

“A NEW PARLOR GAME”

by **Larry W. Ross, Jr.**

SUPPOSE you are having some friends in for the evening and you belatedly discover that the TV tube has burned out, the children have ruined all the playing cards and there is no mix for drinks. Your guests are about to arrive. What should you do? Take them to the movie? Turn off all the lights and not answer the doorbell? Call the party off?

No indeed. You greet your friends cordially and when all are assembled and settled comfortably, you calmly announce that the planned entertainment for the evening will be “conversation.” To heighten the effect of the announcement you let everyone sit in shocked silence for a few moments before going on to explain the rules of this new and delightful form of entertainment.

The object of the game is to exchange and develop ideas. If this sounds too corny for your group, skip it and go on with the rules.

Because you are host you are tactful enough to choose a subject

with which every member of the party has some familiarity so that everyone may participate. The success of the entertainment depends upon your success in handling this most difficult problem. You realize that if the subject is not interesting to everyone you will soon have three or four “gab-fests” going on at once, and the entertainment will be a flop.

The difficulty of the task confronting you is made apparent by the fact that most of the members of your group share no common heritage of either backgrounds, education or ideas. You are attempting to find a common area of literacy, and unless you know your guests well you may be hard put to find a suitable subject.

The individuals may variously be versed in foreign affairs, art, local politics, basket weaving and literature, and their contributions may shed much light as the discussion progresses, but you try to determine how each can be brought to bear on a general conversation.

Perhaps there is a play or book which everyone has seen or read that can be discussed. Your conversation will be better if your subject is clearly in focus and the issue sharply defined. But you may be forced to choose a more general area, such as education, about which everyone is likely to have some information and an opinion.

However, you will avoid a topic on which one of your guests is an expert, knowing that you run the risk of the conversation turning rapidly into a lecture. A conversation is always an *exchange* of ideas *between* persons.

THE RULES for conversation are simple and may be easily learned by the novice. Though the rules are frequently difficult to practice, they are the *sine qua non* of good communication. As you become practiced you will want to observe some of the many finer points of talking, but the fundamentals outlined here will, when observed, richly reward the serious student of conversation.

Listen carefully and attempt to understand thoroughly what your opponent is saying. Especially be alert to misstatements and call them to his attention. This device is stimulating and puts your opponent on the defensive.

Keep the conversation from wandering, and be alert to your opponent shifting the issue when he

discovers he is on weak ground.

Do not argue about facts. When your opponent says, "It's true," and you say "It's not," the conversation has grounded itself upon an impasse. You magnanimously grant the fact because you are interested in where the conversation leads, not in winning the argument. It also shows you are a better man than your opponent.

Clarify the meanings of key words in the conversation. A preoccupation with definitions is tedious and soon leads to a breakdown of the conversation, but some attention to meaning is necessary to make sure you are not talking about different things.

When you get an idea of what your adversary means by a word, you accept his definition, realizing that most of us are poorly practiced in the use of words, and we are likely to have no true notion about the meanings of many of them.

Of course, all the rules of courtesy and fair play are carried out in friendly conversation. You coax your opponents to see your position by developing it with cogent arguments, illustrating it with apt similitudes and identifying it with known truths. And certainly you refrain from taking advantage of the mistakes and ignorance of your adversaries—unless, of course, the party gets dull. And now . . .

En garde!

C. D. BATCHELOR'S CARTOON



THE TRUTH ABOUT TITO

by **Constantin A. Fotitch**

Former Ambassador to Yugoslavia

ON JUNE 28, 1948, the free world learned with amazement that the Cominform, successor of the disbanded Comintern, had ousted Tito, dictator of Yugoslavia and his Communist Party, from the "family of fraternal Communist parties." Cominform accusations were couched in terms similar to those made during the great Soviet purges of the 30's against Communist leaders who had invoked Stalin's wrath and were to be liquidated by the despot of the Kremlin.

Tito, considered until then as Moscow's favorite vassal, was indicted of crimes of deviation, aggravated by "boundless ambition, arrogance and conceit." The Cominform indictment, coming out of a blue sky, ended with an appeal to the Yugoslav Communist Party to replace Tito and his clique with "new leadership of the party."

This appeal brought no result. Tito, unlike other comrades who had fallen victims to Stalin, was beyond reach of the Kremlin's military might and was protected by a very efficient secret police of his own.

The Cominform resolution shocked the outer world by its suddenness and violence. The much-publicized "monolithic unity" of the Communist bloc had been profoundly shaken. The surprise was all the greater since Tito was considered a favorite pupil of Stalin, one who pursued the Communization of his country more forcibly than any other leader of the "people's democracies."

Policy-planners and analysts of Communist problems were at a loss to find satisfactory explanation for the violent conflict. Scores of reporters, columnists and commentators descended on Belgrade to calculate how the Western Allies could exploit this unexpected break in the Communist family.

But while searching for ideological differences, most of the experts lost sight of the personal element, which was the fundamental reason for the cleavage. Tito himself, although slow in giving an ideological explanation for the conflict, helped to promote confusion, which he needed in order to gain Western support in his difficult situation.

Through effective propaganda, he stressed that the only reason for