

## ECONOMIC ENDS AND MEANS

THE requests of several readers—two within the past month—for a discussion of the works of Karl Marx require at least an explanation of why no such article or review will be forthcoming. It is hardly that Marx is "unimportant" or not worth writing about. His influence upon thought as well as upon the forms of modern social organization has been incalculably great, and no one who wants to understand the shaping intellectual and moral forces of the time can neglect the impact of Marxian analysis and doctrine. But to discuss with any particularity the "works" of Karl Marx would necessitate an extensive background in nineteenth-century economic theory, and this, in turn, for all but specialists, would entail a course of intensive study. If a reader happens to share in the assumptions of Marxist thought, he would probably do well to pursue this study, but for others, a more useful inquiry will be to investigate some of the basic issues involved in all attempts at human betterment through change of the economic system.

First of all, there is the question of the *aim* of the system—any system—the present one, or one that is proposed to replace it. What is the system supposed to do? The Marxist program envisioned the liberation of man on the assumption that human misery is due to the economic arrangements of capitalist society, and Marx devoted his life to the project of transferring ownership of the productive and distributive mechanisms to "the people"—the workers themselves. But the important question, here, is not whether or not socialism will "work," not whether it violates human nature, nor even whether it is a "good thing"—but instead, whether or not the establishment of an economic system, even the best possible one, ought to be thought of as the ultimate aim of human beings.

The purpose of an economic system is to see that goods and services are efficiently distributed among the people who need and desire them. That is all an economic system can do. It might be important for some people to discover that they "need" less things instead of more, but an economic system cannot help them to make this discovery. An economic system ought to be "just," we say. But every system is a kind of machine, and a machine knows nothing about justice. Men know something about justice, and unless just men are operating the machine, it will probably work injustice.

It seems fairly obvious that the social revolutionaries and economic reformers of our time have identified ethics and economics. They had plenty of excuse for doing this, for they saw that the economic processes of the societies in which they lived were mass-producing poverty and suffering more than anything else. But there is a difference between saying that an economic system embodies the injustices done by human beings, and saying that the "right" economic system will inevitably create justice. It is this difference, we think, that the revolutionary and liberal movements of the past hundred years have almost entirely ignored.

Most people have read a few proletarian novels. The best of the lot is probably John Steinbeck's *Grapes of Wrath*. What, then, is the highest good, according to John Steinbeck—or, according to the Joads? A decent house, a garden, a clean, well-stocked kitchen, regular, fair-paying jobs for the menfolks, happy, well-scrubbed, well-fed children who go to school every day and are respected by their playmates—in short, the traditional scheme of "ideal" American life, suffused with all the minor virtues of good, substantial, hard-working people. What

is wrong with this picture? Nothing at all, as a picture, but does it represent the highest good?

Do you get that kind of a society by deliberately setting out to construct it, according to specifications? Many people seem to think so, which is one reason, perhaps, for the fact that there are so many democrats and republicans in the United States. A less popular and relatively unheard-of view is that reasonably desirable material conditions are never the result of going after them for their own sake, but are a by-product of a radically different undertaking.

But, someone will say, you can't expect all these people to start looking for the Holy Grail. That may true, but we can expect *some* people to start looking for something more than a Hollywood happy ending, or even an ending by Harold Bell Wright. We are talking about human culture, and there just isn't any culture without the distinguished minority that doesn't care whether it gets a happy ending or not. We are arguing for the proposition that in a civilized community, the tone of human objectives and the ideals of human relations are set by people who are searching for a higher than economic good.

What is the use of discussing Karl Marx, when this is the proposition to be defended? For there to be an argument, some premises need to be held in common. Here, the only common element is the broad, ethical idea of the good of man, which must certainly be conceded to Marx. But on the terms we have proposed, there is no possible meeting with Marx on the question of *what is good for man*, so no argument can take place.

Probably a corollary should be added to our proposition, to the effect that there are times when the sheer fact of human brotherhood makes it necessary for people who personally do not care much about material objectives to throw themselves into the struggle for basic economic justice, but if they lose sight of the fact that this is only one sort of justice—a very limited sort—they

end by becoming leaders or would-be leaders of some kind of totalitarian state.

Actually, both capitalism and socialism should be made to answer equally to the charge of stifling and degrading the religious impulse in human beings. There is, so far as we can see, no important moral distinction between the two, if they be considered as competing ideologies. Both assert dogmas which elevate economic benefits to the highest conceivable good—either directly, in doctrinaire form, as in socialism, or by clear implication, as in capitalism. And both, in aggressive application, finally pervert religious motives to the service of systematized mediocrity, producing, at the same time, a fascist or bolshevist elite charged with suppressing all human tendencies to pursue non-material ideals.

