

THE AGE OF TANTALUS

ALL over the world, people are wondering how to stop the trend toward economic and political enslavement. The analyses to explain this trend appear most frequently in three familiar forms: (1) the Vicious-Men theory; (2) the Bad-System theory; and (3) the We-are-Materialists-who-have-forgotten-God theory. Of these three theories, the first two have been put into practice in recent years, while the third is mostly a criticism of the things that have happened as a result of the application of the first two.

The Russian Revolution put the second theory to work, but, soon after, the ideas of the first theory became increasingly prominent. In order to get rid of the bad system, it was said, the men who support the bad system must be "liquidated." Originally, Marxian theory was largely impersonal in its analysis of Capitalism. It regarded the champions of private property as deluded victims of their own system, the question of their private character being held a matter of indifference. Today, however, aggressive communist propaganda takes full advantage of the vocabulary of moralistic abuse. Capitalism as a system is still condemned, but since hate and fear of individuals or classes of human beings are more easily aroused and exploited for political action than the abstract disapproval of a "system," the communist arguments have become increasingly primitive in their appeal.

Propaganda for war is almost always at the personal level of the Vicious-Men theory. Whatever the initial theories of the recent struggle to wipe out fascism from the earth, such subtleties of analysis as they may have possessed soon gave way to popular symbols of personified Evil—in the persons of the leaders of the "Enemy States." The war had to be fought as a "purge," because too few men would fight for any other reason. The intellectuals might call it "a war of ideas," but

the people who gave their sons and who put up with wartime inconveniences were not particularly interested in "ideas"; they saw the war as a nasty clean-up job and were angry at the people whom they regarded as authors of the mess that had to be cleaned up. The great majority fought the war according to the Vicious-Men theory; they looked upon the making of the peace with the same ideas in mind; and they anticipate another war as another burdensome task of cleaning out more Vicious Men from the world. It doesn't make much sense, but this attitude seems to be necessary to the great masses of people who have to be depended upon in order to win a war.

While the Vicious-Men theory is peculiarly related to the prosecution of war, the Bad-System theory can be adopted without either the expectation of or the desire to go to war to get a better system. Nor is the Bad-System theory necessarily made up of Communist doctrine. In what seems to us the best article that he has written in recent years, Bertrand Russell presents a form of this theory which finds the major evil of our system in its centralization of power rather than in the political and economic concepts upon which the system is erected. The title of his article is "The Exceptional Man," and it deals with the inability of the exceptional man to give expression to his exceptional qualities in our society. One type of "exceptional man" includes the moral reformers and founders of religions. Of them, Mr. Russell says:

The prophets and sages who inaugurated this moral advance, although for the most part they were not honored in their own day, were, nevertheless, not prevented from doing their work. In a modern totalitarian state matters are worse than they were in the time of Socrates, or in the time of the Gospels. In a totalitarian state an innovator whose ideas are disliked by the government is not merely put to death, which is a matter to which a brave man may remain

indifferent, but is totally prevented from causing his doctrine to be known. Innovations in such a community can come only from the government, and the government now, as in the past, is not likely to approve of anything contrary to its own immediate interests. In a totalitarian state such events as the rise of Buddhism or Christianity are scarcely possible, and not even by the greatest heroism can a moral reformer acquire any influence whatever. This is a new fact in human history, brought about by the much increased control over individuals which modern technique of government has made possible. It is a very grave fact, and one which shows how fatal a totalitarian regime must be to every kind of moral progress. (From the third of the Reith Lectures, delivered over the BBC, and reprinted in the *Atlantic* for November, 1949.)

Scientists, too, are in the grip of government power. The scientist who invents the process of industrialism, whether for war or for peace, is controlled by the politician. The politician has the role of an Arabian-Nights magician, while the scientist is like the *djinn* who obeys his orders:

The *djinn* does astounding things which the magician, without his help, could not do, but he does them only because he is told to do them, not because of any impulse in himself. So it is with the atomic scientists of our day; some government captures them in their homes or on the high seas, and they are set to work, according to the luck of their capture, to slave for the one side or the other. The politician, when he is successful, is subject to no such coercion.

