

## GREAT REFORMERS: SUN YAT-SEN

FOR the Western reader, the story of Sun Yat-sen, the man who made the Chinese Revolution, is a key to the humanity of the East. Such a key is needed, especially for China, for China's four hundred and fifty million people have long been four hundred and fifty million oriental mysteries to the great majority of European and Anglo-Saxon peoples. And today, Americans are confronted by the ominous prospect of a mighty, industrialized China led by Communist zealots and ideologues, in whom the supposedly malignant purposes of red revolutionists are combined with sinister oriental unpredictability.

Most of the books about Sun Yat-sen and the Chinese revolution focus upon the immediate political circumstances: the decadence of Chinese imperial rule; the undisguised greed of the Western adventurer nations; the alchemy worked in an idealistic Chinese youth by a Western political education; the help of expatriate Chinese—laundrymen, cooks, railroad workers and others in the United States and elsewhere—who supported and largely financed the Chinese revolution; the part played by the secret societies; the contribution of the eccentric American military genius, Homer Lea. All these things have their importance, but the story ends, we think, with unrelieved pessimism unless it is told against a larger and more searching background of human history.

On the surface, the Chinese revolution took place amid rapid social transitions which were world-wide in scope and are still going on. The civilization of the United States was passing from exuberant and expansive industrialism into the age of power and militarization. The buying-and-selling bourgeois culture of both Europe and America was beginning to exhibit alarming symptoms of a neuroticism which culminated in two world wars. Meanwhile, and as

a result, inner psychic compulsions of the mass society of the twentieth century were driving more and more people to forsake the skeptical, rational libertarianism of the West for the more tangible and emotionally stimulating securities of authoritarianism. In the same epoch, industrialized Japan became ripe with the poisons of occidental "progressivism"—an overnight mushroom growth of lurid colorings and raucous claims. In India, Gandhi was returning to the inspiration of antiquity, seeking out the roots of a society that might be both organic and free.

If Sun Yat-sen be regarded simply as a Chinese nationalist and revolutionary who contended against the reactionary forces of his time forces which eventually engulfed the revolutionary movement he began—then reading about him has a merely "historical" interest. But if he can be seen as one of a small number of great men who have constituted themselves links between a type of social unity that is passing away—the organic unity of a patriarchal or hierarchical order—and another sort of organic social unity, a unity which may perhaps be described as growing out of the deepened moral selfconsciousness of mankind, then Sun Yat-sen may emerge, regardless of political failures, as one of the truly creative spirits of the age. This interpretation of Sun Yat-sen, it is true, involves considerable historical optimism and a frankly metaphysical—even Hegelian—conception of the forces at play in social evolution, yet it seems futile to regard the drama of human experience in any other light.

Sun Yat-sen was born in the year 1866 in a small village forty miles from Canton, the scene of his first triumph many years later. He began his education in Hawaii, where an elder brother had prospered as a storekeeper and rice-grower. Western knowledge fired his mind, leading to

questions. When he returned to his village at the age of eighteen, one of his early acts was to harangue the peasants for their devotions before three plaster idols of an ancient fertility cult. "I could forgive you," he shouted, "if you offered me a single reason for worshipping this idol!" To prove the impotence of the images, he broke off the arm of one of the gods and walked away from the horror-struck peasants. Banished from the village, he continued his education in Hong Kong and in 1885 found a place in the Pok Tsai hospital in Canton, where he studied under a Scottish medical missionary. Then began a time pregnant with revolutionary dreams and plans. Later he wrote: "All the years between 1885 and 1895 were like one day in my hard fight for national liberty, and my medical practice was no more to me than a means to introduce my propaganda to the world." In 1887 he enrolled in the Alice Memorial Hospital in Canton and in five years his training was complete.

