

THE QUICK AND THE DEAD

OUR present civilization is tending to go to pieces. While people have said things like this in every generation, usually they have meant, not civilization itself, but their particular life of comfort and convenience. To say that civilization itself is going to pieces is to assert that the *principle* of civilization is dying out of a system of social life that has built up over centuries. And this, we think, is true of our present social system.

What is the "principle" of civilization? Many definitions might be offered, but the one that seems most pertinent is that a civilization is a consciously constructed series of human relationships which provide for the best possible development and expression of the potentialities of human beings. A Declaration of Independence, a Constitution, a public school system—these are instruments which men devise to increase the values of their civilization. The Bill of Rights defines certain human relationships for the purposes of civilization.

Fundamentally, a civilization must always embody some affirmative postulate about the nature of human beings. The civilization of the United States is based upon the proposition that men are by nature free—and this means, for practical purposes, that freedom of choice in as many directions as possible is a good that should be preserved and guarded and extended. Certain limitations on this human freedom are naturally conceded to be necessary, so that the question arises, How shall these limitations be administered? The answer, according to our civilization, is that limitations on freedom shall be defined by impersonal law. On what shall the law be based? On the idea of the equality of all men before the law. This is the equivalent of saying that the law shall be just. Justice and freedom, therefore, are complementary ideas. Justice sets limits to freedom, but it also secures the freedom

that has not been limited. The idea of justice is the guarantee that no man's freedom will be interfered with arbitrarily—without a *reason* that is connected with impersonal law. And behind all limitations of particular human freedoms must be the purpose and practical effect of increasing general human freedom as a result.

These are the equalitarian and libertarian principles of Western civilization. They spring from the idea of man as a moral agent who finds his ultimate good in self-determining behavior and what growth is possible to him through self-determination. The implied postulate is that man cannot really grow in any other way.

Why, then, is our civilization tending to go to pieces? Because we have developed and largely accepted a doctrine of progress which is absolutely opposed to this sort of human freedom—a doctrine which requires, for its successful application, the practical destruction of this sort of human freedom. Accordingly, we are faced with a dilemma: Either we continue to "progress" and lose what freedom we have left, or we preserve and increase our freedom by changing our idea of progress.

What is the doctrine of progress which threatens our freedom? It is the doctrine that technology can make the world over into a Utopia—that scientific knowledge is the same thing as wisdom.

The rest of this article will be a review of the contents of Friedrich Georg Juenger's *The Failure of Technology*, for of all the books we have read on this subject, none, we think, approaches it either in conceptual breadth or in skill of development. It seems just to say that, at last, the "infant civilization" of tomorrow, which is trying to get born, has found an able advocate. This book is or ought to be epoch-making. It belongs

on the shelf beside Ortega's *Revolt of the Masses*, as a volume which carries Ortega's analysis forward into the realm of causes. Ortega gave a brilliantly faithful description of the massman of contemporary industrial society. Juenger provides an equally brilliant description of how the massman loses his intellectual and moral individuality.

Juenger writes about the quick and the dead—the quick, who resist the assumptions of technology, and the dead who submit. Why are the dead, dead? Because technology means skill in the manipulation of inert materials, and a technology-dominated population is a population increasingly treated like inert material. Technology is the enemy of life, or—to make an essential correction—technology as we seem to understand it and undoubtedly use it, is the enemy of life. Living things deviate from norms because they are alive, have vital independence, and they deviate to the extent of their intelligence. Technology hates originality and individuality with the fury of a frustrated planner of world destiny. The technologist is a perfectionist, an Olympian of undisturbed routine. His kind of perfection depends upon the reduction of men to automatons; he *must* know and control their responses, else how can he plan?

There is a rare irony in the fact that Juenger, a German, completed this book in 1939, on the eve of the Nazi outburst upon Europe, and that it is the most devastating criticism of the totalitarian mania that has so far been made. Everybody has been asking what has happened to the world, wondering why this type of insanity has spread so widely throughout both East and West. Juenger knows. He understands the obsession and exposes its roots so clearly that there can never again be any real doubt about the diagnosis. *The Failure of Technology* is much more than a big intuition about the menace of the machine. It is a profound investigation of numerous phases of industrial society in the light of Juenger's central critical thesis—that the assumptions of technology, as we conceive and apply them, are at

continuous and merciless war with the human essence. His book might well have retained its German title in translation, *The Perfection of Technology*, and been subtitled, "The Failure of Man."

