

FROM THE EDITOR

THE OTHER END OF THE ROPE

Once upon a time — says an ancient Chinese story — there was a judge who insisted on precise replies to his incisive questions.

"What is your crime?" One day he asked a tramp produced before him.

"Your Honour, I was on my way to the bazar when I saw a string of dirty rope lying before me. I just picked it up..."

"Is that all? How dare these policemen waste my time expecting me to pay attention to such trifles?" the judge demanded, casting an angry look at the officer who had arrested the tramp.

"Your Honour, the fellow..."

"Was there anything other than the dirty rope in the accused's hand when you caught him? Tell me 'Yes' or 'No!'" the judge cut in.

"No Your Honour, but..."

"I'll have nothing to do with your 'huts'. I set him free — mind you — with his rope."

A year passed and the judge retired. One day he stood under a roadside shade as it was raining, when someone saluted him and asked, "Do you recognise me, Sir?"

"Ah — yes. I think you're the chap once dragged to my court for picking up a string of dirty rope. Am I right? Those policemen are sometimes so funny!"

"You're right, Sir, but I can't exactly blame the policeman who led me to your presence. The fact is, the other end of the rope was tied to an excellent horse. It still gives me good service."

The tramp hopped onto his horse and galloped away.

But it is something quite remorseful that reminds one of this amusing anecdote.

THE DEVIL'S GLUTTONY

A number of Japanese scientists who were rounded up in a large faculty attached to Japan's military headquarters at the end of the World War II were later set free as they claimed to have remained engaged in purely scientific research. That their statement was only one end of the rope, is now revealed by a thorough investigation by a Japanese scholar, Sichi Morimura, published under the title *The Devil's Gluttony*. A Government spokesman has admitted that his report is true.

He interviewed three scores of the surviving members of that group of scientists and has documented the nature of their research—which was mostly devoted to innovating novel methods of torture and killing. For example, the Chinese, Russian and American prisoners were given nutritious food over a period. When they had grown quite healthy, they were infected with the germs of cholera, small-pox, syphilis, etc. for the scientists to observe the progress of the disease. Some other prisoners were kept in freezing temperatures and then abruptly thrown into boiling water for the Scholars to study how fast their skins and flesh fell off.

We all knew of the German concentration camp at Auschwitz. While tens of thousands of Jews were thrown into gas chambers there and killed, many others were subjected to various innovative forms of torture—and some for sake of 'scientific' experiments. A certain Professor Hint of the University of Strasbourg questioned the heads of "150 Jewish-Bolshevist commissars who

embody a repulsive but characteristic subhumanity". Dr. Josef Mengeles, obsessed with exploring the mystery of twins, got a few hundred men, one each from pairs of twins, killed, to record the reaction of the surviving ones of the pairs. Morimura's work is Bound to add to our growing suspicion of human nature.

What the author has to say in conclusion is significant: those who were engaged in this kind of brutality were not qualitatively different from the kind of people we are! It is the climate of war that brings about a Satanic metamorphosis in human nature. Many of the goody goody men of today's society would not hesitate to participate in such activities should the same climate prevail again.

There are cynics who believe that preoccupation with science dulls humanness in scholars. We need not subscribe to such a view if we know the several other factors that influence a scientist. For any experiment he requires patronisation and under a dictatorial regime the only patron is the State. Secondly he often does not know at which point his discovery will be turned towards destructive purposes. Thirdly the normal fear of the regime that keeps an average man docile applies to the scientist too.

END THE DANGEROUS SILENCE

But times are changing for the better—slowly though. Scientists have begun to be more conscious of their primary moral responsibility to humanity. One young American scientist, Warren Davis, is spearheading a movement that intends to make scientists conscientiously refrain from inventing means of massacre. Davis now presides over an organisation, HTPP (High Technology Professionals for Peace). Another Scientist Tom Forman, a high-ranking executive in one of America's leading weapon-making institutions, says, "More engineers should speak out, but they don't... They are protecting their jobs." He fears, their silence, "That is how it was," he says, "when I was a student in Germany, under Hitler."

"More than 6,500 U.S. scientists have pledged not to accept Star Wars research funds from the U.S. Defence Department calling President Reagan's Strategic Defence Initiative "ill-conceived and dangerous," says a report flashed on the 14th of May this year.

It is a great news — the good news of the decade. How much can the politicians do to maim humanity without the cooperation of the scientists? We call upon these conscientious scientists to go a step farther — to resolve non-co operation with all activities connected with the destructive application of the nuclear power. They and people in general should boycott such scientists.

Humanity's survival now almost depends on the scientists speaking out—for the politicians are not likely to speak the truth. The popular movements that are gathering momentum against the nuclear weapons should not be directed against the politicians alone. The devil in the scientist may be as bony and robust as he is in his boss.