Sun Yat-sen was now a graduate physician, but far from being a graduate revolutionist. Years of homeless wandering were before him. He joined and formed revolutionary societies, lectured outside of China, plotted and participated in revolts against the decaying power of the Manchus. There were many discouraging failures. His friends were caught and beheaded. The hour for an uprising would come, as planned, but guns and ammunition would be found missing. The "long arm of the Manchus" pursued him around the world. In England he was kidnapped and held prisoner in the Chinese embassy and only a note smuggled out to an English friend saved him from being secretly transported to China for execution.

In London he read Henry George and Marx, met Lenin, and exchanged ideas with other revolutionary exiles. The Boxer Rebellion of 1900 found him in Japan, where he had been trying to weld the various secret societies into one, strong, underground, revolutionary party. After the Boxers had been suppressed, he explained to his Japanese friends: "We are not in

the least depressed over the result. Quite the reverse, in fact, as it shows how easily the imperial troops can be defeated, as soon as our men are properly armed and prepared for the great effort." He went back to his books and lecture tours. He read Darwin and Huxley. On a second visit to America in 1904, he discovered Abraham Lincoln, whose "Government of the people, by the people, for the people" found a new incarnation in the Chinese revolutionary slogan: "The people are to have, the people are to rule, the people are to enjoy." Sun Yat-sen was now becoming known to Chinese patriots everywhere. In Philadelphia a laundryman called at his hotel one evening, handed him a linen bag containing his life's savings, and disappeared. Such were the moral and practical resources of the Chinese revolution.

Returning to Japan in 1905, Sun Yat-sen openly declared for the overthrow of the Manchus, a republican government for China, and nationalization of the land. He founded a new revolutionary society which gained tens of thousands of members within a year. Armed revolts began to break out in China in 1906. Sun Yat-sen left Japan for China to conduct raids across the Annam frontier. While these and other efforts brought no major victory, the habit of rebellion had taken hold and was gathering strength. In 1911, angry rioting swelled into the tide of successful revolution. Again in the United States, Sun Yat-sen read in the St. Louis newspapers that his revolution had taken place and that he was to return to China to become provisional president of the Chinese Republic. At forty-five years of age, the penniless and threadbare revolutionary was the leader of 450,000,000 people, with power, as Robert Payne says, "greater than that of the Emperor, for it derived a greater measure of assent from the people. He had been unassuming at all times; at the height of his victory, he became still more gentle and unassuming." The vicissitudes of the Chinese revolution in the years that followed are told at length in the histories of modern China. (See in particular George Chen's and Robert

Payne's *Sun Yat-sen, a Portrait*.) Without interest in personal authority, and eager for practical labors in reconstruction, Sun Yat-sen resigned from the presidency in favor of Yuan Shih-kai, a northern statesman who later betrayed the revolution by trying to make himself emperor. China was disunited by struggles between the republican south and the north of the warlords. Not until 1927, two years after the death of Sun Yat-sen, when Chiang Kai-shek led the army of the Republic on its famous northward march from Canton, was China unified under a single government. But this coup of Chiang's was also the beginning of the ascendancy of militarism and ruthless dictatorship in the Chinese government, and of the antagonism between the Communists and the Kuomintang. Soon, China was ruled by a military oligarchy which, in the words of those true to the founder of the revolution, had "turned the maxims of Sun Yat-sen into their opposite; whereby the revolutionary regime had ceased to be revolutionary and become the organ which, under the banner of revolution, restored the very order of society which the great innovator Sun Yat-sen had gone out to subvert."

What, actually, had Sun Yat-sen stood for and tried to do? It is perhaps not realized by the Westerner that the old Chinese social order, under the emperor, afforded more personal freedom and even more "democracy" in a sense than more efficiently organized political states. The idea of the maintenance of the authority of government by naked military force is alien to the Chinese spirit. As Gustav Amann says in *The Legacy of Sun Yat-sen*:

In the old China, the Chinese Emperor had, in this sense, neither been master of the army, nor had he ever disposed over a treasury into which all the revenues of the empire flowed. The country had been divided into provinces, provinces into departments and districts with officials ruling them who had been appointed by the governor.