It is not, however, a depressing book. A genuine increase in human knowledge should never be depressing. Despite the surgical skill with which Juenger lays bare the decay of our culture and illustrates its dehumanizing capitulation to technological ends, the book has a luminous quality. The reader may say to himself, Now, at last, I know what is wrong. Juenger, it is true, does not tell us what to do about it. He is not writing for a beehive or an anthill, but for human beings with imagination. It is the precise condition of victory over the technological delusion that *no one* should tell us what to do, but that we should discover what to do for ourselves.

In his closing chapter, Juenger reminds his readers of the fascinations of science fiction, in which the future of the earth, or even of the entire universe, is made to hang upon the genius of a single inventor---one who works madly against impending doom, alone in his hidden laboratory, guarded by one or two faithful and adoring servitors. What does this Nietzschean nightmare imply for the people whose emotional tastes are served by such reading matter? It means that they have replaced their human ideals with the ideals of technology. "What," asks Juenger, "could be more abhorrent than the idea that the use of such an invention depended upon the will of one single being? Should we not have to fear him, however noble he might be, far more than the most vicious and inhuman criminal? To place such powers in the hands of one man is a thought more inhuman than any human crime."

The Failure of Technology, we may predict, will be no more "popular" than Ortega's study of the massman. It exposes too many fallacies, is too careless of ideologies and slogans. Of one familiar "liberal" cliché, Juenger writes:

To be "socially conscious" today means nothing else than to maintain faith in machinery and organization. Social consciousness is the kowtow of man before the ideology of technological progress. The craving for security may well call forth powerful organizations, but to give man real security is entirely beyond their power. This is not just because the only real security we can ever possess depends upon ourselves and, being our individual responsibility, cannot be relegated to others; this is not only because these organizations merely distribute or spread poverty; but because these organizations are in themselves already expressions of poverty, worry, misery, and like all scarcity organizations they mushroom just as fast as unorganized wealth declines.

The early chapters are devoted to the ascetic imperialism of the technologists. The ideal engineer wants a perfectly functioning machine—productive "efficiency." He tries to eliminate the "human" factors as much as possible. For a machine, humans are sources of error, of slow-downs and mistakes. Then, as production increases, markets must be sought. The technological urge invades merchandising. The machines must be kept busy. Selling efforts are accompanied by fair words, but the meaning behind the words is the need of the machines to keep running. The great factory becomes the home of voracious demons, consuming the raw materials of the earth, laying waste the countryside, heaping up great mounds of refuse, muddying the atmosphere with fumes, inflicting great scars on the landscape—reaching out across great oceans to places of natural, untouched beauty, and "exploiting" them.

The technologist is the dark opposite of Orpheus, whose songs brought even inanimate stones to life. Technology imposes the principle of the lifeless and the inert upon the living. The ancient myth of personification, of Universal animism, has been reversed, for now death invades life. As they enter the factory, men are classified like metals. Their temperaments are catalogued like the properties of matter. We take up the slogans derived from work with inanimate materials and apply them to human undertakings.

A working force, a project, we say, is "activated" into functioning. Men and materials are now undifferentiated parts of "operations." For the victims of the technological psychology, a false glamour is generated by such expressions.

Juenger shows the submission of medicine to technology:

Obviously, the discovery of ferments, hormones, and vitamins is not only a scientific but also a technical advance. The effects we ascribe to these substances are of a mechanical and functional nature. The uses to which we put them betray that concept: either they are introduced into the body in the form of technical preparations, supposed to produce specific mechanical effects, as are all drugs manufactured by the technician; or else they are consumed in vitamin-enriched food. This whole pharmaceutical arsenal is the product of technical specialists who think of the human body as a machine. . . .

We can reasonably assume . . . that an apple contains a number of substances that so far have eluded the chemist and the biologist. It is likewise quite certain that even if all these substances could be synthetically reproduced in a pill, they could not replace the apple. For the apple embodies a principle higher than the sum of its parts. It is not a lifeless preparation, like the substances that have been, or could be, extracted from it, but an expression of life that grows and smells and ripens and has fragrance. No doubt the wise thing to do is to eat the apple rather than swallow the vitamins which may be extracted from it. And I shall also show wisdom by eating the apple not for the sake of all the vitamins it contains, but because it is an apple. The difference is fundamental, for in the first instance I am acting like a sick person, in the second like a healthy one.

