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THE STUBBORN FACTS

THE moralist who, whether political or religious, allows himself to ignore facts which are decisive in the shaping of human welfare, will sooner or later find himself out of a job. And the moralist who is so foolish as to wait until such facts rise up to confront him, in all their mature contradiction of the things he stands for, will have to bow to the popular rejection of his claims.

The religious leaders of the West have never really recovered from Christianity's loss of prestige resulting from its disdain for Copernicus and Galileo. Intelligent people still laugh with derision at the Scholastic doctor who, refusing to look through Galileo's telescope at the spots on the sun, argued that Aristotle had made no mention of the spots and that they could not, therefore, exist. In the twentieth century, religious leaders are thought to be "liberal" or "progressive" to the extent that they combine their traditional ethical ideas with conceptions of social reform and human betterment which have arisen from the disciplines of science. Scores of churches now retain counselors with psychiatric training.

There was a time when a progressive Man of God felt that he could not hold up his head without being able to say, when the occasion demanded, "Of course, I'm a socialist." Jesus may have been, in his way, a "socialist"—it is certain that he had no interest in "private property"!—but the Marxist doctrine of public ownership of the means of production is not a Christian but a borrowed inspiration, so far as the preacher is concerned. It is a question whether a purely "Christian" inspiration can ever again capture the imagination of the Western world. The Christian inspiration, as it has come down to us through history, was not and is not able to cope with the extraordinary developments of human energy and inventive genius that have flooded the modern world with a host of new problems. An ethical analysis of human experience, however grand in its original purity, has to penetrate the ramifying facts of life—it must grow with mankind if it is to serve mankind, and this the Christian analysis failed to do. Instead, the representatives of Christianity opposed virtually every great step of advance of modern thought, from Copernicus to Darwin. The West, therefore, is neither un-Christian nor anti-Christian—it is simply *ex*-Christian.

With the passing of the Christian goal of Salvation, a new end was adopted by men of the West. As Carl Becker suggested, the Heavenly City of God was exchanged for the ideal of an earthly Utopia, to be realized by means of scientific discovery, political reform and universal education. We still believe—or think we believe—in this holy trinity of modern progress, although the attempt to make these means work together in harmony has not been marked by spectacular success. Scientific discovery, for one, although vastly impressive when regarded in isolation, has seriously complicated the problems of politics in a number of important ways. First, it has transformed administration into a domain ruled over by highly trained technologists—experts whose decisions are difficult for the public to understand at all except in terms of simplified propaganda. Science has also created the dilemmas of modern war, to which the average man can find no rational solution. Further, science, through industrialization, has led to the centralization of economic power and of manufacture, rapidly urbanizing the culture of the most scientifically "progressive" nations; and this, in turn, has created what the Marxists call the "proletariat"—the millions of jobholders who, except for their unions, are completely at the mercy of the fluctuations of trade for getting enough to eat for themselves and their families. This latter development naturally had the effect of redefining the meaning of "political reform." What the factory system would do to human beings was chief among the facts which were ignored by the champions of progress through scientific discovery and the Industrial Revolution.

Today, the people who refuse to acknowledge the effects of urbanization, as we have practiced it—who ignore the consequences for human nature of mass production techniques, and the treating of labor as a commodity to be bought and sold—are like the Aristotelian who refused to look through Galileo's telescope. Their favorite writers on the virtues of Private Property and the Free Enterprise System tell nothing about these evils —and, therefore, they cannot possibly exist; or, if they *do* exist, the fault is said to lie entirely with "agitators" who stir up "unrest" among the workers, who are themselves "irresponsible," anyhow, and will only work when their employers take a "firm" stand.

We have the good fortune, however, of living at a time when at least two great world "faiths"—non-religious faiths—concerning the path to progress and the material Utopia the eighteenth century longed for are in operation. The revolution against capitalism and free enterprise has taken place during our lifetime and has driven toward what seemed to its leaders to be the goal of stability with such ruthless fury that we are now able to assess some of the facts which it, too, is ignoring.

The subject of the comparison between these two faiths or "systems" is too large to be considered generally, and by limiting our examination to the single field of agriculture we have opportunity, also, to see that the revolution against capitalism, while claiming a complete break with the past, failed to make any criticism of the means of production employed by the capitalists. The socialists and communists do not object to capitalist means, but to capitalist *ownership,* and the facts which are now emerging suggest that a shift in the goal of production—in who is to reap the rewards—may be utterly inconsequential in effect, so long as the means themselves are not also changed.