Like the man of religion and the man of science, the artist is also a captive of the age. He has no real freedom. In discussing the corruption of the arts, Mr. Russell is at his best:

The decay of art in our time is not only due to the fact that the social function of the artist is not as important as in former days; it is due also to the fact that spontaneous delight is no longer felt as something which it is important to be able to enjoy. Among comparatively unsophisticated populations folk dances and popular music still flourish and something of the poet exists in very many men. But as men grow more industrialized and regimented, the kind of delight that is common in children becomes impossible in adults, because they are always thinking of the next thing, and cannot let themselves be absorbed in the moment. This habit of thinking of the "next thing" is more fatal to any kind of aesthetic

excellence than any other habit of mind that can be imagined; and if art, in any important sense, is to survive, it will not be by the foundation of solemn academies, but by recapturing the capacity for wholehearted joys and sorrows which prudence and foresight have all but destroyed.

Mr. Russell sees both the material and the psychological effects of economic and political centralization, but he says nothing about its cause. Here, perhaps, lies the defect of all Bad-System theories. While we need to recognize the gnawing futility in our "habit of thinking of the 'next thing'," it is still more important to inquire into the origin of the habit. Where does this dissatisfaction with what we have, with the present—almost any present—come from? Why must we forever be "improving" our circumstances? Why is contentment virtually a forgotten ideal? The nervous drive written in human faces is familiar to us all. Too many people are like department-store buyers who fear that they will lose their jobs if they do not increase this year's sales over last year; or they are like the manufacturer who lives only from one moment of "expansion" of his plant to the next. It is this hunger for an ever-receding material goal that obsesses our society, making us, finally, insist upon having ten thousand atom bombs rather than one or two. Our psychological balance depends upon the process of raising our wants to an infinite power. We make an adjustment to this process and feel, in an artificial sort of way, that we are really "living," when in fact the adjustment has been made to a monstrous and ever-growing delusion which is at the root of all our unhappiness.

To say that all human beings are motivated by an acquisitive instinct is too simple a solution. There is, to be sure, a lust for things in human beings. But this primitive urge, in our culture and civilization, has been dignified by philosophical justification. It is accorded the status of a final "truth" about man. We have constructed economic theories around it and related it to the "laws of nature." We did not, like the Greeks, devise a myth—the story of Tantalus—to instruct

ourselves in the folly of overriding acquisition in human life. Instead, we turned our homes and our public buildings into an endless succession of temples to Acquisition. We gave it *cultural sanction* and added the prestige of institutionalization to the simple and unreflective longing for material possessions.

In short, the indictment of the "system," like anger against bad men, may be simply another aspect of our initial mistake in failing to understand ourselves. To blame the system in any but a restricted sense may be to consolidate our ignorance of ourselves and our inner possibilities with a feeling of helplessness and learned pessimism.

Remembering "God" will not help us very much in this situation. The Christian thinkers—Toynbee, and now Butterfield—are able to make the same sort of cogent criticisms that we find in Mr. Russell's Reith Lectures, although with a somewhat different and at times more searching emphasis, but the replacing of "God" in history as a or *the* Causal Agent can hardly increase our knowledge of ourselves or strengthen our resolve to shape another destiny for modern man. God, like the blind "forces of nature," or "the System," is still an External Circumstance over which we have no control, and the acceptance of an outside God will only confirm and justify another kind of impotence than that which Mr. Russell describes.

Mr. Russell and Mr. Toynbee know how they would *like* to see human beings behave, but their proposals on what will make men change their behavior seem weak and ineffectual. Russell wants to revive "local autonomy"—to restore individual initiative and to reduce the power of modern organization so that the latter "will be less oppressive to the human spirit through its impersonal vastness, than it has become through its unbearably rapid growth and centralization, with which our ways of thought and feeling have been unable to keep pace." The others want a new set of ideals, by means of which something like the free society envisioned by Mr. Russell

may be accomplished. But we need a declaration, rather, of the God *in* man, than of a God outside of him, in history. And if we are to become free of our obsession with the "next thing," we shall first have to free ourselves of our time-bound and matter-bound conceptions of man and what is good for human beings to have and to do.

It will do no good to deplore the effects of acquisitiveness while nourishing the beliefs about human nature which encourage acquisitiveness. We have to stop believing in the things which make powerful systems seem desirable, and to stop fearing the things which threaten *our* system, while favoring some other which draws its support from the same basic conception of human nature. We have to convince ourselves that money and power do not bring either freedom or happiness or peace, and to believe it every day, in all that we do, until money and power no longer exert any real influence upon our lives.