Juenger pursues the implications of his theme with extraordinary thoroughness and consistency. He ends his commentary on medicine, for example, with the observation that the technological thinking of the specialists working in the great cancer institutes of the world is very similar in character to the disease itself—mechanistic, autonomous, and devouring of "experimental" material. He wonders whether these institutes tend to spread cancer, rather than cure it. The mental activity of cancer specialists, he observes, "produces cancer artificially, as for

instance, with the aid of aromatic carbohydrates obtained from coal tar."

This book is a small encyclopedia of the devastation of the world by technological thinking. Popular literature, advertising, State bureaucracy, collectivist programs, ideological enthusiasms—all the cultural attitudes and institutions which depend upon the fractionation and subjection of human individuality are shown to have developed along with the rise of modern technology. It is the record of one vast pillage of the world by an inhuman idea—the story of reason turned against itself, of reason with no higher authority than itself, reason without knowledge of wholes or reverence for ideals. But it is also the end of the delusion for at least one man, Juenger, who may help to end the delusion for many others.

The Failure of Technology is published by the Henry Regnery Company, 53 South Washington Street, Hinsdale, Ill., at \$2.75.

Letter from **CENTRAL EUROPE**

VIENNA.—The provisional Austrian Government established by the Russians in 1945, after they had conquered Vienna, early issued ordinances against those who had been members of the National Socialist Party. In 1947, the Austrian Parliament voted for a comprehensive denazification law which included severe punishments. Courts were established and are still in action—daily condemning former Nazis to hard labour and the loss of their property.

While no particular purpose would be served by arguing about the right or wrong of denazification, it may be noted that the Austrian law is more severe than those which have been imposed by the Military Governments in Germany. One reason for its severity is the fact that the members of the Austrian Parliament believed or were made to believe in 1947 that a Peace Treaty could not be expected by the Austrians if the Austrian Government showed any "softness" toward former Nazis. The law turned out to be an exceedingly strict one, but there was little hurry on the part of the Allies with regard to making a treaty with Austria.

During recent weeks, the Austrian press has been commenting upon these circumstances in connection with a motion of the Government to nullify the consequences of the ordinance for certain of the former Party members. Expressions of editorial opinion are not limited to denazification. "Are all of us condemnable for high treason?" was the headline in one of the independent papers.

With another election in sight, every citizen will be wise to acquaint himself thoroughly with the paragraphs of the official penal code, one correspondent ironically suggested. The winning party, he continued, might be one which has been opposed by yours, and then you will be accused of "collaboration" with "the enemies of the people," and be taken before a people's court and treated as a traitor. Terrorizing the mind is regarded as a major political weapon, these days. Golden times for informers are ahead.

The frightened citizen is intimidated by small but fanatical groups who force him either to show an

absolute neutrality or to join them. If he seems politically indifferent, one press correspondent declares, he may be charged with assisting the extremists wittingly or unwittingly; and if he openly sides with one party, another group may put him on its "black list." Already he nightmarishly imagines himself as an accused, awaiting the verdict of the "people's court."

An atmosphere of inner corruption and insecurity is spreading. "Are you for black or are you for white?" the citizen is asked. There are no other colors, no nuances, no shades. If you are not strictly for us, you are our enemy! And the fearful citizen talks "black" to black party members, and "white" to the white members—he may even register himself as a member in both parties. Often he cares nothing, personally, about either one.

The maneuvers in connection with the forthcoming elections are already in full swing. Each party uses the entire dictionary of expressions about human worthiness, the liberty of man, the noble history of Austria and the dignity of her statesmen. There are even some who declare that Goethe and Mozart and even Strauss stood for their ideas and would, if they lived, be honorary party members.

All these tendencies are marks of a growing psychological anarchy. The political party as well as the State declare anything to be right, so long as it serves the momentary situation. Genuine justice has been replaced with "justice by appearance." Political expediency is on the way to being identified as an ethical conception. Political ideas are offered as dogmas and doctrines to those who have lost their religious faith. And those who do not "believe" in the new political religion are outlawed.

Where is the line of separation between error and crime, patriotism and high treason, guilt and atonement?

