

Peace, Freedom Require Discipline

IF WE ARE to have peace and freedom we must have discipline. In order to maintain discipline, proper authority must be exercised.

Two notable examples of this appeared in the news in recent days. When a small band of convicts at McAlester penitentiary grabbed guards as hostages and started what might have been a devastating riot the warden exercised authority. He brought a shotgun and fired one shot into the ceiling. That ended the rebellion.

A large New Jersey high school did a turn-around in behavior and achievements when the principal, a former army drill instructor, started patrolling the premises with a bullhorn to exercise authority. The students responded with better grades, less vandalism, a cleaner school and safer teachers.

This is a sharp contrast to the movement of the 1960s when youngsters demanded to do their "own things." Many were allowed to do so by parents, teachers and others in charge. Not a few of today's prob-

lems may be traced to this repudiation of authority.

People become addicted to alcohol or drugs because they lack self-discipline. Others become overweight or lazy because they will not observe the disciplines of diet and diligence.

Most crimes are committed by people who refuse to recognize authority and who are lacking in self-discipline. Outlaws can't or won't control their desires for money, pleasure or power and they turn to crime in order to obtain these things.

On the other hand, western lore is replete with tales of early-day sheriffs or other officials who faced up to outlaws or angry mobs intent on lynching prisoners without trial. They frequently put a stop to such doings by exercising authority to restore discipline that even respectable citizens sometimes lost.

Discipline should begin in the homes and continue in the schools, where proven practices for learning and motivation for achievement are backed up by fairly applied authori-

ty.

Religion is based largely upon discipline, set forth in such precepts as the Ten Commandments, catechisms, doctrines and examples presented by church leaders. Divine authority is respected.

Government is an application of discipline. The breakdowns in our society are not usually failure of our laws but default of elected and appointed officials to make responsible use of authority vested in them by their offices. Our military forces became weak when officers failed to exercise authority to maintain discipline.

It is true that authority often is abused but, except in cases of arrogant federal judges, American citizens have courses of action open for correction. The feeling of power seems to cause some individuals to misplace their personal discipline.

Many people have become famous or notorious by doing as they pleased, ignoring rights and well-being of others, but none ever became great without discipline. Neither did any nation or society.