So far, we have considered only what may be named the "highest good" fallacy of economic thinking. A second fallacy relates to the dependence of the advocates of change upon "organization." There is doubtless a close connection between the evolution of the cynical or "tired" radical and the reliance of most revolutionary programs on the achievement of power through party organization. Organization is conceived as the crucial link between the theory and the fact of social revolution. In practice, however, whenever organization has been regarded as the principal means to the attainment of revolutionary ideals, it has eventually become the most impregnable barrier to their realization. The worship of organization seems logical enough, so long as the ends of the revolution are conceived in material terms, for publicly supplied material welfare requires the service of large-scale organization; but the fact that the drive to absolute power through organization seems always to corrupt the revolution ought to be enough to call into question the basic assumptions which are involved.

Only within the past century, the West has had sufficient experience with attempts at social change through political revolution to justify a

critical rule in respect to all such movements—a rule which might be stated: No "program" entailing a radical change in the patterns of human motivation should be given serious consideration unless it can be voluntarily applied, even if only partially, by individuals and small groups within the structure of the existing social order. This is the equivalent of saying that unless there is a moral revolution, there is no revolution at all. It might even be claimed that revolutionary propaganda which suggests that the important moral changes in human beings will come naturally *after* new economic and political relationships have been established is probably as vicious a betrayal of human beings as the doctrine of the Vicarious Atonement has been in the prevailing religious ideology. Both contentions relieve the individual of moral responsibility, and both imply a master-and-slave psychology.

A more innocent deception that may be practiced in the name of human betterment arises from nostalgia for the simple life. The advocates of decentralization and less industrialism are often guilty of anticipating in Arcadian handicraft culture that is to result from the rejection of large-scale manufacture and bigness in industry and government. William Morris is sometimes given as an example of this sort of unrealistic utopian who neglects to replace basic economic processes in his theories while condemning the sort of socioeconomic pattern which now exists. In other words, the decentralist who proposes an over-all scheme for establishing more individual freedom on the basis of less mechanization has the responsibility of explaining how Spartan "simplicity" will become under the system he proposes. Just who, in any given utopia, will do society's drudgery and "dirty work"? Such questions call for a careful estimate of how psychologically dependent most people have become upon the production and distribution facilities of our present economic system. People who refuse to slice their own bread are not exactly prepared for careers in revolutionary simplicity.

Another tendency that will bear discouragement is the habit of uncritical contempt for all existing forms of central government. Even the much pilloried FBI has been of some service in peonage cases in the South and in apprehending lynchers—a thing which should be recognized and admitted, despite the easily identified schizoid element in FBI behavior, as illustrated, for example, in the anti-Negro bias disclosed in the recent loyalty investigations in Washington. A better instance of the service of national government to the democratic interest of a single region is in the policy of the Department of the Interior in connection with California's Central Valley Project. Local democracy in California seems almost powerless to oppose the great utility and agricultural monopolies that have grown up in this state. Meanwhile, defense of the rights of the individual citizen has had strong support from the federal government, showing that the idea of impartial service to the entire community, regardless of the claims of privilege, is not necessarily a fascist device. This holds also for other federal agencies of national scope, such as the Forest Service.

The obvious danger in an analysis of this sort is that it so easily relaxes into a do-nothing approval of the status quo. But this tendency, again, results from the view that no significant change can occur without the power of militant organization. Count the number of former radicals and socialists who are now prosperous contributors to magazines like the *Reader's Digest*, the *Saturday Evening Post* and the Luce publications, or are collecting anywhere from five hundred to a thousand dollars a week as Hollywood scenarists. If questioned about their negotiated peace with the big battalions, they would probably answer, "But what can a single individual do? There's no use going hungry." And there would not be any great hypocrisy in this reply.

At this point, it seems in order to lay down another "absolute," to this effect: Organizations,

as such, can do nothing of enduring importance on behalf of essential human welfare. Only individuals can make free decisions; only individuals can take to heart moral ideas; only individuals can declare high purposes and embody the integrity that is necessary to carry them out. An organization may transmit and extend the moral power of individuals, but it is never a substitute for individual moral intelligence. It seems likely that radicals who are convinced of this truth will never get "tired."