Letter from **SWITZERLAND**

GENEVA.—An important declaration was made recently by M. Moderow, director of the European office of the UNO, to an assemblage of Swiss journalists accredited to the *Palais des Nations*. Since 1946, he said, Geneva had been the headquarters for four divisions of the UNO—the OIT (International Labor Organization), the OMS (World Organization of Sanitation), OIR (International Organization for Refugees), and the OIT (International Organization of Communications). He spoke of the economic advantages gained by Geneva through the presence of these bodies, in addition to the prestige they have bestowed by making Geneva the "City of Peace." In return, he pointed out, Geneva had offered an invaluable psychological atmosphere in these troubled post-war days.

Yet what, he asked, is the situation today? If, in 1946, Geneva was the only place affording settled conditions for the exchange of ideas, with a meeting place ready at hand, these conditions no longer prevail. The UNO and its subsidiaries have grown too large for their Geneva setting.

In June, 1951, the new buildings of the UNO in New York will open their doors, offering not only more space, but more advantages. Many countries have permanent representatives in the United States and will be spared the present costly travels and sojourns of their envoys. Moreover, many persons have complained that life in Switzerland is too expensive, that the rates of hotels, instead of going down with the equilibrizing of conditions, have, on the contrary, been increasing. Further, the sources of information which should help them in their work have been neither sufficient nor efficient. These last two reasons were especially responsible for discontent.

M. Moderow pointed out that the UNO Budget Commission of the General Assembly had refused credits for the session of the Economic

and Social Council in Geneva. Similarly, it had not authorized the Commission of the Rights of Man to sit in Geneva this year. The OIR was already beginning to wind up its activities and would cease functioning during this year. And in 1951 the General Assembly would decide whether or not the Economic Commission for Europe would continue its functions.

M. Moderow concluded by saying that the future of international activities in Geneva would depend upon the efforts of the authorities and the people of Geneva. The latter, he said, must now look on Geneva as the European branch of the Secretariat of the UNO, whose Principal Center will be in New York.

This frank declaration has dampened the pride and assurance which four years of uncontested leadership had produced in the heads of the Genevese. But there are larger issues to consider. For one thing, the Americans intend more and more to supervise the international focus of activities. Events in Europe are disquieting: the German sore-spot is festering; the grip on Soviet-controlled countries is tightening; the frantic attempts for the preservation of European culture and free exchange and union of interests are finding expression more in words than in fact. The middle East is restless and the East stirs uneasily under the new conquests of communist China. The whole continent of Eurasia is the victim of diverse moral epidemics whose outcome is threatening.

Human effort, clear vision and determined will are the only palliatives remaining in this time of crisis. Switzerland is still the heart of Europe, and Geneva will still have opportunity to serve in new accomplishments for peace.

SWITZERLAND CORRESPONDENT

REVIEW

THE MAPLE SUGAR BOOK

IN recent years the attractiveness of the rural life seems to have re-asserted itself and to have brought with it a number of books by adventurous individuals who have sought to re-establish for themselves a direct relationship between nature and economics. That this desire recurs periodically is not surprising, since in simpler societies men have derived from such a life a type of strength and sense of purpose which are conspicuously lacking in our present uncertain world.

But of all these attempts at becoming self-sustaining on as many levels of existence as possible, perhaps the most interesting is that recounted in *The Maple Sugar Book* by Helen and Scott Nearing. In three parts, the book covers past history and practice in the art of maple sugaring, present conditions and practice, and its values as a livelihood and as a means of achieving a kind of rapport with the natural world which is much more than the result of occasional "communings" with nature. The subject is carefully treated in great detail, but always with interest and a kind of unhurried enthusiasm. As the book progresses, several ideas emerge. It is actually upon the aspects of the subject treated in the third part that the purpose and rest of the material depend. The book represents an effort to portray as completely as possible the nature and advantages of this kind of life, for those who may be interested, from any point of view, in the belief that one of the most important facts of existence is the fundamental interdependence of man and nature. The maple sugar industry is a means of livelihood which has been open to men for centuries, but which does not depend on the injury or destruction of the resource which affords it, for the reaping of its benefits. (As a matter of fact, the trees located in a well-tended sugar bush are likely to be the sturdiest because care is taken to insure the best conditions for growth, such as sufficient ground covering to hold water, enough