In the University of Chicago quarterly, *Measure* (Spring, 1950), Rene Cercler of the French Agricultural Academy compares three types of agriculture—capitalist, collectivist and peasant. French agriculture, it seems, from the viewpoint of capitalist and collectivist standards, is extremely backward, being essentially the traditional agriculture of the French peasants. But M. Cercler takes the position that peasant agriculture should set the pattern of agriculture of the future that it should replace the "mining" methods of both the capitalists and the collectivists. According to M. Cercler:

> Capitalist agriculture, to my mind, is characterized by the quest for maximum immediate profits. In capitalist agriculture one chooses the profession of farmer because it "pays," or at least because one thinks so; one chooses this or that crop—wheat, corn, or cotton—because at this moment and in this situation such a crop seems to be the most profitable. Guided by this sentiment, one frequently devotes oneself exclusively to a single kind of crop, that is to say, specializes and engages in one-crop agriculture. In addition, since the particular aim is profit, it is necessary to apply to the agricultural plan the objectives in industry; i.e., reduced costs which will make the greatest possible margin of profit. The consequence is a mechanization all the more rigid, since, in the majority of countries devoted to this system, manpower is really more expensive than mechanized power. The machine, in order to be a good investment, must be used on a fairly large scale, hence a tendency toward concentration of operation.
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> From the viewpoint of production alone, it cannot be denied that this system has produced remarkable results. From a more general economic viewpoint, on the other hand, it has generated, in conjunction with business fluctuations, cycles of boom and depression on an increasingly large scale. True, with artificial (and costly) means, it is always possible to mitigate the worst consequences of these crises. Nevertheless, they leave behind ruins of such magnitude that one may ask oneself if their cost does not exceed the benefits previously acquired.

These exploiters of the land leave behind them "fields that are either forever sterile, or at least largely exhausted," a spectacle which, for the French farmer, schooled in the peasant tradition of love for the land, "makes him realize the absence of the intimate bond between man and soil in the kind of agricultural exploitation we have described as capitalist."

What, then, of collectivist agriculture? Surely, a *public* enterprise will be undertaken with greater foresight and consideration for the nourishment of unborn generations. This question is vital, for already, exclusive of territories within the U.S.S.R., the fields of some ninety millions of peoples in

Europe, from Finland to Albania, are on the way to complete collectivization. We learn, however, from M. Cercler:

> This battle of collectivist agriculture for immediate and progressive yield bears singular resemblance to the battle for profits in capitalist agriculture, although it is based upon quite different principles. In each case a maximum is sought, and in each case one hopes to obtain it in minimum time—in the first case, yield, in the second, profit. The establishment of five-year plans offers no long-term assurance for the maintenance of soil fertility, since the purpose is always a short-term acceleration of production without thought of the distant future. Finally, the methods of cultivation employed by collectivist agriculture resemble those of capitalist agriculture in the matter of mechanization and, above all, in that of one-crop policy. In fact, it employs these procedures, at least in theory, on a much vaster scale; and the concentration, which in capitalist agriculture is not inevitable, becomes an absolute rule, often attaining dimensions up to 12,000 and sometimes 50,000 acres. If the widespread use of these methods in capitalist agriculture is considered dangerous for the soil, there is all the more reason to pronounce a similar judgment against collectivist agriculture, where the system is carried to its logical or illogical extreme.

M. Cercler makes the additional point, that while the capitalist farmer—the "windshield farmer," as he is called in California's fertile valleys, who drives around his holdings in an automobile, and studies the commodity market rather than the weather reports in his daily paper—may have little attachment to the soil, "what is one to think of the mental attitude of those exploiters of Eastern Europe who till the fields belonging to the collective? Since the notion of personal profit has been abolished under these regimes, what can be the motive of the agricultural laborer other than to exist and to escape the threat of punishment for failure to deliver the quantities demanded under the plan?"

The peasant, unlike either the capitalist or the collectivist, seeks a living on the land, not to make large sums of money *off* it. He practices multiculture—the production of diversified crops for self-support—and this helps to make him a stable economic unit, and the countryside as well. His multi-culture also conserves the soil, protecting the future, and, as Cercler says, "for this reason it deserves without any doubt to be preferred to capitalist and, *a fortiori,* collectivist agriculture."

The peasant holds his land in trust for future generations. He wants to leave his descendants a better farm and he is, therefore, a conserver and maintainer of the soil. He refuses, "not just for scientific or agronomic reasons but instinctively, to apply methods which might procure for him a greater immediate income but which he senses will be likely to exhaust the soil."