We don't know much about the personal history of Scott Nearing and have little knowledge of his particular connections with the radical movement, but we have read one of his books (*Dollar Diplomacy*, written with Joseph Freeman), and we know a little about what he is doing, now. Mr. Nearing seems an excellent example of a radical who did not get "tired." At present, he is up in Vermont, producing maple syrup himself, and at the same time continuing his publication, *World Events*, containing useful commentary on national and international affairs. It is no universal panacea, perhaps, to go back to the land, but it's a lot better than going to Hollywood. And in one sense it *is* a panacea, for if every man with creative and analytical capacities of mind would deliberately set about finding his own economic and moral independence as Scott Nearing seems to have done—whether on "the land," or somewhere else—the "revolution," we think, would soon be an established fact. Problems of organization would then be purely matters of technical efficiency, which is all they really amount to, anyway, and the restored sense of the meaning of *human culture* would soon bring about the educational and other social changes we long for.

This is the stage of the discussion of a subject of this sort when the going always gets difficult—when the obligation of becoming "practical" is squarely before us. What, indeed, can a young man, or a young woman, or young man and woman and child, do, besides tap the sweet sap of

the maple tree? Plato, when confronted with a question as puzzling as this one, always lapsed into mythology, which is as good a way as any to insist that it has an answer, although one that loses its meaning when an attempt is made to state it as a formula. It is a question much the same as asking what the Norse Gods used to tie up the Fenris Wolf, or what sort of fibres Ariadne used to weave her thread. The best meaning that we can read from these stories is that every real solution to the basic dilemmas of human life contains a secret ingredient which no man can supply to another, and if any man pretends to, or offers it for sale, he is just another lying priest.

Actually, a review of as many examples as possible of voluntarism in social usefulness and social reform would be a public service of immeasurable importance. Arthur Morgan's *Long Road* has some suggestive steps in this direction, telling what a few people have already done, and what ingenuity might devise. There is a clear need for wider knowledge of unpublicized experiments in education, in small business, agriculture, in any undertaking which recognizes and resists—however imperfectly or even "unsuccessfully"—the sort of compromises and confinements to which natural human idealism is continually subjected in our civilization. There are plenty of accounts of the routine forms of ethical expression, but these seem always to evade or ignore the roots of modern social problems. What is wanted is a small library of the *living* social philosophies of self-reliant individuals.

## *Letter from* **GERMANY**

BERLIN.—If by the word "ideology" be understood the "false consciousness" of a person or a social group about itself, the inhabitant of the Russian-controlled part of Germany has special opportunities to study its various aspects. This, because a great historical movement—the Marxist one—which claimed (with considerable justice) to unveil the ideology of so-called "bourgeois" society, has itself developed a new and thicker ideological "mist" than the one which it set out to destroy.

The utter defeat of Marxism (in its present, especially Russian, form) in its struggle against false consciousness is appalling to anyone who has compared its theoretical expressions with the actual conditions prevailing under "Marxist" rule—in respect to such conceptions as "socialism in Russia," and all terms beginning with "people," such as *people's* democracy, *people's* police, *people's* factories, and so forth. Unconsciously or not, a new ideology has been developed and is very similar to what we know of the scholasticism of the Middle Ages. Marxism today is pure scholasticism, and nothing else.

Why should this have occurred? Does present-day society tend to corrupt ideologic movements? Will Marxism be able to free itself from the chains of scholasticism (after the downfall of the present Russian regime)? Which elements in Marxism—or outside of it—and which conditions of social organization influenced its decline? What form of thought will follow Marxism, in the course of progressive and lucid explanation of social evolution and analysis of social conditions?

These questions cannot, of course, be dealt with in a short letter. But the answers will probably be found in fulfilling several tasks which can be sketched here in a few lines: (1) It becomes necessary to expose the actual structure of the present Russian social organization—its economic, political, social meaning for the people living in this sphere of ideology. (2) The undefined biases or assumptions in the position of the Marxists have to

be uncovered. (Marxists tend to see ideologic problems only in the ranks of their opponents.) (3) It is necessary to avoid falling into boundless relativism or nihilism, as if it were not possible at all to find a level of thought free from ideologic preconception.