space to allow trees to grow uncrowded and to enable sunshine to reach the leaves, yet still keep the forest floor shaded.) This is a part of the larger discovery that the purpose of man's life is not to be found in a constant battle against a hostile nature, but in mutual cooperation, and the unique assistance which the mind of man alone can render. Another theory the Nearings feel they have proved to themselves by their experiment is that a man does not need specialists to enable him to exist comfortably upon the earth; that in fact he sometimes may do far better without them. A family with a few, inexpensive tools, and patience and industry, can build a dwelling without benefit of architects, contractors, or bank loans, and can continually improve their means of livelihood through intelligent care and ordinary ingenuity. These factors apply particularly to maple sugaring because the materials and tools are mostly inexpensive, durable, and come almost entirely from the land. And the maple sugar season comes at a time when the farmer and his family and his team of horses would be otherwise idle. Also, maple sugaring seems to be most profitable on a decentralized, household basis, thus creating ideal conditions for dynamic family relationships.

In considering how the purposes in making this experiment have worked out in practice, the Nearings have brought to light a very significant point. Most people feel, at least once in a while, that life would be much simpler and better if they could just get away from the complications which plague them, and go to some quiet corner of the earth. It is often overlooked that to a really mature person such a life would actually be anything but simple. The Nearings discuss the problem:

. . . we wanted to live simply, doing as much good as possible to our fellow humans and fellow beings, and at the same time doing them as little harm as possible. The negative part of this aim could be fulfilled anywhere on earth. The positive part made it impossible for us to withdraw to the inaccessible mountains of Guatamala or India or to the remote Pacific Islands, to which, indeed, we were inclined to go. The place had to be so located as to

enable us to reach other people and to enable people who so desired to reach us.

But still other questions arise from the reading of this book. All people cannot go to live on farms in Vermont, nor is it necessarily desirable that everybody should. But it seems that those intangible values which the Nearings have found to be possible of realization in such conditions—values of the family as a purposeful and integrated household unit on which a stable society may be founded, values of individual creativity and self-reliance, educational values—by the very fact of their being desirable, relate in some sense to the universal questings of all men, whatever their conditions. The fact that the real benefits from such an existence, although they may come by physical means, are intangible, means that they are essentially independent of any specific conditions. If this were not so, such a book would have appeal only for other sugar-makers on Vermont farms.

The Maple Sugar Book is published by John Day, at \$3.75. The importance of the book seems to lie in the fact that it reminds us that our present situation, while not ideal in one sense, is nevertheless a means to some end, and that we should ask ourselves again toward what end we are moving, or allowing ourselves to be moved; and that if man can not only derive benefit from, but contribute something to an ideal natural environment, it is because he is essentially a creative being, able to make himself master even of the unnatural environment with which he has surrounded himself, and, so doing, to gradually transform it into a more natural one.

COMMENTARY INQUIRING EDITORIAL

OUR lead articles, to the discomfort and dissatisfaction of the editors, at times seem somewhat inconclusive, and not striking a sufficiently "positive" note. This week's lead is a case in point. Perhaps it is because we are always writing about "big" things, when, actually, the "big" things are made up of lots of little things. The big things can easily be subjected to analysis, but to change them means attention to little things.

Bertrand Russell is very sure that no great man, no great reformer or religious leader, can exercise much influence in our time. What about Gandhi? In India, it is true, Gandhi had the incalculable energy of the nationalist movement for Indian freedom to help him along. It was easy for Indians to be "against the government," and easy, therefore, for Gandhi to gain a hearing and to win support for his program of changes in little things, which to him loomed very large.

Today, numerous Indians seem to regard the Indian State as an instrument of relative oppression. The curtailment of the freedom of the press, once practiced by the British, but now by the government of Free India, seems to bear out Mr. Russell's contention that the system of centralization is itself at fault, regardless of who is in power. The real test of Mr. Russell's claim that great men are impotent in our society would be for another Gandhi to arise in India and to campaign for the same aims as those the revered "Mahatma" lived and died for. Then we would know what a great man can do to change the conditions of modern industrial society, without the aid of the nationalist spirit.

One possible explanation for the alleged "inconclusiveness" of our lead may lie in the fact that a certain measure of disillusionment seems to be prerequisite to any constructive movement involving large numbers of people. We might say, without too much presumption, that while the savor has gone from the lives of countless human beings, they don't quite realize why, and are still pursuing their hopes in the same old directions. Only after another war, perhaps, will the real disillusionment come, permitting a new kind of social leader to arise.