Apparently, we are back to where we were, in agricultural theory, before the Industrial Revolution. Will it be possible to regain the wisdom of the peasant, not as an instinct, but as a rational outlook, and to practice it, not merely for our personal descendants, but on behalf of the entire social community? The wisdom will have to come to us this way, for the power of the machine and the techniques of industrialism cannot, it seems, be regulated by a preservative or possessive instinct, but require a larger vision if they are to be controlled for the common good.

This is the conclusion we are forced to in respect to numerous aspects of the modern social problem, and not just in agriculture alone. Can we accomplish self-consciously, as an application of social intelligence, the things that we once did from instinct and self-interest? The necessity for doing so is the one great contemporary fact which we dare not ignore.

Letter from
GERMANY

BERLIN.—A conversation with a German bookkeeper in a so-called "SAG" factory (*i.e.,* a Soviet-owned plant with German machinery) in Berlin has helped to clear up some questions in connection with the poverty of Eastern inhabitants, referred to in the last letter from Berlin. There, it was asserted that Eastern Germany not only is poor, but will remain so, *must* remain so. Here are the facts and arguments.

The question—What is the method of payment for the goods and raw materials which are to be manufactured in the SAG?—was answered by the German employee: They are paid with German currency. Usually, those goods come from other SAG's in the Soviet zone. It follows that a considerable amount of German money is circulating inside the Soviet zone with the sole purpose of financing transactions between the Russian SAG's. Further, goods which are manufactured in those SAG's finally reach the Soviet Union or are exported only on her account, *without ever being put down to Germany's account for reparations!* When we consider the large sums of money thus circulating "uselessly" inside Eastern Germany, we have the explanation why Eastern currency is so worthless (7:I) in relation to Western German currency. The amount of this money, in comparison to the actual quantity of goods available for Germans themselves, is far too great. And the available merchandise will never be sufficient for the German population, because the demands of Soviet armaments do not lessen, but are steadily going up. (Weapons are produced in the SU itself, while consumer goods are manufactured in the surrounding countries.)

The poverty of the Germans in the Eastern zone is therefore an *organised* poverty, arranged for and provided by the same Germans who in former times—until 1945—declared themselves (as the Socialist Unity Party) to be devoted to the benefit of the lower strata of society! It is this carefully administered system of artificial want that is claimed to be superior to "capitalist" economy and held especially depression-proof. Let's look a little closer, however.

It seems a peculiarity of totalitarian economy—as a German professor lately observed—to work always at full blast; but in one period people work and get something to eat, although not much, while in another period they still work but suffer from malnutrition. Thus, the economic cycles are hidden by the shifting of their consequences, through political manipulation, to the shoulders of the general population. (In this connection we should note that keeping people busy at all times, and thus binding their energy and aggression through apparently useful activity, is almost a necessity for a State in which high social tension prevails.) Other forms of avoiding unemployment are huge digging projects, building up a big force of "people's" police, etc. (not to forget labor camps, concentration camps, and the like).

Yet actual proof from the Communist side is still needed to show that, in a possibly coming crisis with world-wide effects, the Soviet Union and her satellites can maintain their boom production. This is very improbable, for the following reasons: While the depression of 1929-32 lasted, the Soviet Union was not so highly industrialized as now, her farmers were not collectivised, and there was a *big and undeveloped inland market.* This market is now gone, the Soviet Union has to export in ever-enlarging volume, and is therefore more and more sensitive to world market conditions.

Undoubtedly, the political system of the SU will endeavor to prevent an open outbreak of unemployment; she will try again to shift the burden of economic disorganisation in an indirect manner to the Soviet population and that of neighboring countries. So it may happen that the economic crisis in totalitarian States will take the form of increasingly grave social and political

tension, both domestically, within these countries, and outside, in relation to the Western world.

Hitler took to open war when Germany's problems pressed him too much (a Swiss paper observed in 1938 that the situation was such that either open economic crisis or war would come at once). Stalin does not have this alternative, fortunately, because it would mean his certain end. The way out can only be an inner explosion in Russia herself. The Soviet economy is "planned"— we see—so that not only production is planned, but crises likewise. Yet such planning cannot exclude depressions, so long as the economy is planned in the wrong direction: not for fulfillment of human needs, but for armaments, with excessive attention to heavy industrial goods, an over-extended working day, forced labor, and innumerable other "mistakes" in planning.