CENTRAL EUROPEAN CORRESPONDENT

REVIEW **BOOK REPORT**

DOUBLE MUSCADINE, by Frances Gaither (Macmillan), is not easy for this Department to handle, being one of those books you can't say much about unless you begin to tell the story. We have usually treated BoM selections as illustrative of certain prevailing attitudes of mind—attitudes which probably reflect, in some way, the lack of depth in our popular culture. (No BoM book has yet won our high esteem, although elements in certain novels have seemed commendable.)

Double Muscadine cannot be looked at down one's nose, however. It seems to have definite psychological values. While the story has no extraordinary virtues, it does not swing into extremism in depicting the tensions of a murder trial, nor are popular devices used for glamorizing the plot with spectacular action.

Reading Double Muscadine is like listening to a fairly intelligent person tell you the story of his troubled life, after supper around a camp fire. It has this much value, and cannot be treated with less respect than we would treat the teller of such a tale. Perhaps this is an appropriate time to consider what sort of analysis a reader might best use on any stray volume of fiction in order to estimate its value. There ought to be standard questions which can be asked with profit about every book, such as the following:

1. (a) What does the author show that he believes are the chief values of life? (Does he believe in God, that man is an animal, or what?)
(b) Do you agree or disagree with the "values" he selects?

2. What does the main character learn, how does he learn it, and how important is what he learns?

3. Name one incident which you feel is truly educative.

4. Are there enough of such incidents to make you believe that the book should be a part of your library, and thus be recommended as a genuine help to education?

Well, let's try this system on the BoM volume, and see what conclusions emerge.

1. *Double Muscadine* is doubtless not a great book, because the author apparently does not have any "chief" values in mind while writing. Not much thought can be stimulated by reading its 335 pages, since it is impossible to agree or disagree with nonexistent values.

2. There is no main character in this story, which might be taken as an indication of the author's unwillingness to accept any obligations exceeding that of a raconteur of events and moods.

3. The most educative incident in *Muscadine* is a killing which forces a weak-tea wife to become a responsible woman. But despite the attractiveness of any method which would simultaneously reduce the overpopulation problem and make women responsible, we rebel esthetically at this. There must be other ways.

4. To this query, the answer is negative, except for the fact that the novel affords one of the better presentations of courtroom psychology. It would be possible, of course, to say that Courtroom psychology is American psychology, and that if we understand Frances Gaither's version of the courtroom mind, we may understand our own minds better. In a measure this must be so. But these are the things we all ought to know by this time, anyway, and the important novels are those which inform us about the things we haven't yet had a chance to learn.

Somehow, after asking yourself questions like these, you seem better able to think about literature in general, for the answer to each question holds for not just one book, but for many. The writing in *Double Muscadine* presents a good opportunity for focusing attention on another aspect of a trend already remarked in

these columns—the growing disinclination of novelists to cast their characters in heroic roles. The disadvantages to the reading public of reducing all characters to the level of dull mediocrity should be sufficiently apparent in a totalitarian-tending society. But there is another aspect to this literary habit. With an author like Frances Gaither, who is not overly cynical about human nature, the leveling process may do something valuable for the reader. Starting out with a large assortment of characters, some apparently very unlike ourselves—even repellent, at first glance—we discover that we are very much like them and that all of these characters are very much like each other.

We feel a natural sympathy for the predicaments of all persons involved in the plot, and are perhaps aided in this manner to overcome the tendency to attempt judgment of people according to their personality, or appearance, or according to the role in our lives they temporarily play.

One of the supreme masters of this method was Dostoevsky, although he went to such an extreme in depicting human weakness and even depravity that many readers may be excused for failing to feel an "identity" with such persons. The whole secret seems to be in whether or not an author can step inside a character and portray feelings and ideas *from the inside outward*. If we see a common thread of mood running through all the characters, we can be rather sure that the mood belongs to the author and is not in the characters at all, and this is usually the case when all of the persons in a plot are either bitter or Pollyanna-ish. But when we find each one rising to his best as well as sinking to his worst—the best or worst of none being the same in detail, but alike only in full expression of personality—then we have perhaps deepened our ability for tolerant understanding.

COMMENTARY THINKING MACHINE

THE most recent triumph of technology is Norbert Wiener's machine for solving partial differential equations. As described in *Science* for Feb. 18, this machine "is fed data and proceeds to perform a complicated series of logical operations at a rapid rate through electronic switching devices." The machine works on the principle of sets of choices between two alternatives, each set depending upon a set of earlier choices. A clock device times the sequences of the choices.