War, after all, is an ever-present symbol of the compulsive necessity which drives us to ever greater centralization of power. Until we realize that war—modern war, as it is feared, provoked, and fought—no

longer represents valor of human beings, their determination to be free, and their rejection of tyranny; but has itself become the easy way instead of the brave way, and is now the greatest of all tyrants, we shall not be able to take any new ideals seriously.

Yet it is not merely "pacifism" that we need. Rather, we need some profound grip upon the reality of life and its meaning, that will, in turn, make the issues of modern war seem puerile and stupid. We must learn to put away war in the same spirit that the maturing individual puts away "childish things." So long as war remains an emotional issue, we shall not be able to do without it.

Mr. Russell's comments on our preoccupation with the "next thing" seem close to the heart of the matter. Our anxious eye to the future heaps contempt upon what we are doing now. To use the present in order to be able to "buy" something tomorrow is a kind of blasphemy against our creative powers. It makes us live by the artificial values of our culture instead of by the principles that would rule a natural life. And here, perhaps, is the secret of the destruction of civilizations. People who lose touch with the primary motives of existence eventually cut themselves from their natural roots. This, at least, would be one reason why we are overtaken by terrible wars. War, then, is not a visitation of Providence, but the reaction of an outraged nature against nations without respect for a natural life.

The bonds of the "system" will loosen when we no longer honor the things the system promises and provides. That, perhaps, is what Mr. Russell has overlooked. Common sense tells us that there is nothing wrong with machines, but that the wrong lies in what we expect of machines and what we use them for. Is it so strange that neurotic insistence upon material abundance unfits us for its intelligent use; that fear of want produces what is feared, and that "security" cannot be bought?

If we were all transported to tiny desert islands, in miscellaneous communities of tens and twenties, what would we have to live for? This won't happen, of course, but the question remains a good one. Actually, we want the kind of a simple life that people living peacefully in tens and twenties would probably have, yet, day in, day out, we pursue objectives that would have no meaning on a desert island. Could we make a compact with Nature in her simplest terms, and not feel "frustrated" and exiled? What, after all, do we really want of life?

CHILDREN ... and Ourselves

WE have been discussing the seldom considered advantages of diversity of opinion among parents, in contrast to the parental "united front" which is generally supposed to be for the benefit of the child. The case for allowing the child to observe differences of opinion in the home may be furthered by reference to texts in social psychology which outline the serious, almost schizophrenic, contradictions which are already deeply imbedded in our culture. It would seem that the child who is habituated to simple agreement on all matters will find himself sadly unprepared for his later encounters with practical experience. Knowledge comes from the capacity to evaluate contradictions and conflicts. The wise man has often been described as the one whose perspective is sufficiently clear to enable him to comprehend the merits of opposed positions. Modern world society certainly offers abundant opportunity for this. We have before referred to one excellent volume on this subject, *The Neurotic Personality of Our Time*, by Karen Horney. Another such book is *The Social Psychology of Modern Life*, by H. S. Britt, who says:

The conflicts in our society are varied and extreme. For example, we hold to the notion that our democracy is based on the principle of freedom of speech, yet we try to prevent people from expressing "dangerous" opinions.

One frequently gets a sense of people's being afraid to let their opinions become sharp. They believe in "peace, but—" They believe in "fairness to labor, but—" In "freedom of speech, but—" In "democracy, but—" In "freedom of the press, but—"

We talk a great deal about equality in the United States, yet tolerate a tremendous amount of social inequality. We discourse about democracy, yet talk about "upper" and "lower" classes as if they were innate, worry about our ancestors, and join various societies to prove our social prestige. We pretend that we have respect for law and order, yet we tolerate racketeering, bribery of officials, falsification of tax returns, and various forms of vice. We give lip service to the notion that women and men are equals,

yet most employed women must work for less money than men at similar jobs. We condemn birth control, yet practice it. We claim to be a monogamous society, yet accept infidelity and divorce all about us. We call ourselves a Christian nation, yet half of us belong to no church at all. We claim to believe in a God of peace, yet pray to Him for victory in time of war. Sometimes we starve in the midst of plenty. We praise competition, but practice merger and monopoly. Everybody has equal economic opportunity, except Negroes, immigrants, women . . .