The Chinese were neither nationalistic nor power-conscious. They were ruled by a way of life rather than by the dictates of authority.

Amann writes:

Not from an army or from money over which he disposed did the power of the emperor spring. *What preserved the empire for him was the power of faith.* Sovereignty and allegiance were founded on a religious belief in the order of heaven, on the belief of officials and people that, without loyalty to a God-given order, there can be no happiness for man; they were the morality and religion of the Chinese under the old empire.

These sacred relations Sun Yat-sen's revolution had no intention to destroy. Sun Yat-sen believed in them; up to the day of his death he believed that they continued to exist; his spirit was part of their spirit. He followed the call to the Presidency, he went to Peking among the wolves of empire because he was led by the conviction that the spirit would conquer them. . . . The revolution of Sun Yat-sen sprang from the very loyalty to the God-given order. . . . But the onslaught of western materialism had done its work. As soon as the authority of the emperor had fallen, the authority of heaven also fell; an earthly spirit arose. . . . The "strong men" of material ambition prevented the erection of a new, united household of state, they were the cause of the popular failure of the revolution. The Chinese spirit died of [Western] democracy; the republic crumbled away.

To effect a transfer of popular trust from the old hierarchical order to the institutions to be created under the Chinese Republic—that is what Sun Yat-sen was trying to do. He wanted Chinese democracy to find roots in Chinese, not Western, tradition. He feared that Western political forms might prove "out of date" by the time they were installed in China. He hoped that Chinese democracy would be born from the emancipation of the people from ignorance.

The unit of self-government was to be the *hsien*, or city community. He wrote in his *Outline of Reconstruction of the National Government*: "When more than half the provinces have reached the stage when local self-government has been completed throughout the province, then a National Assembly shall be elected to promulgate a constitution." Government, therefore, was to grow with the people, and not to be imposed from above:

The new government, arising out of the broadest mass of the people, with its duly elected representatives in the National Assembly, will exercise representative power in a way which China has never experienced before. The State will take over all the large enterprises; we shall encourage and protect enterprises which may reasonably be entrusted to the people; the nation will possess equality with other nations; every Chinese will be equal to every other Chinese both politically and in his opportunities of economic advancement. When we have done this, when the benefits of society are enjoyed by all equally, then and only then can we lay our hands on our hearts and say that the revolution has begun.

How to transform such dreams into reality: that is the problem of the modern revolutionist. It seems just to say that the great Easterners of our epoch—Sun Yat-sen, Gandhi, Nehru, Sjahrir—all revolutionaries, all educators, all men who have attempted to unite the great cultural past of the Orient with the political self-consciousness of the West, have all cherished this same dream, although with varying points of emphasis. And all have suffered the frustrations which the problem of *power* imposes upon political leaders. Only Gandhi, perhaps, had prophetic vision and moral daring sufficient to declare an absolute break with the familiar forms of political power, and to place his faith in a kind of power which can never be turned against the human beings it grows to serve. But while military power struck at the heart of Sun Yat-sen's revolution, even as disease struck down its self-effacing author, no might of external force can ever erase the vision of a free and self-governing people that Sun Yat-sen gave to the Chinese, and out of that vision and the lessons and discouragements of the revolutions of the twentieth century, may be born a new kind of strength and the patience that will be necessary for the freedom, not only of China, but of all the world.

## *Letter from* **ENGLAND**

LONDON.—Following the discovery of the sea route to East India by Vasco da Gama in 1498, and the establishment of English trading centres in the seventeenth century, the intervening years have seen many changes in the relations of India and Britain. Generations of British people have worked in India, not always (as is sometimes supposed) to their own profit. But the twentieth century saw a representative Constitution, and the failure of the Round Table Conference in 1931 to conciliate Mahatma Gandhi led to further concessions and acceleration of the growing movement for complete independence. Two world wars in the first half of this century have played no small part in this rebirth of Eastern political thought, in which India may almost be said to have acted as midwife. It was left to a Labour Government in England, aided by the understanding and resolution of an able Governor-General (Lord Mountbatten), to set the seal last year on an independent India which has now declared her intention of becoming a republic, and on a separate Muslim state of Pakistan, which is likely to follow suit.