This form of "planned economy" will be destroyed by the same economic forces which today are being given free rein by the Soviets. The secret and general lie of the SU economy will become an open and therefore perishing lie. Out of the "planned economy" grows the "planned disaster."

GERMAN CORRESPONDENT

REVIEW
ART AND THE PROFANE

LITERARY art, one may say, is bounded at its upper reaches by the impossibility of describing, in any direct way, the subtleties of ultimate experience in consciousness, and the depths to which the written word may descend are barred from literature by the fact that degrading utterance can hardly qualify as art. The incommunicable idea, of course, can have no proper definition, and the obscene thought—that which, according to the classical canon, ought never to be displayed—often depends upon the author's reason for presenting it, so that a discussion of this sort must move within a region without any strict limits at all; and yet, it is fairly easy to illustrate what the boundaries of literature may be considered to be.

If ultimate experience there be, no language exists to describe it, except, perhaps, the colorless intellectual abstractions which do not describe at all. This may be the reason why great scriptures have always been composed from a vocabulary of paradox: the truth is not in the scripture, but in the magical moment when the invocation of the text unites with the invocation of the reader's mind—and here, without doubt, the test of the truth is in the reader at that moment, and nowhere else. Beauty, it may be, is the quality in a story, a picture, a song, which seeks out this intuitive response from human beings; and the definition of beauty, therefore, rests with the secret of a man's heart, and can never—except, perhaps in some remote Nirvana of common consciousness—be publicly defined with particularity.

But all good writing strives after devices to unveil, if only a little, this common sense of harmony. It seeks the illusion which has the greatest similitude to the real— and because it offers an honest illusion, making no pretense to *be* the real, it has legitimate claim to the name of art.

The degradation of art, then, is nothing more or less than a profanation of the mysteries—the mysteries of both good and evil. It can hardly have been an accident that, almost at the same time, there has been an extraordinary increase in books on the subject of "prayer" and in books which pervert the ultimates of human experience into mere "thrills." Death and procreation are transcendent modes of experience, through which humans, as physical beings, gain touch with something more than the physical by relating themselves to universal processes in nature. They are chief among the lesser "mysteries" of life, just as "prayer" may be taken to represent an approach to the higher mysteries.

What can a book about prayer, implying that there really exists some routine technology of communication with the highest, do for its reader except mislead his mind or revolt his soul? Whatever else is true about inward searching, the first rule must be that outward guidance can never assist, that the idiom of spiritual perception is always born in its own instant of revelation and will be viable only if its uniqueness is recognized. Books about prayer, however sophisticated, are suffused with the unction of pious speech—the speech which echoes priestly intonations and the hollow reverence of the public rite. There are rites, perhaps, which are properly public—a song or a game or a dance, conceived as part of the conscious harmony of community life, but prayer ought never to be a rite. The rite subdues the individuality for a specific purpose, whereas the search of the mind for truth—and if prayer is not this, it is nothing—ought to awaken the individuality to supreme acuteness. It is, after all, the endeavor to be absolutely free of all past and all conditioning—*Ain Soph* talking to *Ain Soph,* as the ancient Hebrews have put it.

Perhaps we should set aside the word "prayer" entirely, as too closely allied with the mannerisms of contemporary religious tradition, and call it reflection or contemplation, involving all the resources of our minds and hearts. Prayer is not what we ask of a god without, but what we demand of the self within.

The history of religion is in large part the history of the materialization of metaphysical ideas—the *paganization,* one might say, of ancient philosophical insights. The sacraments, for example, instead of being moments of vision, have become "things" and "acts" which have precise definition. Instead of moral principles, we have a moral *code*—and the social malevolence directed against a person who, because of a moral principle he believes in, violates the accepted moral code, is far more vindictive and unforgiving than the punishments imposed upon those who steal or injure from ordinary criminal motives.

The peversion of religion into material forms and symbols has its logical cultural counterpart in the corruption of literature—or a large part of it—into sheer sensationalism. What accounts for the extraordinary fascination of the murder story, the murder *mystery?*

Is it that, by fair means or foul, we are determined to penetrate behind the veil, to revel in the secret that could not be revealed? Why, each year, do the stories of adventure become a little more shocking, a little more ruthless? Why do the highest monetary rewards go to the writer who can manage to convey a feeling of utter abandonment to chaotic sensuality while preserving the abstract forms of the "moral code"? Is it, perhaps, a cultural reflex of the dogma of the Vicarious Atonement that makes us suppose that the preservation of the forms will somehow sanctify the content of what we read?

