

ROBERT CLANCY

It looks as though every headline event these days just serves to point up the intense rivalry between the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R.

Lots of ingredients go into this witch's brew, but the main one seems to be the opposition of two world philosophies.

Now we're a long way from a truly free capitalist system, but I think there's no doubt that we'd rather take our chances in a society where we can still move around from job to job—even granting monopoly and all that—than in a monolithic state, controlled by a politburo.

But I wonder how many people think of it this way? "Communism" is a dirty word today regardless of what it means. Just suppose that in order to survive, the U.S.S.R. had to grant more and more economic freedom to its people. And suppose that to gird for the struggle against communism, the U.S.A. had to restrict its people more and more. Carry it to fantasy and suppose that the U. S. S. R. thus became in fact "capitalistic" and the U.S.A. "communitistic"—while each one was still using the same words as before to belabor the other!

We're still a long way from that! But let's suppose this: Some second-echelon people—perhaps a U.S.A. corporation vice-president and a U.S.S.R. commissar—get together in a restaurant and talk things over. No one is watching and they are momentarily moved to let their hair down. They freely confess, gripe, tell their problems and so on. Isn't it amazing how similar it sounds?

There's no blinking away the top echelon, or the big problem. But would it not be a good preparation for a human world to count the millions on the other side of the world as human beings who, after all, go through motions very much like our own in order to live?

Lay that hydrogen bomb down gently for a moment and read the story "William Wilson" by Edgar Allan Poe. In it, Wilson is annoyed by another chap who looks and acts like him. The double keeps turning up at inopportune moments, and finally in a fury, Wilson stabs him to death. But to his horror he suddenly sees his own features in the dying man, who says to him: "*Villian! . . . See by this image, which is thine own, how utterly thou hast murdered thyself.*"