The outright conflicts in our society involve Negroes *versus* whites, old *versus* young, the educated *versus* the ignorant, city *versus* country, individual medical practice *versus* socialized medicine, public *versus* private education, men *versus* women, 100 per cent Americans *versus* aliens, pacifists *versus* militarists. Such facts indicate the amount and intensity of our own cultural contradictions.

Such a description of our cultural schizophrenia is enlightening to the extent that it leads us to recognize that these discouraging social manifestations are only the result of differences in attitude and approach among individuals. Inversely, though, with every two "disagreeing parents" we have not only two people who may differ bitterly and confusingly, but also two human beings who represent widely prevalent outlooks—outlooks which the child will ultimately need to understand—and often certain half-truths which need further exploration.

Let us take a few examples of matters which may be constructively "debated" in front of children. One of the basic issues of our time is certainly represented by the imminence of war. Nearly all men are "pacifists" to some degree—that is, under certain situations they will prefer, on something of a humanitarian basis, a solution to disagreement which does not involve violence. Similarly, nearly all men and women respond violently to some situations, and consequently at times will support warfare. But no two human beings are ever exactly alike in deciding between pacifism and belligerence. The dividing line shifts, moreover, with each single individual from year to year. Of those who seem to agree that the

participation of their country in World War II was necessary, some will maintain that the pre-Pearl Harbor sinking of a Japanese submarine was simply commendable forethought, while another will regard it as a serious symptom of an all-too-pervasive militaristic outlook. Some will think that the Nuremberg trials and the hanging of General Yamashita were necessary in order to frighten coming generations of potential enemies, whereas others will feel that both of these occurrences were unnecessary violence.

We are not sending our own children to the bottom of the sea with torpedoes, nor having them tried before "international" tribunals, but we do enter into the area of discipline together with them. We wonder about whether "punishment" is necessary, and, if so, what kind. On the subject of Communism, *among* those who feel strong opposition to Communist influence, there are differing measures of sympathy for the people who, they may agree, mistakenly embrace Communist doctrines and aspirations; while some will see nothing in either Socialism or Communism that need not be vigorously combatted as alien to the progress of mankind. Now, our child is probably not being besieged with offers to join the Communist Party, but one parent may favor private ownership of toys and another not.

With these "big" questions, children are concerned, whether they know it or not, because they live in a society which spends reams of paper and millions of hours of talk in deliberating them. The child is not interested in the problem of Communism as such, of course, nor the abstract question of whether violence is necessary or in what degree, but he is living a life with his playmates which involves some of the same issues at a different level—and he does hear a great deal about both Communism and wars when he sees moving pictures.

It would seem possible for any two parents to conduct their conversation in front of the children so that differences of opinion, rather than

becoming divisions, become supplementary. Even such matters as the spending of family income, referred to by a recent correspondent, are of a similar nature. They involve broad questions, too, because the spending of the family income depends upon an attitude toward the nature of man, of the nature of the family in general. There is no reason why a child cannot be present at or even participate in such a discussion. The important thing is to achieve enough "adult education" so that we can replace emotional argument with rational arbitration. If such a basis clearly dominates differences of opinion between parents, the very differences can be used as means of stimulating the child's own critical faculties. This may seem to be asking too much of parents, for it is admittedly asking them to become philosophers—men and women of such calm wisdom that they will be able to remain undisturbed even when their child- is more favorably impressed by a point of view not their own. Yet there really is no genuine middle ground between becoming a philosopher and having an authoritarian home.

FRONTIERS World Without End

PEOPLE who have fallen into the habit of doing their thinking in exclusively political terms and who, as a result, are feeling somewhat forlorn and depressed by the thought that if the bad eggs now hatching in Korea should grow into another world war, there will soon be no politics at all, and probably even no civilization, would do well to read a book like *Roving South* by Willard Price (John Day, 1948). Mr. Price is not a heavy thinker, but he is an efficient and vastly inquisitive inquiring reporter with a special talent for covering a lot of ground in a short time. He also reads up on the places he visits and provides a fair amount of historical and sociological background along with the tales of his travels.