In his recent book, *Cybernetics* (the science of control mechanisms), Prof. Wiener draws numerous analogies between his invention and the human brain. Some of them are indicated in the *Science* article:

No human interference with the processes takes place from the time of supplying the machine with its initial information until the end of the calculations. Thousands of ordered operations take place at an exceedingly rapid rate, condensing into minutes processes that would require days to complete with ordinary methods of computation. . . .

In such a machine information can be stored until ready for use, and the machine quite literally possesses a functional memory in the form of patterns of dynamic electrical configurations or of molecular patterns which may be called upon to furnish information by appropriate stimuli arriving as timed pulses from other circuits in the apparatus. It is important to realize that this memory need NOT be lodged in any one locus in the machine, but belongs to its function as a whole. To ignore this is to commit the fallacy of Descartes in locating the action of mind on matter in the pineal gland.

Prof. Wiener is persuaded that Cybernetics will bring about a new Industrial Revolution. He envisions entire factories "without a human operator" where all "routine, stereotyped decisions" will be made by the "electronic brain."

Considering the indictment of technology in this week's lead article, it would seem appropriate to regard Prof. Wiener as the arch-offender of all technically-minded scientists, and yet, he is the

scientist who set the example of outspoken rebellion against the technologizing of human society. A little over three years ago, he published (in the *Atlantic* for January, 1946) a letter he had written to a scientific colleague, refusing to supply certain data relating to guided missiles.

. . . the bombing of Hiroshima and Naasaki [he wrote], has made it clear that to provide scientific information is not a necessarily innocent act, and may entail the gravest consequences. . . .

The experience of the scientists who have worked on the atomic bomb has indicated that in any investigation of this kind the scientist ends by putting unlimited powers in the hands of the people whom he is least inclined to trust with their use. It is perfectly clear also that to disseminate information a weapon in the present state of our civilization is to make it practically certain that that weapon will be used. . . . If therefore I do not desire to participate in the bombing or poisoning of defenseless peoples—and I most certainly do not—I must take a serious responsibility as to those to whom I disclose my scientific ideas. . . .

This mood of responsibility runs through Prof. Wiener's writings. In a summary of his volume, *Cybernetics*, appearing in the *Scientific American* for last November, he compared the "shock" treatment used to restore a calculating machine to operation—by shaking or jolting it—with the shock treatment of mental disease, pointing out that brain surgery is a species of shock therapy. Of brain surgery or lobotomy, he observed:

It [lobotomy] is currently having a certain vogue, probably not unconnected with the fact that it makes custodial care of many patients easier. (Let me remark in passing that killing makes their custodial care still easier.) Pre-frontal lobotomy does seem to have a genuine effect on malignant worry, not by bringing the patient nearer to a solution of his problem, but by damaging or destroying the capacity for maintained worry, known in the terminology of another profession as conscience.

Prof. Wiener's twofold achievement, in technology, and, in connection with technology, a heightened sense of moral responsibility, illustrates the extraordinary difference that may

exist between a general trend of western civilization—the dehumanizing trend of technology—and the individual human beings who are technologists. This difference becomes easy to overlook, in reading a book like Juenger's *Failure of Technology*.

If Juenger is read carefully, however, it will be seen that he does not attack scientific reason or technology, but the development of technology as *an end in itself*. Reason should serve human, not technological, ends, and this is what many technologists—Prof. Wiener being a dramatic exception—have overlooked. To use technology for human ends requires intensive inquiry into what human ends are or ought to be—a question which not only technologists, but the great majority of men have consistently ignored. Juenger's contribution is in his comprehensive and irrefutable analysis of the price we are paying for this neglect.

CHILDREN ... and Ourselves

THE word "discipline" is a curious sort of bogey. Its mere sound arouses opposition in most of us, during a good-sized portion of our lives, yet let a man become "head" of a family, begin to "run" a business, or be elected to a post of public responsibility—say, in the legislature or the courts—and he usually starts talking of the necessity for "increased discipline." As for our children, since they have not as yet undertaken any such weighty responsibilities, there can be little doubt that they will belong to the first category, among those who intuitively sense a lurking danger to themselves the moment we even begin to *think* about "more discipline" in their presence, let alone discuss or plan it.