Or has the method of paradox, which, although unable to disclose, may intimate the meaning of the mysteries, been inverted and made to stimulate a paroxysm of subhuman instead of superhuman experience? There are dark ultimates of evil—"sin" the theologians call them—as well as ultimates of good, and neither can be directly described. But both can be invoked. Perception of the good in life is invoked by the artist through the creation of forms of sensibility, perception of the evil, by their destruction. There seems to be something in human beings which forever drives toward some sort of ultimate in experience, and if the ultimate good is inaccessible, or apparently non-existent, that something moves our lives in the opposite direction.

Fortunately, literature, like religion, deals only in symbols. But literature, again like religion, mirrors human inclination and betrays the pattern of hidden desires. There are other ways of looking at popular tastes in books, suggesting other, less depressing interpretations, and no doubt *all* the interpretations have some validity and importance, for human beings are vastly complex intelligences, with strange capacities for finding good in evil things, and evil in the good. But it is also true that, with civilization as with individuals, there comes a day when diverse tendencies and psychological habits crystallize into definite shape and character—when the time for conscious choosing, the exercise of discrimination, seems to have gone by. There have been some horror stories in history, recently enough, and the question of how *they* get written is important enough to justify intensified questioning of the profane in literature.

COMMENTARY
CREDIT TO THE UN CHARTER

EARLY this month, the California Court of Appeals, reversing a lower court, ruled that the Alien Land Law of California can no longer be enforced because it conflicts with the Charter of the United Nations. Justice Emmet H. Wilson, the presiding judge, contended that, according to the Federal Constitution, all treaties made under the authority of the United States are the supreme law of the land, binding upon every state in the Union, and as the UN Charter obliges all signatories to promote respect for and observance of rights and freedoms for all, "without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion," and as the Declaration of Human Rights proclaims the right of everyone to own property, it follows that a state law which denies the right of anyone to own property on the ground of race is unconstitutional. The state is appealing the decision.

The present Alien Land Law was passed by the State of California in 1920. Admittedly directed against the Japanese, it also prevented anyone affected by the Oriental Exclusion Act from owning land in California. It provided that land could not be bought by anyone ineligible for citizenship. (During the war, the United States repealed the application of the Oriental Exclusion Act to nearly all Asiatic peoples except the Japanese.)

The decision of the Appellate Court came as the consequence of an action initiated by Mr. Sei Fuji, publisher of the *California Daily News,* who purchased a piece of property and commenced a disclaimer suit against the state. The Superior Court in Los Angeles ruled the land law to be constitutional and declared that escheat had taken place automatically at the time of the transfer of the real property. (Escheat means that the land reverts to the state, without compensation or recourse for the purchaser coming under the Alien Land Law. Hundreds of thousands of dollars' worth of property has come to the state in this way, and the escheated purchasers of this land may now seek to regain it under the Appellate Court decision.) In ordering a reversal of the lower court, the Appellate Court declared:

> Clearly such a discrimination against a people of one race is contrary both to the letter and to the spirit of the Charter which, as a treaty, is paramount to every law of every state in conflict with it. The Alien Land Law must therefore yield to the treaty as the superior authority. The restrictions of the statute based upon eligibility to citizenship, but which ultimately and actually are referable to race or color, must be and are therefore declared untenable and unenforceable.

CHILDREN
. . . Ourselves

IT is usually best to avoid lengthy generalities about "the Modern University." The temptation to deplore the failures of our Institutions of Higher Learning is, of course, very great—partly, perhaps, because one does not have to pay a price, in this instance, for being derogatory, as we might if we similarly attacked our form of government. And we always like something to blame for inadequate moralities and mentalities. The universities are presumably charged with improving the mental condition of our youth—have so charged themselves, and thus invite attack whenever we may feel that there is something wrong with either our country or ourselves. But it seems an extraordinary waste of time to be caustic or witty at the expense of a huge abstraction called "colleges." Certainly the university is a hope and a promise, as well as a repository of human mistakes. Even granting that many specific complaints might be well founded, the university is still a praiseworthy effort to create that "atmosphere" of learning which is crucial to any program for the development of the human mind. And there is nothing wrong with the universities that is not also wrong with our family life, our politics, our public institutions, and our world of scientific opinion.

