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Miss Gandy

MY DAY

We Must Preserve Individual's Right to Be Different

By ELEANOR ROOSEVELT

NEW YORK, Friday—I am interested to see that J. Edgar Hoover, head of the FBI, feels as I do about the inadvisability of outlawing the Communist Party. I am in entire agreement with him in his recommendation that people whom we find actually engaged in subversive activities shall be immediately brought before the proper legal bodies.

However, the more I think about one clause in the President's executive order for preventing the employment of disloyal persons in the Government, the more troubled I am. I fear that that clause, which refers to subversive organizations, would not be rendered harmless even if the Attorney General published, at frequent intervals, an up-to-date list of the organizations considered subversive.

Under this clause, I am afraid it would be possible to declare subversive many organizations that are simply in opposition to the thinking of certain powerful groups. They might even be organizations upheld by the majority of the people and still, if certain groups were powerful and influential in the Government, they could be declared subversive.

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THIS was brought to my mind last night when I spoke before a church audience and someone brought up the question of conscientious objectors. It is quite evident that, in the case of true conscientious objectors, we have no right to interfere with their conscience. But they will suffer, of course, because until the whole world comes to feel that war is really mass murder, the great majority of men are going to feel that they have an obligation to defend their country in time of war.

The problem may become obsolete if modern weapons prove, once and for all, that any war in the future will mean destruction of the whole race, and if we therefore use our intelligence to prevent this final destruction. Nevertheless, as long as the conscientious objector exists in relation to a majority opinion, he illustrates the point that we must preserve the right of individuals to be different. And we must very carefully guard against legal processes under which human beings can be punished for holding different ideas from the majority of their fellows.

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I HAD dinner last night with two friends in a small restaurant. The food was excellent but the prices were appalling. I find that even to eat at home costs a tremendous amount these days, and I wonder how people with small incomes are eating at all.

I see that the President has called for a halt in the general rise in the cost of practically everything that enters into the daily necessities of life. But I think something more will probably have to be done than merely to urge the curtailment of costs. The indices show that, while the volume of retail buying has been less, the high prices have kept the actual money taken in by stores at about the same level.

We seem to be opposed to planning in our free-enterprise system, but it looks to me as tho a little planning, in which industry and labor planned together, might be helpful to the general public.

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