Some elements of the answers to our problem are to be found in the so-called sociology of science (Karl Mannheim, Max Scheler) which tries to show how the consciousness of man is conditioned by the social reality in which he lives in each period of history. But the important question arises: Are there social standpoints from which to grasp objectively the reality of social life in a given period—standpoints which avoid subjection to the "false consciousness" of the period? Perhaps the partition of present society into different nations impedes the discovery of such an impartial point of view. We think, however, that the growing rational mastery of the world in general will lead mankind to the destruction of ideological delusions in ever greater extent. The defeat of Marxism need not discourage us from again trying to find a sight free from ideological cloudiness, to see social reality as it is. The scientific approach to knowledge of things which started—among others—Bacon and urged on Hegel, Marx, and Mannheim, should tend to develop new forms of rational, dynamic thinking that recognizes the questionable and problematic, even in its own position, and goes on to a superior level. We may become more sceptical, but we need not be nihilistic.

GERMAN CORRESPONDENT,

## *REVIEW*

### "THERE LET IT REMAIN

LEAD, KINDLY LIGHT, Vincent Sheean's book on Gandhi's life and death (Random House, \$3.75), the mid-summer Book-of-the-Month selection, will certainly suggest to a sizable number of American readers a new way of viewing the psychology and philosophy of the East. This volume is considerably more than Vincent Sheean's "latest book." It is the first work in which he allows himself to write from strong personal conviction concerning what truth is, and how it can be found. It certainly cannot be said that Sheean is trying either to make Gandhi "more popular" or to make himself more popular by capitalizing on the almost universal respect paid to India's great man. While a number of reviews have stressed Sheean's description of the spectacular moments of Gandhi's assassination—incidentally overplaying the personal "psychic experience" reported by Sheean—the reader will discover that this is decidedly not a volume designed to keep interest alive from emotional stimulus. Gandhi's story *is* dramatic, but Sheean rightly considers an emphasis on Indian philosophy and psychology more helpful to an understanding of Gandhi and of Gandhi's place in world history.

Ever since his rejection of Catholicism at the age of fifteen, Sheean has been on some sort of a quest for truth. His journey to India was not essentially a porter's assignment, but rather the result of a clearly defined desire to learn something from a man he believed likely to be the greatest living philosopher and religious teacher. "I hoped," relates Sheean, "to find some clue to a different view of reality, something in which the relentless opposition of material forces need not endlessly and forever lead to ruin."

Sheean's apology for his discussion of Indian philosophy is really not an apology at all, but a flat statement to those who read his volume that they must either investigate Eastern currents of thought

or give up the endeavor to understand Gandhi. Sheean writes of the Indian leader:

In innumerable ways he showed, both in his writing and his talk, the profundity of his Hinduism, and to understand him at all demands at least an acquaintance with those systems, ideas and aspirations which created and used him. History and scripture, the structure of Hindu society—all this must needs come into it, far more, actually, than the details of a purely temporary relation between India and the British Empire: the political struggle was, in my view, almost incidental, even though it did lead to the liberation of India. What counts most of all for us of the West is what hold Gandhi (and India) had of the truth or of a truth, how much of this can help us in our extremity, and what possible alternative may be offered to the sterile and self-destructive rush of our materialism.

Readers of MANAS will doubtless recall references to Edmond Taylor's *Richer by Asia*, a volume of unparalleled value, in our opinion. There is little use in comparing Taylor's fascinating voyage of psychological discovery with *Lead, Kindly Light*, but it may be said that Sheean reaches the same fundamental conclusions. Persons who have wished that *Richer by Asia* might gain a larger number of readers will be gratified by the more extensive circulation of *Lead, Kindly Light* through BoM.

Sheean's description of Gandhi as an impartial *educator* in non-denominational religion seems to fit well with all that is known about Gandhi, and at the same time explains why Sheean's impression of Gandhi was so overwhelming—the American journalist had himself fought against the rigidities of creeds and religious formulas ever since his rejection of the Catholic faith. Concerning what he received from Gandhi, he writes:

Essentially, what he led us back to was the concept of our own highest truth. This may differ widely: we should hardly expect the highest truth of a physicist, an astronomer, or a biologist to be precisely the same as the highest truth of a Buddhist monk, an Italian priest or a Russian bureaucrat. It has sometimes occurred to me that St. Paul's three Christian virtues, faith, hope and charity, might go by the name of dialectical materialism in a society which was founded upon that idea. But whatever it may be,

a man's highest truth is most often forgotten or obscured in the heat of the day. What Gandhi did was to lead us all—that is, all who are accessible to his lesson—back to that central core or being in which we communicate with an idea higher and greater than ourselves. Thus, among his Islamic followers it can be said that they were better Muslims because of him, as his Christian friends were better Christians. He, the greatest of Hindus, expressed above all that all-embracing impersonal truth-absorbing catholicity of Hinduism, in which whatever garment the truth has worn makes no difference and the worship itself (as the *Gita* says) is more important than the forms it takes. Thus a powerful impetus toward essential religion, as distinct from ecclesiastical orthodoxies, is one clear result of the Mahatma's life struggle.