Another reason why we feel that, in order to be just, one must refrain from criticizing the universities in generalities, is this: within their walls, preserving, at least to some extent, the tradition of free inquiry, millions of young men and women bring into focus their own quests for enlightenment. Each quest may not be spectacular, if viewed in comparison to the ideals and goals of the world's most renowned thinkers, yet every search for truth has a greatness of its own. The atmosphere of an average university classroom is certainly more warming and inspiring, by the way, than the atmosphere of international or private bargaining—and, perhaps, more inspiring than the atmosphere surrounding any conventional religious institution.

We think that the only valid way to investigate the many things undoubtedly wrong with universities is to set our discussion in a context which automatically includes the rest of the world's combination of psychological and practical failings. As example of a basic link connecting "the universities" and ourselves, we quote a single sentence of dialogue from Storm Jameson's war novel *The Black Laurel:* "It took forty years and two world wars to convince me that there is hardly any relation between what people profoundly want and what they arrange their lives to get."

This is the tragedy of our present era of history, and it is also the tragedy of Man. It is more psychological than physical, more moral than political. No one can write—at least no one has written—an authoritative textbook on it. In this light, we might wonder if poets and artists could not do a better job of evaluating our universities than do our most brilliant critics. Here, certainly, is a place needing the type of intuitive sympathy which many of artistic temper possess. Working beneath the surface of university life, represented hazily in innumerable of its motions, is the Great Tragedy—inability to translate the abstract ideal into the practical ideal. The college professor presumably believes in academic freedom, but many will sign any kind of "loyalty oath"—and disavow the right of men of Marxist persuasion to teach, in order to retain the right to go on talking about the virtues of Free Inquiry. Most university students probably really "believe" that the life of the mind is superior to a mere life of the senses, yet will place their greatest emphasis upon ways of increasing social and financial prestige, the remuneration for which can only be in terms of sense enjoyment, since neither social nor business success deals with the realm of the mind. Perhaps we could say, too, that professors and students, like most of us, tend to "flirt" with knowledge rather than embrace it. Very few wish to risk the possible demolition of their cherished preconceptions. The professor may have gained comfortable prestige by association with a certain line of academic thought, or the student may enjoy a certain prestige by virtue of membership in a social group where particular attitudes or beliefs are prerequisites to acceptance. An ideological threat to

one's group becomes a threat to one's personal position.

Robert Hutchins of Chicago University was reported to have asked this question during a Great Books discussion of "moral values": "Yes," he said, "I don't doubt that you do feel you believe in these principles, nor do I doubt that you apply them to your work in the political management of labor relations. But do you believe in their *validity,* or do you just want to win with them?" This, of course, is the most searching question any Believer could ask himself, and one which could, with profit, be asked once or twice a day, at least. The search for truth and the devotion to principle can only be complete with the man who has concluded that it doesn't really matter whether he wins or loses. Here, there is room for a timely application of the old saying that "man cannot serve two masters." The goal of our Institutions of Higher Learning is certainly circumscribed unless it be that of acquainting coming generations with some understanding of what devotion to Truth may mean.

We cannot have any dynamism of learning unless we place the learning of truth above all other values, and are always willing to risk our prestige. And all too often we lack that sort of dynamism at the collegiate level, as elsewhere. The arrangement of subjects in the study of the curriculum is strictly a status quo, conformist production. If we really wish to learn to *think,* to use our minds, we would—either as students or professors— demand that all of our learning proceed in widening circles, in an attempt to make rational analysis of the crucial problems of our time. But we do not truly discuss "Communism" in any university today. We do not discuss, as men must learn to discuss, the relationship of conscience to participation in war. We do not discuss racial discrimination, in any but the vaguest way. We have no thorough rational discussions of those intricate psychological problems of relationships between the sexes; if such discussions were thorough, they might intrude upon an orthodoxy provided in the home, church or community. (In this instance, to avoid misunderstanding, we should make it plain that we are not considering the advisability of a further mulling over of biological details, but only suggesting that here, as elsewhere, men must learn to solve their problems by measured pondering and creative thinking. It is precisely when we fail to proceed in this manner that we allow ingrained prejudice to tell us who the Bad, Unworthy, or Naughty people are.)

