by the word civil, this is a word that is not used much in most recent books in this field. However, clearly as her views are expressed, the manner in which she presents her material is such that not even the most ardent welfare statist could justify quarreling with the book as a whole. For his views are explained, too, in principle.

"Governments derive their powers from the consent of those whom they govern, or they assert their authority by force, to one degree or another. Complete consent and complete force are at the opposite ends of the power pole, but there are many ways in which elements of both can be combined." (p. 18) Mrs. Jones devotes the rest of that chapter to a discussion of these two basic theories of government, describing how they achieve and maintain power, and what they mean to the citizen, and then to a discussion of the basic compromise between them, which is representative socialism.

Under the complete consent theory, the rights to life, self-defense, political freedom, property and the pursuit of happiness "are absolute (without exception or qualification) and do not and cannot conflict with each other . . . . If the purpose of government is to provide systematic enforcement of rules, where does its authority to use force come from? The consent of those whom it governs states this theory . . . . A complete consent government not only has the complete consent of its citizens when it is founded, but it is strictly

limited to governing continually with complete consent. If it initiates the use of force even once, the theory states that it does not govern with complete consent."(p. 18)

"The complete force theory implies that governments are created and maintained on the basis of the principle 'might makes right'--if one has the power to rule people's lives, one has the right to do so . . . . Under a totalitarian government the citizen has no importance as an individual, no rights which must be protected, no voice in his government . . . . Whatever freedom he possesses is not his by right, it is a privilege granted to him by the government." (p. 19)

Mrs. Jones points out that neither of these two theories has ever been put fully into practice, and that one of them, the complete force theory, is not even theoretically possible. It is possible to leave men alone in perfect freedom so long as they do not infringe upon the rights of others. However, there is simply no way in which you can control each and every aspect of the lives of the citizens. "A government of complete force . . . . would be, in effect, a complete concentration camp. . . . What usually happens is that most actions of the general population are regulated . . . and the possibility of force and terror keeps dissenters in line."

Under the fusion of socialist and representative government principles that is currently called socialism (as opposed to communism): "The citizens . . . . delegate to the socialist government the power to enforce rules of conduct upon each individual which are generally accepted as good by the group as a whole. This is particularly true in the area of economic activity . . . . Citizens are often allowed to own property and to produce wealth by means of it. But their property rights do not extend to the use to which they will put this wealth. The wealth is considered an outgrowth of group effort, and thus the government reserves the right to distribute this wealth for the benefit of everyone in the group . . . . Socialists maintain that each man's life and happiness is dependent entirely upon his interaction with other members in the group--all are interdependent. An individual cannot exist without the group."(p. 19-20)

Objectivity is impossible? It is a waste of time trying to attain it? Only if you don't care to understand what objectivity means.

For this is what it means--to discuss the basic views and theories of government in terms of principles, to make clear what these principles mean and imply and what they necessitate, and to show how they apply to the many controversial issues of the day.

"The government of the United States today stands somewhere between the

complete consent theory and the mixture-of-consent-and-force theory. It was originally closer to the complete consent theory; the trend since 1776, however, has been in the direction of fusing a rights philosophy with welfare principles." (p. 20)

From then on, whenever dealing with areas of government on which there is or has been controversy, Mrs. Jones tells both sides of the story. The student will not find it difficult to understand why the government, today dominated by the welfare-rights fusion, takes the actions it does in relation to welfare, foreign aid, administrative government, labor relations, etc. Nor will he find it difficult to understand in principle why the dissenters are against so much of what is being done. He will know fully what the basic arguments against these actions are, and what they are based on. When he is finished with this book, he will have an excellent idea of the pros and cons of such matters as deficit spending, economic planning, the gold standard, antitrust legislation, etc.

"Antitrust spokesmen maintain that laissez-faire capitalism inevitably leads to monopolies which, by coercive methods, can set their prices independently of supply and demand and can bar competition. Fair competition, according to this view, consists of a market which has many buyers and sellers who serve consumers well by competing with one another, but who do not attempt to reduce competition or restrain trade . . . a large corporation, according to this view, can use economic force against its competitors and its workers through its buying and selling power and its ability to hire and fire employees . . . Opponents of antitrust laws . . . maintain that a free market insures free competition and that coercive monopolies can exist only with legal protection or assistance (subsidies, franchises, protective laws) by which they can bar competition by force of law." (p. 90)

"The current United States 'mixed' economy relies on government intervention to provide what is called a more just distribution of wealth for the general welfare. . . Defenders of this practice maintain that each man, regardless of his effort or ability, is entitled to shelter and subsistence (economic security) from the society in which he lives. Opponents of government redistribution of wealth maintain that such government intervention is immoral: that one man does not have a right to economic security, if, in order to provide it, the government must deprive another man of what he has rightfully earned. According to this view, redistribution of wealth is a fundamental threat to property rights--the right to the fruits of one's labor and the right to use them as one chooses." (p. 91-92)

The same approach is used throughout the book, not merely in the text proper, but even in the questions that follow every chapter. There are a good

many unanswered essay questions designed to help the student work out for himself his own views on the subject matter given: "Discuss the pros and cons of antitrust legislation. What is your opinion? Why?" "Do you think military conscription is right or wrong? Support your answer with reasons." "Has the growth of the executive branch of the federal government been deterred or encouraged by the judicial branch? In what way? For what reasons?" "What are the differences between the 'strict' construction and the 'broad' construction of the Constitution? Which do you think is right? Why?" (*Italics mine.*)

Time and again she asks--why was this done? what do you think of it? why? give reasons.

Contrast this approach with that of the gentleman in whose book I found the UNESCO quotation cited earlier in his test section entitled: "How Democratic Are You?" "Do you respect others, or do you just tolerate them? . . . Do you trust other people, or do you insist on doing everything yourself so it will be done 'right,' meaning of course the way you think is 'right?' . . . Do you use your initiative for the good of your family, your school, your community, your state, your nation, or do you use it solely to promote your own selfish interests? . . . Do you prefer to work alone so that you'll get all the credit or would you rather work cooperatively with others? . . . Are you democratic, or do you just think you are?"

You will have no trouble detecting this gentleman's bias, any more than you will find it difficult to decide what Mrs. Jones' views are. But notice the difference--and notice what kind of an effect each approach could have on a youngster in his early teens. Mrs. Jones' approach implicitly and explicitly respects the youngster's right to think for himself, while the gentleman who composed the "democracy" test leaves the child feeling that he will be considered some kind of immoral monster if he does not come up with the answers the author so clearly wants.

And this of course explains the basis of Mrs. Jones' approach, the underlying and overriding theme of her book: "Each citizen owes it to himself to gain knowledge about the two philosophies of government at work in the United States. His personal welfare and that of his family and neighbors are always affected by the decisions of government. He must use his own judgment to decide what he thinks the functions of government should be." (p. 20) (*Italics author's.*) In short, this is your country, you must know what the alternatives offered you in government and economics are, what they mean, what they imply, and what they result in--and you must decide.

Citizenship Education not only tells you what living in the United States is all about--it not only tells you what the Constitution is, and how the

different branches of government work, and all the other things one would expect to find in such a book--it also is a glowing example of American citizenship, of its honesty and fairmindedness and its genuine respect for others.

I highly recommend this book to every parent, and to every individual who is seriously interested in the American form of government.

-- Avis Brick

EDITORIAL NOTE: Persuasion wishes to thank all of its readers for their support and suggestions, and to tell you that we are changing to a new, improved format with the January 1967 issue, which will be the first issue of Volume IV. Should the issue be somewhat delayed we hope it will be worth waiting for, and we will be back on schedule as soon as possible.

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