



MOST AMERICAN schoolchildren and probably most of their parents, too, would fail an identification test requiring them to name the prime minister of Great Britain, premier of France, chancellor of West Germany, chairman of the Presidium of the USSR, head of state of the People's Republic of China, premier of Italy and the rulers de facto of most other nations.

Possibly they'd do better on a test of their historical knowledge regarding world leaders of a generation ago: Franklin Deiano Roosevelt, Winston Churchill, Adolf Hitler, Josef Stalin, Benito Mussolini, Chiang kai-Shek, Mao Tse-tung, Francisco Franco, Juán Peron, Charles DeGaulle, Jawaharial Nehru, some of them admirable and others despicable characters but all influential.

A QUARTER-CENTURY AGO the names of the world's leading statesmen and leaders were familiar to young and old. In addition to those already cited, there were Salazar, Batista, Duvalier, Trujillo, Gandhi, Haile Selassie, Tito, de Valera, Nasser, Benes, Chamberlain, Saval, Daladier, and many others.

Today, because of the attention paid them recently by the press and television, Anwar el Sadat and Menachem Begin are widely known in this country. The politically conscous also can identify Ian Smith of Rhodesia, Bathazar Vorster of South Africa and Idi Amin of Uganda.

There is, however, only one world statesman who belongs in the same class as the giants of yesteryear as a man with a vision, program and record of achievement. He is, of course, Fldel Castro of Cuba, hated and feared by many Americans but idolized by the rank and file of Latin Americans and respected the world over for his successful defiance of American imperialists.

THE PHENOMENON of a plethora of diplomatic talent in one generation and a paucity of it in the succeeding years raises the centuries-old question as to whether the course of history is determined more by inevitable social forces or by strong personalities. Historians and other scholars have never agreed on the answer.

The lack of statesmanship is keenly felt everywhere today, nowhere more so than in the United States. The fate of several potential candidates for greatness has been a disastrous factor.

I'll never forget the taxi driver who drove me from the airport to a Boston hotel the evening of April 4, 1968. He damned the powerful economic interests he said run the country and then declared, "They'll never let anyone threaten them. You know who they got to

The United States has no monopoly on this sort of politics, but we cannot point a finger of scorn at other countries where oppositi leaders are eliminolently.

Bidding for influence here are a horde of whoop-and-holler evangelists and mystics. Being born again into any kind of fanatatical sect is not the answer. Nor does it provide any lasting escape for the individual. Maybe when conditions worsen a bit more, they'll cause the proper kind of leadership to emerge. We hope.