

A Word With You

ONE of the explanations for the troubles of the world is the "bad man" theory. It is really more a feeling than a theory, but it is very pervasive and influential.

The brunt of it is that bad people are stirring up all the trouble, and once we get rid of these undesirables all will be well. This ranges all the way from our folklore — western movies are a good example — to our foreign policy. Up to now we have always managed to find the right bad man or men responsible for our woes.

When, on Election Day, enough people pull a lever with a certain Presidential nominee's name attached, he thereby becomes the man to take the blame for all the troubles going on, and as these usually grow, he becomes before long the most hated man alive. A nice compensation comes when his term expires, for then he is acclaimed as a great man.

All President Johnson had to do was to announce that he would not run for another term, and overnight he was converted from a bad man to a good man without anyone batting an eyelash. However, some accumulated blame will await our next President.

Despite these simple rules, there is a great deal of confusion straining the bad man theory these days. How do you classify de Gaulle? Franco is getting mellow in his old age. We can't even decide about Ho Chih Minh. As

for Vietcong and South Vietnamese, they are indistinguishable one from the other. Furthermore, the bad people think they're good, and what's more, they think the good people are bad. And worst of all, no sooner do we get rid of all the bad people when new ones seem to arise.

As this theory groans under insupportable burdens, we may have to look for another theory about our troubles.

A useful clue may be found in the field theory of physics. We learn that the particles of physics are all pretty much alike, but behave very differently according to conditions in the field wherein they are operating. Electrons lazily ambling along will, depending on how you energize the field, act like destructive lunatics, or like a disciplined army, or like creative architects.

And so, in this world's wide fallow, we might do better searching out good conditions than searching out bad people. Do we not indeed find that where people are oppressed, exploited, despised, they are at their worst? And where they have the greatest freedom, the most of economic opportunities, and are accorded a human dignity, they are at their best?

The most effective way of getting rid of bad people is to convert them into good people by changing the field in which they operate.

—Robert Clancy

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The Henry George News, published monthly by the Henry George School of Social Science, 50 E. 69th Street, New York, N. Y. 10021, supports the following principle:

The community, by its presence and activity, gives rental value to land, therefore the rent of land belongs to the community and not to the landowners. Labor and capital, by their combined efforts, produce the goods of the community—known as wealth. This wealth belongs to the producers. Justice requires that the government, representing the community, collect the rent of land for the community purposes and abolish the taxation of wealth.

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