Sheean's study of Gandhi and of India, like Taylor's book, is a study of "soul-force." While Taylor concerned himself chiefly with the dynamics of subjective truth-finding processes, Sheean is more inclined to explore the way *Darshan* (spiritual inspiration, or, in religious terms, "grace") may be communicated from one man to his fellows; Sheean's bent, therefore, is mystical, though a mysticism by sober use of the rational faculties.

A considerable portion of *Lead, Kindly Light* is devoted to *The Bhagavad Gita*, the Indian scripture reputed to contain great riches of symbolic truth about the nature of man and the means to Enlightenment. The *Gita* is the story of a war between the usurpers of a kingdom and its dispossessed, rightful rulers. Sheean, however, agrees with those who believe that the real story of the *Gita* is one of philosophy and psychology, extraordinarily subtle and complete. He discloses the *Gita* in this manner, mentioning Gandhi's own rendition of the *Gita's* philosophy, and summarizing Gandhi's interpretation in this way:

The principal thing he communicated to me was the necessity of the renunciation of the world. He was at great pains to show that the fruits of action are not forbidden and that the world could be enjoyed, providing it is first renounced. This means, of course, that a man must at all times be ready to give his life for his truth. It involves a great decision, which, once made, can never be retracted. Gandhi

had himself decided long ago and since then had never been afraid.

The great "civil war" described by the *Gita* came to mean to Sheean, as it did to Gandhi, the endless battle between the opposing psychological forces in man's own nature. Gandhi had said to Sheean that "Kurukshetra" (the *Gita's* "battlefield") is in the heart of man. After Gandhi's death, these words kept recurring in Sheean's mind, stirring in him what he calls "a kind of response as in a litany; *'and there let it remain.'*" In this way perhaps, was Sheean drawn to Gandhi's fundamental philosophy of non-violence.

Sheean's reason for writing the book appears when he contrasts the values expressed by Gandhi with the dominant political and social forces of the twentieth century: "Spiritual exhortation is given greater power for the grossest mind by the fact that it falls in a day sodark."

## *COMMENTARY*

### **MORE FOOD IN BERLIN**

COMMENTING on Paul Mattick's description of hunger in Germany (MANAS, June 15), our Berlin correspondent writes to say that conditions are considerably improved since the lifting of the blockade on May 12. Potatoes, for example, which sold at 400 marks per 100 pounds on the Berlin black market last spring, are now down to six marks (German pounds are 10 per cent heavier than English pounds). Our correspondent reports further:

In West Berlin there is an abundance of good fish which most people of all sectors buy with pleasure. The windows of the Western stores are filled with food, fruits, chocolate, textiles, shoes, etc., and prices are lower than in the Eastern zone of Germany. It is quite an invasion of goods. People look healthier and better than at any time since the war. Most people don't eat black dry bread any more; and at least cheap bread spreads are used in place of butter. Only very old and poor people still live badly. Coffee on the black market brought about 400 marks a pound last year, now 40 marks. If a man had enough money, today, he could go into any (or almost any) store in the Western sector of Berlin and buy tins of American lard, cocoa, coffee, smoked salmon, cigarettes, American, English, Swiss chocolate, candies, fruits (oranges, lemons), all at "reasonable" prices, compared with last year.

This candor is welcome; for a journal edited in the United States, there is always the danger of dealing with the sufferings of Europe in abstractions of black and white. The Germans are "all starving"; or, as some complacent travelers have reported, the stories of German hunger have been greatly exaggerated by "sentimentalists." A few precise facts like the foregoing help to provide balance and a sense of reality. It seems evident that the relative "plenty" now available in Berlin would still be extreme deprivation for Americans, were they subjected to the same conditions.

What Americans are better able to understand than actual hunger is the dull ache of a nation long

at war—the deepening sense of futility, of mindless, unproductive pain, in which the feeling of hope—not hope of "victory," but hope simply for some sort of meaning to come from the struggle—slowly recedes, to be replaced by a kind of "dead" feeling.

The war lasted long enough for the people of the United States to begin to experience this feeling, if only vaguely. In Germany, however, and elsewhere in Europe, it must have grown into a monotone of constant psychological suffering, without even momentary relief.