While Mr. Price has found no surging, bursting revolutionary movement south of the Rio Grande, what he saw and tells about seems fully as important for grasping the possibilities of future history as knowing about the revolt of Asia. There is, first, the almost fabulous wealth of the Latin American countries. Mexico, for example, was second among the oil-producing countries of the world until 1938 when the Mexican Government expropriated British and American oil properties in Mexico and turned the Mexican wells over to Pemex, the official Mexican oil company. Mexico is now seventh among oil-producers, but the oil is there and it won't go away. Meanwhile, the Mexicans are learning. Potentially, they have as much natural capacity for technology as any other people, and they work hard whenever, as Mr. Price notes, "they have something to work for." He adds:

As hacienda serfs they lacked incentive. They lead in the universities. They are especially good in scientific research and laboratory work. Manual deftness is of course one of their great talents as their myriad arts and crafts testify. They make good automobile mechanics. An American engineer says:

"They take to machinery as the proverbial duck takes to water."

In other words, they are distinctly in tune with the modern age.

All this is said of Mexicans. But Mexicans, here, means *Indians*, for it is the Indians, and not the Spanish or the *mestizos* that Mr. Price is talking about. The rise of modern Mexico is the rise of the modern Indian. Mexico, Mexicans say proudly, is growing darker and darker!

It was the full-blooded Indian President Lazaro Cardenas who actually put into effect Mexico's great land reforms of the 1930's. By the end of his term, in 1940, "half of the arable land of Mexico had been redistributed, benefiting 1,700,000 peasants." Here, "redistributed" means that vast holdings of the Spanish land grants have been broken up and the *ejido* system is being restored. *Ejido* means the "way out," referring to land on the outskirts of the village which was once held in common ownership by the villagers and worked by them cooperatively. Under the plan of redistribution, usually all the men of a village apply to the government jointly for land. While they receive separate titles to their plots, they cannot sell the land because it now belongs inalienably to the whole community.

In 1948, there were still half a million unfilled applications for *ejido* grants, and to meet this need for land President Aleman has launched a huge irrigation project to make fifty million more acres available for agriculture. "This, if accomplished, will increase the nation's land by 150 per cent."

Mexico is growing darker because the Spanish brought no women with them, but intermarried with the Aztecs and other tribes. In Argentina, however, a reverse process has taken place. "Argentina," says Mr. Price, "is whiter than the United States." The Argentines went the United States "one better" in its Indian policy, for while the U. S. reduced its Indian population by one half during the nineteenth century, the Indian population of Argentina, from 1825 to the present, was reduced by almost four fifths, by much the same methods.

South America is a land of extreme contrasts, exhibiting, side by side, the best social systems and the worst. The model democracy of Uruguay is a standing reproach to Argentina's fascist regime under Peron. Argentina reeks of Nordic arrogance and race prejudice, while Brazil has all colors of citizens. Neither country has a "color problem"—Argentina, because the Indians have been killed off and what Negroes were there have migrated north; Brazil, because, as a Brazilian bootblack remarked to an American customer who mentioned "color," "Here, nobody white, nobody black, all Brazilian." Jim Crow has no home in Brazil. Interestingly enough, many Negroes brought a century ago to Brazil to be slaves were Sudanese who were often better educated than their "masters." Friendship and intermarriage among the races are taken for granted. Brazil has problems, but they are not "racial."

There is endless variety in Mr. Price's book, all of it interesting, much of it edifying. Space is running out, but we have one more quotation that cannot be omitted. It has to do with the effort of Brazilians to reclaim the Amazon country for agricultural production—an enormous project, but an important one. The UNESCO-sponsored Amazon Institute is making a beginning in scientific surveys of the economic resources of the region. Preliminary estimates support the view that: "If the Amazon can be brought into production, the world will be able to support its population." But most interesting of all are the methods that have been used to "subdue" the wild tribes who live in this country. Mr. Price recounts:

India's Gandhi would have been gratified could he have known of the policy of nonviolence used to win over ferocious Indians. No previous explorer had ventured into the region of the Kalapalos Indians and lived to tell of it. There, north of the River of Death, British explorer Colonel Percy Fawcett had disappeared. The neighboring Chavantes and Caiapos were equally hostile. But picturesque General Candido Rondon, himself partly Indian and chief of the Indian Protection Service, laid down the

ruling that no arms should be used against the Indians. If explorers were attacked, they were forbidden to defend themselves.

This "crazy notion" was termed suicidal, and soon appeared to be so when seven unarmed men who tried to parley with the Chavantes were all killed but one. The Indians then attacked the base camp and massacred all twenty of its men, not one of whom fired a shot or raised a hand in self-defense.

Criticism of General Rondon blazed in Rio, but he stood by his guns—or his gunlessness. The Indians were to be won by kindness. "Die if necessary, but never kill" was the motto. Many more did die.