It is difficult to get at the central problem of discipline as a *subject in itself* unless those who consider it have first evolved something of a common background of thoughts and values. So far, it has been our suggestion that before we make the mistake of "disciplining" our children along conventional lines, we need to know educational history, and must also begin at least the tentative development of workable principles in educational psychology. The "educational psychology" we have been recommending so incessantly is summed up in the idea that children should be treated essentially as "equals." While children do not develop, in the first seven or eight years, the same reasoning capacity as the adult displays, we *must* show toward the embryonic beginnings of reason in children the same deference shown to reason matured. Else, we demonstrate to the child that power and position, not reason, are the *important* things—before his ability to reason has fairly begun to unfold; and then, of course, it becomes unlikely that it ever will. This is why, we have said, we must treat children very much as we would ideally treat adults. We need not and should not expect as much from children, but it is possible for us to

show them that reason and not power is to be the ultimate arbiter in our relationships with them.

It is obvious why most of us have two different feeling-reactions to the word discipline—one when we are young, and another when we are "older" and "more conservative." When we are young, our embryonic rational faculty resents anything that is forced upon us; when we are beset with the problems of administering the complexities of a family, we begin to place faith in the Virtues of an Organization which will move efficiently without endless debate and recalcitrance. We become, at this point also, it might be noted, politicians—men who wish to manipulate various forms of pressure or force in order to attain an immediate end held desirable, and which we feel our "position" enables us to visualize more clearly than others do. So human affairs are everywhere complicated by the presence of "pressure groups" who laud conformity in the interests of efficiency—and who call willing compliance "good discipline." Those who are having their affairs organized *for* them, whether they be citizens of a State or the small members of our family, tend to acquire a distaste for the word discipline. "I must discipline you" is the extremity of the thinking of the organizer, who has passed from conceiving the *necessity* of some kind of discipline to the assumption of the *right to punish deviations from what he has come to regard as the mechanics of good organization*. Thus "discipline," during the course of the early years of most of us, becomes equated with punishment; ergo, undesirable. In our later years, we think in terms of "good family organization" or good communal planning; ergo, "discipline"—the conformity of others to *our* plan—becomes desirable, and something, moreover, devised, as we often believe, for the benefit of others.

The psychological lesson of Fascism is that there are no lasting benefits from externally imposed discipline. The trains may run on time for a while, but when power-backed authority vanishes, no longer does punctuality exist as a

"national virtue." Similarly with a family. The rigorously controlled child may function well as a unit within the "system" of a family, but very poorly when the family breaks up through death or separation, or when he leaves home or violently quarrels with the source of family discipline. The man who has *been* disciplined overmuch may have learned nothing about *discipline* itself. He may become either disjointed or confused in his activities, or drift into the refuge of another authoritarianism, religious, political or personal (for "personal" authoritarianisms, see any elementary text on psychiatry).

We all keep saying that the fundamental principle of democracy should be self-discipline. Of course it should, for democracy can justify itself only as it improves the quality of individual human beings, and no improvement in quality can take place without diligent, individual creative effort. But how is it possible to encourage self-discipline, especially among our children? This is the central problem of education within a democracy. The first answer must be that we have to show that self-discipline is good by demonstrating a great deal of self-discipline in our own lives, and by showing that such self-discipline produces results which are both morally good and emotionally pleasant. We cannot do this by argument, saying persuasively to our child, "See, my 'discipline' has been good!" The child probably knows already, as well as we do, whether the results of our efforts have been good or not. We cannot say: "When I was young I disciplined myself by giving up this and this and this, and therefore you must see that you give up this and this and this." In the first place, this is a negative approach to discipline, and in the second place, if it *is* good for the child to give up certain habits in the interests of developing discipline, we have a wonderful opportunity to produce the "example" parents are fond of mentioning. More discipline would be also *good for us*—who is without habits that need improvement? Also, if we are to suggest the necessity for some kind of corrective measures to discourage a child's repeated

mistakes, we should be prepared to institute corrective measures against ourselves. If we actually think that standing in a dark closet is good for the child who loses its temper, we should march to a dark closet ourselves the moment we lose our own—and let the child know we are doing it. Such an idea sounds ludicrous only because, *as parents*, we have allowed ourselves to enthrone pomposity. Actually such a procedure enables the child to feel that he and the parent are comrades-in-arms in the difficult war against all the human weaknesses. If we insist that children are very much less capable of rational control than ourselves, let us apply this principle by punishing ourselves for deviations from the Ideal Attitudes—in *whatever proportion we feel our present capacity for self-control* exceeds that of the child—not by saying that because the child is "mostly a little animal," we should treat *him* harshly.