This pall did not pass with the military triumph of the United Nations, but remains in attenuated strength as a kind of mass neurosis of the nations, participated in by all, in varying degree. Those who do not feel its effect—who are "adjusted" to this dark shadow of the warring spirit—are indeed the lost generation of our time; they do not realize how much of humanity has been lost in the wars of the twentieth century. The return of food to the German markets is something to be thankful for, but it is very little, really, when compared to human—not merely "German"—needs, all over the world.

## CHILDREN ... and Ourselves

THE number and variety of sources for criticisms of conventional educational psychology seem almost unending. Perhaps the general feeling of guilt for an unpromising world situation does demand unprecedented re-examination of all familiar patterns of thought.

*Education for What is Real*, by Earl Kelley, Professor of Education at Wayne University, Michigan, is but one of many recent attempts to focus attention upon traditional errors of the past. Prof. Kelley's inspiration apparently arose from work done in the laboratory of the Hanover Institute (formerly the Dartmouth Eye Institute), where numerous scientific experiments in regard to "perception" have been carried on. The Hanover experiments prove conclusively what observing teachers have always known—*"that we do not get our perceptions from the things around us but the perceptions come from us."*

Various tests made at the Institute demonstrate that it is our *mind* which tells us what we are seeing, with the retina of the eye playing a secondary role. When subjects look through three peep holes, containing, consecutively, a wire cube, one drawn on a plane, and a number of strings stretched between wires at a considerable distance, the eyes in each case report the presence of identical cubes. No one of the peep-hole exhibits looks anything like a cube at all when viewed from behind the screen, "and yet," as Prof. Kelley relates, "the thing perceived in each case was a cube."

There may seem nothing remarkable about such demonstrations, but apparently for men of scientific temperament they become foci for renewed interest in the learning process. Prof. Kelley concludes that all of us, including children, *select* the various things which we wish to see, and therefore carry a complete set of preconceptions around with us, from which we may be liberated—only by individual

experimentation and thought—not just by exposure to additional facts. Prof. Kelley suggests what might result from better education:

Everything done by the child would be done in recognition of the fact that, since perception is only a prognosis and never right, he must be wrong, at least to a degree. Knowing we must be wrong enables us to work toward better prognoses and better results. The person who feels that he must be right, when he never is, works under a great handicap. For our prognostic perceptions are directives for action, and because they are only prognostic, our actions often fail. The person who feels he must be right gets such emotional reaction from this faulty performance that he is blinded to the lessons to be derived from it. He is therefore handicapped in contriving new responses. He cannot enjoy the failure and success, the cut-and-try, which is the essence of problem-solving. When he learns to approach failure without emotion, he is ready for more contriving, and thus there needs to be no ultimate failure.

Children should learn to enjoy and appreciate the fact that what they do may turn out wrong and have to be revised. That is the real spirit of adventure which flavors life. To be always right, if it were possible, would be deadly dull, and one would never learn anything. We only learn when our set of responses fails to take us where we want to go. Instead of following our children around to keep them from making mistakes, we should help them learn that making a faulty try is not a sin. It is the way, and the only way, that new doors open to growth. If a child gets the idea that to make a mistake is to sin, so great is his fear of error that he refuses to try, and retires into inaction. His capacity to act becomes inhibited, and he loses contact with the reality to be gained through action. The only sin involved is on the part of the adult who deprives youth of freedom to make mistakes.

The foreword to Prof. Kelley's book is written by John Dewey, who, quite understandably, is enthusiastic about the implications of this research. Dr. Dewey believes that the significance of the Hanover experiments, when translated into practical educational meaning, "will prove virtually inexhaustible." Kelley's ideal school would contain primary emphasis upon self-maintenance of the school, so that children would have a working knowledge of

what, for instance, constitutes "janitor service," rather than a preconceived notion of what a janitor is like, involving the idea that janitor work is somehow beneath the level of intelligent men and women. This emphasis is recommended because Prof. Kelley, like John Dewey, feels that education must be a process of continually extending our perceptions and knowledge of the "concrete"—providing, in short, a tangible focus for correcting our preconceptions. Kelley would regard the janitor in the ideal school as "one of the chief educational forces of the school."

Prof. Kelley looked through three peep holes at Hanover and proceeded to evolve an entire philosophy and psychology of the learning process. Other educators may watch political democracy in faulty action, and still others obtain their critical perspective from reading Plato. In any case, there is a great amount of thoughtfully constructive criticism about, which may signify a general psychological preparation for not only new views of education, but also a new view of the essential nature of the human being. What such a view might involve is intimated, in part, by Prof. Kelley's critical summation of current misconceptions about education:

We assume that the child goes to school to acquire knowledge, and that knowledge is something which has existed for a long time and is handed down on authority.