To the extent that our Universities are status-quo oriented, they are no good to us. Growth of mind implies breaking many of the present molds of men's minds. Creative intelligence does not grow by the amassing of facts. The part of science which we venerate is that part which is theoretical and experimental. The "spirit of science" is really the determination of men to press beyond established boundaries. This forefront of science always moves ahead, leaving behind it a technology sometimes useful and sometimes dangerous. But technology and pure science should never be confused. A pondering on the distinctions between creative philosophy and established systems, religious inspirations and religious rituals, creative science and technology, should lead to an understanding of the major emphases selected by Robert Hutchins in his determined re-orientation of outlook at the University of Chicago. Whatever Hutchins may do that is not done as it should be done, whatever mistakes he may make in respect to seeming alliances with particular political or religious groups, we must credit him with calling our attention to the fact that the greatness of man never lies in what can be weighed or measured, but in his determination to proceed beyond all those things which have been weighed and measured before, and discover values that are less transitory than tangible substances.

FRONTIERS

What Is "Liberal"?

A LIBERAL, it is said, is one who believes "in the spiritual freedom of mankind," who rejects all mechanistic explanations of human action and declares for "a free individual conscious of his capacity for unfettered development and self-expression." Thus the *Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences,* which ought to be an acceptable authority, so far as the meaning of the term is concerned.

The definition of the "liberal" idea is important for the reason that, as is generally admitted, the modern liberal is often an extremely confused individual—confused because he feels strong uncertainties—and while uncertainty need not necessarily produce confusion, it is likely to follow when the nature and sources of the uncertainty are not clearly understood. The modern liberal also feels a great weakness in his position. It is not, of course, a weakness of principle. His principles, however, are about the only thing of strength that the liberal has. When it comes to applying them, the uncertainty and the confusion present themselves, and then the weakness appears at once.

The most obvious implication of our definition is that a society guided and governed by liberal ideas is ideally a rational society. This, at least, is the basic assumption of the democratic form of government, with its provision for open discussion and impartiality in the determination of public issues. So long as there is a fairly clear relationship between what men say they believe, and what they do—or, what they allow to be done to them— the social system may be said to have a rational character. But when contradictions occur between the credo—in our case, the liberal credo—and the actual cultural society, confusion of mind is almost certain to result. And, as the psychiatrists tell us, a split of this sort between the theory and practice of social life will "give rise in some people at least to states of mental disorder—and probably in everyone to some measure of insecurity."

The late Harry Stack Sullivan, one of the most percipient of psychiatrists, spoke of the particular vulnerability of the liberal to ravages of this sort. The following quotation from Dr. Sullivan (including a passage on his own views, illustrating his personal candor) is from *Conceptions of Modern Psychiatry:*

> Of more current interest to the American psychiatrist is the place of the *liberal,* the person who is not blind to the unsatisfactory state of things as they are but who is not sufficiently disturbed in his interpersonal relations to yearn for a radical Utopian solution either on the far side of chaos *or* to be achieved by reversing the current of social evolution and regressing to the "good old days"—the equally morbid wish of the *reactionary* "conservative." The rational, liberal position exposes one to extreme vicissitudes of security from attacks by both the reactionaries and the radicals in our technically democratic society—some outstanding characteristics of which pertain less to the achievement of human dignity, opportunity, and fraternity than to the safeguarding of special privilege at whatever cost to others.
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> I have no hesitancy in expressing these views for I am clearly of the privileged class, as are all of my intimate friends. I feel radical as to certain of the underprivileged, who would seem to have potentialities far greater than their socially defined role permits them to manifest. I feel most reserved as to reactionary and radical groups— in part because I know intimately some of their leaders. I do not believe that the destruction of values is a necessary or even probable preliminary to their renaissance, and I know regression, professionally. I feel particularly hostile to all those among us who are incapable of appreciating our traditional, almost accidental way of progress, who prefer instead to place confidence in the omniscience of a dictator. I do not believe that any one nurtured in the American culture-complex *can* have such sublime trust in another; I regard Totalitarianism as the political quintessence of personal despair.

It may be a bit unfair, after citing Dr. Sullivan as an authority on the plight of the liberal, to attempt to discover in his own words some of the reasons for this plight. The temptation is too great, however, for he seems to reveal precisely the attitude toward human beings which has, we think, led the liberals into their confusion. He wants, in short, to practice the liberal virtues without accepting the liberal postulates. This makes liberalism weak.