When shall we really manage to be rid of the disastrous psychological effects of thinking that because we are no longer children we are very Important People whose weaknesses may be overlooked? The only place weakness cannot be tolerated is in our Authority. Of course we cannot isolate any single cause for this human trait, but there is food for thought in the fact that authoritarianism is almost always accompanied by either covert or open libertinism. From the standpoint of individual progress, there is little if anything to choose between Authoritarianism and Libertinism. Being too much on the libertine side as we undoubtedly are in America today does not mean we can be cured by authoritarian devices, for these brought about the extremity as a reaction. We cannot establish discipline in our nation or in our families by joining a church or a new political party. We can do it only the hard way—by becoming philosophers first, self-discipliners second, and persuaders of the young in the *third* place.

FRONTIERS

Theology Has Consequences

SOME years ago, before the war, a prominent Unitarian minister of Los Angeles exclaimed in a public meeting, "I don't care anything about a man's theology: what I'm interested in is his *sociology!*" The implications are plain. Let a man believe what he likes in the matter of dogmas creeds—so long as he is on the Right Side in social issues. For a generation or more, this has been the view of liberals who are "tolerant" of religion, and it will up the burden of the present discussion to show that it is a rather shallow view.

Take the problem of antisemitism. In the *Partisan Review* for May, Sidney Hook points out what is seldom pointed out, namely, that antisemitism occurs only within the boundaries of Christian culture. Does this fact suggest that theological traditions may have sociological consequences? It is difficult to come to any other conclusion. Prof. Hook writes:

There is no one cause of antisemitism, or of any other mass movement, but it is possible to find certain constant factors which are present in all its manifestations in diverse countries, conditions and times. These indicate that antisemitism is not so much a bourgeois phenomenon as a Christian phenomenon, that it is endemic to every Christian culture, whose religions made the Jews the eternal villain in the Christian drama of salvation. . . .

There is, of course, an antisemitism which precedes Christianity; and there is, and probably will continue to be, an antisemitism in Moslem countries. But these antisemitisms are of the same kind as oppositions between Moslem and Christian, Christian and pagan, or between Christians of different sects. They are not so integral to one another as antisemitism is to the Christian epic.

The theological basis for antisemitism is that the Jews are held responsible by the Christians for the death of Christ, who was the "son of God,"

and while it may be supposed that only "ignorant" people still take literally as "history" the story of the betrayal of Jesus by Judas, the trial of the Messiah before Pontius Pilate, and his subsequent crucifixion by the Roman soldiers, it is also true that the Christian culture has never repudiated as false or unworthy the personifications of this central drama of the Christian religion. The literal interpretation of the crucifixion is of course the worst sort of materialism—a mixture of legend and metaphysics which does violence to the sensibilities and must have exercised an incalculably benumbing influence on the moral perceptions of Christians from the beginning of its acceptance.

It is natural, perhaps, for a religion which finds in fear its strongest hold over the minds of its believers to produce the most ferocious psychology of scapegoatism known to history, but unnatural in the extreme for whole populations who suppose themselves to be "civilized" to continue in tacit acceptance of the dogmas on which both the fear and the scapegoatism are based. This is not to suggest that there are no other aspects of antisemitism than the inherited theological bias of Christian peoples, but simply to point out that neither antisemitism nor "anti" anything could exist among a people who have not deeply ingrained in them the habit of looking for some person or group on whom to blame their troubles.

Prof. Hook is quite certain that antisemitism will continue for as long as the children of Christian are brought up to believe in a legend, pretending to be religious history, "which pictures the Jew as a deicide." It will be hard to prove him wrong. Another way of looking at the matter, however, might go deeper toward its cause. Why not get at the reason for anyone believing that "God" can be "killed"? The conception is really obscene in the Greek sense of this term—unfitted for public display.