We assume that subject matter taken on authority is educative in itself. This means that when the acquisition referred to above has been accomplished, the person almost automatically becomes educated. If this assumption is true, then the task of the teacher becomes that of seeing to it that acquisition takes place. Since such a fine thing as in education is to be the outcome, almost any method is justifiable.

We assume that the best way to set out subject matter is in unassociated fragments or parcels. It may be that we really do not believe this, but we proceed as though we do.

We assume that a fragment or parcel of subject matter is the same to the learner as to the teacher.

thus we demand that children see the same significances in facts as we do.

We assume that education is supplementary to and preparatory to life, not life itself.

Since education is supplementary and preparatory, we build school buildings designed to shut out life so that the child can give complete attention to our abstractions or tools for conveying these abstractions, to books, blackboards, and chalk.

We assume that since education is not present living, it has no social aspects. When a child is acquiring the abstractions which have been set out for him, all social intercourse is eliminated. He works by himself, at a desk, as much alone as though he were not surrounded by many other social beings.

The unsocial character of what goes on in school gives rise to competition as a way of life. When one works by himself and does not give or receive help, the need to beat the other fellow who is working by himself at a similar task is sure to be felt. Indeed, it is the only recourse left. The idea of beating the other fellow is the opposite of helping him, and, when helping is inhibited, competition is certain to take its place.

It is implicit in the assumption.

## *FRONTIERS* Racist Delusions

SOME time last winter, members of the Johnstown (Pennsylvania) Alumni Association of Phi Kappa Psi, a strong national college fraternity, circulated a statement which read in part:

The undersigned members . . . can find no words equal to the deep indignation and justifiable wrath that they feel towards the inconsiderate, dishonest, oath-breaking undergraduate members of Massachusetts Alpha. We demand that these mischievous imps be disgracefully expelled from the fraternity, that the charter of Massachusetts Alpha Chapter be irretrievably revoked, and that alumni trustees, who may hold title to the Phi Kappa Psi House at Amherst, be requested to bodily eject these ungrateful outcasts. . . .

A malignant growth has been found in our fraternity. Prompt surgery may remove the cancer, . . . [but] complete recovery at this time is too much to expect. The damage done to our fraternal body is extremely severe, perhaps fatal.

What had the Massachusetts undergraduates done to evoke this fraternal blast? The members of Phi Kappa Psi at Amherst College had pledged a Negro student and apparently were determined to initiate him. Eventually they did initiate him, and the Amherst chapter was promptly dropped from the national fraternity's rolls. However, according to Alfred S. Romer in the *Atlantic* for June, the chapter resumed an emancipated and respected life on the Amherst campus as Phi *Alpha* Psi.

This Department has something less than admiration for the fraternity system, but the action taken by the members of this chapter of Phi Psi is certainly worth honorable mention. It is notable, too, that some eighty per cent of the alumni polled by the Amherst Phi Psi's approved the pledging of the Negro student, Tom Gibbs, and that it was the "organization" men of the national office who opposed the break with racist precedent most vigorously. Prof. Romer's article in the *Atlantic* merits reading in its entirety for the exceptionally interesting details of this controversy—such as the

fact that the other pledges of the Phi Psi house at Amherst all joined in refusing to be initiated unless Tom were initiated, too.

Another sort of victory over racism was accomplished recently in Oklahoma. It will be recalled that in January, 1948, a young Negro woman of this state, Ada Sipuel—now Mrs. Ada Sipuel Fisher—won admission to the law school of the University of Oklahoma through a decision of the Supreme Court of the United States (MANAS, Nov. 10, 1948). Not liking the ruling of the Court, the state of Oklahoma tried to evade its clear meaning by setting up a tiny law school in the state capitol, where Miss Sipuel would have been the only student. In May, 1948, a Federal District Court in Oklahoma ruled that the new "law school" set up for Miss Sipuel was "substantially equal" to the Law School of the State University—a decision from which her attorneys at once appealed.

In June of this year—forty-one months after she first sought admission—Mrs. Ada Sipuel Fisher completed her enrollment in the University Law School, the first Negro to enter one of Oklahoma's "all-white" colleges. Before gaining admission, she had to go to court a total of ten times. According to the *Los Angeles Times*, two other Negroes have since enrolled, and twenty-nine more are planning to attend the state university.