Meanwhile exploration planes dropped pots, pans, mirrors, and other tokens of good will in Indian territory. Flying back, the pilots saw the Indians clubbing the packages fiercely, as if to kill evil spirits. The gifts kept falling and were finally accepted.

One day in 1946 four hundred Indians walked unarmed into the newly made town of Chavantina and swore a treaty of peace with the "white Indians."

The news was radioed to General Rondon. He said

"This is the victory of patience, suffering, and love."

A final anecdote connected with this incident adds to its authenticity by proving, once again, that the ridiculous is seldom separated from the sublime, in actual experience. These fierce Indians, when the long ordeal of nonviolent persuasion of them was over, were asked which of the parachuted gifts they liked the best. Without exception, they voted for the pictures of Hollywood pin-up girls which had been included among the articles dropped from the air!

Has it Occurred to Us?

A PROFESSOR of philosophy and psychology recently summed up the psychological studies made of leadership; its ingredients so far ascertained seem to be decision, self-confidence or self-conviction, the habit of associating with other leaders, and the definite characteristic of looking people square in the eye. A personal leader's intelligence must not be too far beyond that of his followers, and he need not be sane (insanity, correlated with positiveness, is often an advantage). The eminent leader must be intelligent and interested in his field, must have a high imaginative faculty, and persistence; inventiveness, for some reason, manifests early (in the 20's), except in pure science, where it does not appear until the 40's of a man's life. The creative leader (or genius) is the most mysterious: nobody, including himself, knows how he happens or achieves or becomes. The administrative leader is free of eminence and of whatever makes the creative leader, and he may or may not be a popular leader, but the more popular he is, the more successful he is.

The psychology professor, retailing these findings, was properly apologetic. He disclaimed any intention of presenting new and startling discoveries, and frequently observed that the significance of the information collected (for example, the square-look phenomenon) has not been decided. The subject, he remarked, is barely touched, and research is in only the preliminary stage.

We may be struck with the obviousness of the information given, but perhaps the subtler factors would raise embarrassing problems for the still very young science of psychology. Thus, no one would brashly raise the question, Is decisiveness always a good thing? Decisiveness, like leadership, is a given fact, but in human nature it is of variable moral content, and since we rejoice, in the twentieth century, in a bewildering variety of moral codes—relative, private, absolute, rational, irrational, religious, realist, flexible, and so forth—we have no simple way of deciding on the value of leadership or in the need for decisiveness. The matter-of-fact observation that insanity, for the personal leader, is not necessarily a drawback, is enough to indicate that there are more things on earth, for a fact, than we can blithely dismiss with a wave of psychological theory.

Leaders, it appears, have a tendency to associate with other leaders. The ground is again cut from beneath us, for where in this could there be certainty of finding the origin of this cosy circle? We readily recognize that the

leader-type (assuming we have typed it) might present distinct drawbacks in social relationships, and perhaps only leaders *can* associate with leaders. But then, followers also associate, and usually become more confirmed followers, as a result. The law of the attraction of opposites is in many cases stronger than the cohesion of similarities.

Now we come to the odd fact in the case: the straight look. Probably no one will deny the relevance of this characteristic, but as the psychologist warned his audience, we cannot say that looking people square in the eye will develop leadership in *us*. Furthermore, it often happens that the person with the straightest kind of look (there are degrees even in straightness, psychologically speaking) is constitutionally averse to leadership in any form, being far too convinced of the dignity and responsibility of the individual. Although such a person will have an utter directness of gaze, with not the hint of dissembling, insincerity, or fear, he may also not be given to the kind of straight look associated with the powerful personality. (Criminals and confidence men have a most impressive "straight eye.") The hypnotic stare would be as foreign to the ingenuous man as the primitive club or the refined art of over-persuading.

Leadership remains essentially an unexplained manifestation. But has it occurred to us that this may be a useful ignorance? The quarters where leadership, control over others, and fabulous success are "taught" operate, practically, in the service of an anti-social aim, and the quarters where such leadership is demonstrated are repellent to the humane mind.

The phrase, "creative leader," is a misleading form of speech, since the mind of genuine originality does not seek imitation, but evokes the originality of others. If the genius can not explain himself, and no formulas seem to apply, we might as well concentrate on being what we are and doing what we can, while exercising the human prerogative of selecting ideal aims as if we had an unending future to grow up into.