Antisemitism founded on theological prejudice has a long and bloody history. Everyone

has heard of the Black Death which swept across Europe at the close of the Middle Ages, but very few know that this great epidemic of bubonic plague became the occasion for a wave of an antisemitism as mercilessly cruel as anything the Nazis devised. Hecker's *Epidemis of the Middle Ages* (published in London in 1846), founded on eye-witness accounts, relates that the common people, when they began to fall sick, at once charged the Jews, the traditional enemies of Christianity and Christ, with poisoning the wells. Hecker relates:

The persecution of the Jews commenced in September and October, 1348, at Chillon, on the Lake of Geneva, where the first criminal proceedings were instituted against them, after they had long before been accused by the people of poisoning the wells; similar scenes followed in Bern and Freyburg, in January, 1349. Under the influence of excruciating suffering, the tortured Jews confessed themselves guilty of the crime imputed to them; and it being affirmed that poison had been found in a well at Zoffingen, this was deemed a sufficient proof to convince the world; . . .

Both nobles and peasants of Europe bound themselves by solemn oath to let no Jew live. All the Jews of Basle "were enclosed in a wooden building, constructed for the purpose, and burnt together with it, without sentence or trial, which indeed would have availed them nothing." Many Jewish communities undertook mass suicide. Hecker continues:

At Spire, the Jews, driven to despair, assembled in their own habitations, which they set on fire, and thus consumed themselves with their families. . . . At Strasbourg, two thousand Jews were burnt alive in their own burial ground, where a large scaffold had been erected: a few who promised to embrace Christianity, were spared, and their children taken from the pile.

In Mayence alone, 12,000 Jews are said to have been put to a cruel death. . . . At Esslingen, the whole Jewish community burned themselves in their synagogue; and mothers were often seen throwing their children on the pile, to prevent their being baptized, and then precipitating themselves into the flame. . . . Almost all the Jews who saved their lives by baptism, were afterwards burnt at different times;

for they continued to be accused of poisoning the water and the air. Christians also, whom philanthropy or gain had induced to offer them protection, were put on the rack and executed with them. Many Jews who had embraced Christianity, repented of their apostacy,—and, returning to their former faith, sealed it with their death. . . .

The Black Death was hideous enough, but this insane revenge taken upon the Jews has no parallel except in the crimes of the Nazis, which exceed only in quantity, not quality, the example set by pious Christians of the Middle Ages. How could those who accepted the gentle Jesus as their Savior commit such infamies in the name of loyalty to religion? Possibly, one explanation is in the avowed irrationalism of Christian dogma. If the ways of God to man need not be justified by reason, the ways of man to man can claim a similar exemption.

In justice, it should be said that humane Christians have always deplored outbursts of antisemitism and Christian leaders and spokesmen condemned it in the fourteenth century as they do today. But really effective Christian opposition to antisemitism would mean the emphatic repudiation of any literal or "historical" meaning of the account of the crucifixion, in order to remove any trace of justification for resentment toward the Jews on the part of primitive-minded Christians. This course would seem to be the only one consistent with the spirit of the Sermon on the Mount.

Other great religions contain parallels to the Christian idea of a crucified Savior—Osiris suffered death at the hands of Typhon, the dark, opposing Power; Dionysos dies and is reborn; Prometheus is chained to the rock by Zeus; but in these savior myths, the Enemy is symbolically, not *historically* represented. As the Savior is the personification of a metaphysical idea, so, also, is the Antagonist. But in the Christian story, it is the Jews who are charged with the death of the Savior, and no crueller distortion of metaphysical allegory could have been imposed upon either the Jews or the Christians. This inflaming idea has

always been at the root of the unreasoning hatred of the Jews. It was the incendiary spark which released the persecutions which occurred during the first Crusade; during the Black Plague, it made the desperate townspeople of Europe turn upon the Jews as well-poisoners; and later, in years just prior to the Reformation, it gave inspiration and momentum to the antisemitic craze whipped up by the ignorant friars and so courageously opposed by John Reuchlin. It lies near the surface in the subconscious mind of the culture of Christendom, bursting into flaming resentment whenever morbid fears have weakened human decency, and when demagogues endeavor to ride to power on the worst potentialities of human nature.

Sociology may be an important academic "discipline," but theology seems to play a greater part in determining human behavior, especially in time of crisis. Possibly, if we could reform our scapegoating theology, the sociological problems of the age would seem far less insoluble to us.