For example, in *Conceptions of Modern Psychiatry,* he says, "I know of no evidence of a force or power that may be called a *will,"* and speaks also of "the illusion of choice." For these traditional conceptions of liberalism, he substitutes the idea of choice and decision as "the products within awareness of the vector addition of motives called out by a situation, plus the constructive revery processes pertaining to them." We shall not attempt to say exactly what Dr. Sullivan means by this, as he has the habit of using his terms rather carefully, but it is somewhat explained in the second paragraph quoted above, where he seems to account for his own dislike of the omniscience of dictators by the fact that he was "nurtured in the American culture-complex." The love of freedom, in short, is some kind of conditioning. No doubt it is, in part, but—and here is the crux of our point—this part is the only element in human nature that the psychiatrists tell us about with any assurance or enthusiasm. They recognize no large-hearted ideas like "the spiritual freedom of mankind," and if there is loose in the world "a free individual conscious of his capacity for unfettered development and self-expression," he has never been inveigled into any free association with a modern psychiatrist. So far as we can determine, the *free* part of the individual is the part that psychiatry ignores altogether, and love of freedom must be interpreted as a special type of fetter which is "good."

But we are not intending, here, to hold psychiatry responsible for depriving liberalism of its moral conviction. The reference to Dr. Sullivan is really an oblique sort of compliment, for he, at least, with some others, has developed the implications of the denial of human freedom to a point of honest consistency, whereas large numbers of political liberals have only an honest confusion, allowing them to repeat the rhetoric of the liberal idea while also subscribing to various technologies of determinism. Dr. Sullivan has thrown out the rhetoric, although he clings to the behavior suggested by the liberal idea, which he describes, in its most unpretentious form, as "our traditional almost accidental way of progress." But why, in a world without free will, *almost* accidental? Why not entirely so?

What we are really trying to get at is the fact that our modern civilization has expert knowledge on everything except the nature of human freedom. Our devotion to freedom is intuitive, it is also a traditional democratic piety, and these two forms of devotion reinforce one another; but both together are not enough to overbalance the influence of the technological disciplines to which all our practical energies are given. This is a way of saying that we know exactly what to do to a human being to produce any desired effect, most of the time statistically, that is—except how to inspire him to love freedom and to love knowledge and truth.

This has been the cry and the reproach of Robert M. Hutchins, Chancellor of the University of Chicago, for some fifteen or twenty years. He is the champion of a liberal education—liberal, in the sense of our initial definition—and his concern is with the fact that the young in America are not getting a liberal education, and have not been getting one, for nearly half a century. From this, Dr. Hutchins draws the conclusion that we do not really believe in the potentialities of human beings, nor in their right to genuine educational opportunity. In what is very likely the most vigorous prose of our generation, Dr. Hutchins states his case:

> The foundation of democracy is universal suffrage. Universal suffrage makes every man a ruler. If every man is a ruler, every man needs the education that rulers ought to have. If liberal education is the education of rulers, then every man needs a liberal education. . . .
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> We have, or are on the way to having, universal suffrage. Every man is now a ruler. But in the change of the past 150 years the idea of an education appropriate to rulers has got lost somewhere. . . . When we talk of our political goals, we admit the right of every man to be a ruler. When we talk of our educational program, we see no inconsistency in saying that only a few have the capacity to get the education that rulers ought to have. We believe that the people are qualified to rule; many among us do not believe that the people are qualified for the education of rulers. The popular syllogism—and it is popular in the highest educational circles—runs like this: everybody has the right to education. But only a

> few are qualified for a good education. Those who are not qualified for a good education must be given a bad education, because everybody has the right to education. Anybody who favors a good education must, therefore, be antidemocratic, because only a few are qualified for a good education. The paradoxical consequence is that those who believe in the capacity of the people are called reactionary and antidemocratic, whereas those who doubt the capacity of the people revel in the name of democrats and liberals
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> . . . the Report of the President's Commission on Higher Education takes the position that it is a good thing to have all young people in school at least until the age of twenty and that it is immaterial what they do there. It is simply a good thing for them to be there. This is a logical consequence of their assumed inability to do what they ought to be doing there. We want them to be in school because we believe in universal education. We cannot give them the education of rulers because they have not the ability to acquire it. . . . S*chool and Society,* June 18, 1949)

Dr. Hutchins, of course, does not believe this. He believes just the opposite. But his diagnosis is sound—except that he does not, in this article, at least, tell us that we do not give even the "qualified few" a very good education for rulers, much less "the masses," because we no longer have any certainty about what a ruler ought to know. It is clear, at any rate, that the liberals, however great their good intentions, will not emerge from their confusion until they go back to their first principles, and, for the first time in generations, begin to take them seriously. We seem to have used up about all the "accidental progress" in fortune's allotment, and must now begin to make a little progress deliberately.