The Rape of the Mind

By Dr. J. A. M. Meerloo.

Cleveland: World Publishing Co. $5.00.

This important book is written by a psychiatrist who experienced Nazi sadism at first hand in a concentration camp. After the usual nightmare adventures he reached this country and here has been used as an expert witness in the cases of American soldiers who collapsed under "brainwashing." He has gone on record that every normal man whose mind has yet to be profoundly trained can be broken under the present skilled pressures. He is rightfully contemptuous of "truth drugs" and shows the shallowness of Russian "Pavlovism." But his advice on preventive training sounds vague and conventional, coming from this tried and gallant defender of liberty and the soul's integrity.

We are told, for instance, that rats kept in luxury are soft, and so are men; that the advisory committee that drafted the code "to Govern the Conduct of American Fighting Men" was divided between the "hard Spartan view" and the more lenient. Dr. Meerloo appears to regard these as the only alternatives and to incline toward the former. But before we attempt to assess these alternatives, it is important for us to know that young Spartans were trained to be tough and violent by butchering their helots, and that almost every Spartan, given a position abroad where he could betray his hated country for money, did so.

Nonviolent Methods

This book contains no reference to nonviolent techniques of psychological training, such as the spiritual exercises of the Jesuits or the Buddhists. There is one reference to such new aids to concentration and character implementation as mescalin and lysurgic acid, but unfortunately it is quite uninformed. Although work in this field is still in the opening phases, those who have examined the results so far obtained believe that it holds remarkable promise for the education of the emotions so that they may cooperate with and actualize the directives of the reason and the conscience.

The general public has been informed about these experiments largely through a little book by Aldous Huxley, describing what happened to him. Meerloo can dismiss Huxley's account as not being a scientific paper, but his reference to his own negative experience twenty-five years ago is no more scientific.

These new medicaments do not "sell artificial heavens" or for that matter "artificial hells." They teach

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the subject swiftly and deeply to confront his true self. This knowledge may be painful or it may be a great relief. It can always be profitable. Of course, it should be given only by a medical psychiatrist skilled in the use of this aid as a producer of profound attention. Huxley helped to further that research by acting as a subject for one of the most able of the medical pioneers in this vital field.

To Train the Mind

Drill, discipline, esprit de corps, these are all rudimentary ways of mind-training. Auto-suggestion, meditation, contemplation, often accompanied by severe austerities were the ways the ascetic saints made themselves invulnerable; the intense ecstatic group field of the *agape* was what raised Christian martyrs above their anguish. What we are now waiting for, Arthur Koestler has said, is a truly contemporary psychophysical technique and training manual. Whatever national community gets this first will have the initiative. This research is but a few years old, but its promise is great. Increasingly the answer to the challenge of psychological warfare seems to lie here, in the power to mobilize our only true defense, the inner discipline for which Dr. Meerloo pleads so convincingly.

GERALD HEARD

Conquest of the American Mind

By Felix Wittmer. Boston: Meador. 352 pp. $5.00.

This book is a veritable encyclopedia of leftwing organizations, publications, and people. It has two long indices, one of people and the other of subjects. Suppose you are curious about a textbook in your local school, or a pamphlet being urged for study by your men's club. Chances are that you will find helpful references to it in Wittmer's book. Or, if you want to know how *Readers' Guide* operates, or how the Best Seller lists are put together, this book will tell you. Plus hundreds of other important items of information, all carefully indexed for quick and easy reference.

Dr. Wittmer must have gone through mountains of material and millions of words as background for this book. The scholarly apparatus does not encumber the book, however, which is written with considerable verve.

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