Despite the fact that eighty per cent of the student body favored the admission of Miss Sipuel, the university authorities used every available device to oppose her entry, and now, when forced by the Supreme Court to admit her, are continuing the policy of segregation within the college walls. According to the *Times*:

University officials said the Negroes will be seated in special segregated parts of classrooms until sufficient personnel can be provided to set up separate Negro classes. One new faculty member was hired today to instruct a separate class and university officials said several members of the faculty have volunteered to teach additional classes. The

university will also provide separate facilities for eating and for library study. (June 19.)

The intensity of feeling against Negroes revealed by these cases seems almost to border on insanity, so that it becomes of some importance to understand its origin. It appears that for some people, the entry of Negroes into normal social relationships with the rest of the population has the effect of stirring up deep emotional insecurity—a psychic disorder which is indeed a "malignant growth" in our society. The most obvious connection of this virulent form of prejudice is with the "status" afforded by organizations. The "all-white" fraternities and colleges of the country have the effect of shielding the egotism of mediocre persons who fear that if Negroes are admitted to "white" society, their mediocrity will become known to all and they will then have to face it themselves. This, at least, is part of the explanation—that the illusion of "superiority" is threatened by any sort of practical equality.

Another aspect of explanation is provided by M. F. Ashley Montagu in his book, *Man's Most Dangerous Myth: The Fallacy of Race*. It is not necessary to accept all the conclusions of Prof. Montagu as unalterable scientific truth—this subject, we think, involves more unsolved puzzles than most "liberal" social scientists will admit—but his survey of the origins of modern racist doctrines seems accurate enough. He shows that "objection to any people on 'racial' or biological grounds is a purely modern innovation," dating, for the most part, from the justifications of human slavery which have been offered since the French Revolution. He quotes Lord Bryce, who says that, previous to the nineteenth century,

there has been very little in any country, or at any time, of self-conscious racial feeling . . . however much men of different races may have striven with one another, it was seldom any sense of racial opposition that caused their strife. They fought for land. They plundered one another. . . . But strong as patriotism and national feeling might be, they did not think of themselves in terms of ethnology, and in making war for every other sort of reason never made

it for the sake of imposing their own type of civilization. . . . In none of such cases did the thought of racial distinctions come to the front.

Prof. Montagu admits that there were traces of what might be termed "undeveloped" racism among the ancient Greeks and Romans, but finds the deduction of "superiority" from hereditary or biological race differences to be uniquely the "direct result of the trade in slaves by European merchants." Further, it was not until this commerce in human beings became an object of moral condemnation that conscious theories of racial excellence were produced by the slavers in self-defense. Prof. Montagu writes:

The abolitionists argued that those who were enslaved were as good human beings as those who had enslaved them. To this, by way of reply, the champions of slavery could only attempt to show that the slaves were most certainly not as good as their masters. And in this highly charged emotional atmosphere there began the recitation of the catalogue of differences which were alleged to prove the inferiority of the slave to his master. . . . different physical appearance provided a convenient peg upon which to hang the argument that this represented the external sign of more profound ineradicable mental and moral inferiorities. It was an easily grasped mode of reasoning, and in this way the obvious difference in their *racial* status, in caste status, was equated with their obviously different *physical* appearance, which in turn, was taken to indicate a fundamental *biological difference*. Thus was a culturally produced difference in social status converted into a difference in biological status. What was once a social difference was now turned into a biological difference which would serve, it was hoped, to justify and maintain the social difference.

This seems about as clear an analysis of the racist dogma as one can hope for. Prof. Montagu connects the nineteenth-century justifications of slavery with the proto-Nazi theories of Count Joseph de Gobineau, and Houston Stewart Chamberlain and finds similar ideological developments in contemporary South Africa—another area where the social status of the whites would be threatened by an admission of equality.

Prof. Montagu, it should be said, has no interest in denying the broad physical differences

between, say, the black, yellow, and white divisions of mankind. It is the assumption of "superiority" from the mere fact of differences which he sets himself to oppose. The question of what "race" means and whether the term is of any value will not be settled by this book, nor, we suspect by any other, for some years to come, but the tracing of the psychology of prejudice by Prof. Montagu is a contribution of enduring importance—much more valuable, one may say, than any amount of "scientific" proclamations on what is a race and what is not, and on what the chemistry of the blood may reveal. Prejudice is a psychological and a moral problem, and flag-waving will not solve it.