It was feared by many people, here and in India, that these steps would sever the deeper links that have joined India and the Commonwealth nations, quite irrespective of political forms. Instead of this happening, however, a bridge has been built between East and West. As a sovereign independent republic, India desires to continue her full membership of the Commonwealth of Nations, and has declared her acceptance of the King "as the symbol of the free association of its independent member nations, and, as such, the Head of the Commonwealth." These are the simple words used by the Prime Ministers of the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, India, Pakistan, and Ceylon, and the Canadian Secretary of State for External Affairs, who met in London during the latter part of March, 1949. The countries concerned have stated that "they remain united as free and equal members of the Commonwealth of Nations, freely co-operating in the pursuit of peace,

liberty, and progress."

No doubt, questions have still to be answered and risks run, and the cynics will smile and wag their heads. Yet, in a world showing inherent contradictions, fissiparous tendencies, and monolithic organization, it is something to find an emphasis on "free association" between countries differing widely in race and outlook. Continuing membership of a Commonwealth of Nations may have many advantages even in the cultural sphere, and, as Mr. Liaquat Ali Khan, the Prime Minister of Pakistan, pointed out, it is now open to any member of the Commonwealth to frame a constitution, similar to that which India has chosen to make, altering its relationship with the Crown ("emblem of an ideal of life and not of authority," as *The Times* has called it), and to decide nevertheless to retain its membership of the Commonwealth. The reality of independence remains unimpaired. If India swarms with unhappy beings, precariously provided for, and is vexed by demagogues, with but few who seek to revive her ancient spiritual greatness, it may seem that niceties of constitution-making are irrelevant. But "the few" are to be found in every Commonwealth country, and a family may often do in association what is impossible for isolated units. In England, there are some who feel that our fundamental unity with Indian aspirations is of importance to the future of the world. They do not despise the freedom that seeks points of agreement voluntarily. With Lao-tze they would say:

Big things of the world  
Can only be achieved by attending to their small  
beginnings.  
Thus, the Sage never has to grapple with big  
things,  
Yet he alone is capable of achieving them!

ENGLISH CORRESPONDENT

## REVIEW TWO NOVELS

THE Book of the Month Club's *The Mudlark* (Doubleday), by Theodore Bonnet, is essentially a return to nineteenth century tempo. While the book may not seem particularly important to anyone, its general attitude towards human nature is rather heartwarming after the psychological stress and strain of most of the better novels of this era. The publishers report that the novel was begun during an embarkation preparatory to military operations in which Mr. Bonnet played the role of an Artillery Sergeant, and it is interesting to think of reasons for developing such a strong affection for the nineteenth century under such circumstances.

One could say that the plot of *The Mudlark* consists entirely of trivia, were it not for the fact that the author has contributed a general, positive feeling about human experience which is in interesting contrast to what is current.

The central figure in the story is not the urchin who attracts English country-wide attention by breaking into Windsor Castle and sitting on the throne, but Benjamin Disraeli, a character who plainly fascinates Mr. Bonnet. Mr. Disraeli, however, seems a not entirely accurate portrayal. Rather, Disraeli serves as a focal point for sifting out the best of a nineteenth century world whose political and economic complications were still within the grasp of man. Perhaps this book was written primarily because the author liked to return, in his mind, to an epoch which, if not superior, was at least spared the various forms of near totalitarianism which have overtaken national politics since World War I. Disraeli is depicted as an ambitious schemer, an artist in logic and drama, but also as a man whose machinations are always checked by a strong, however unconscious, moral sense. Disraeli's genius could never lead to dictatorship, implies Bonnet, because the whole tradition of thought for which he stood was "reactionary" in entirely

different ways from those suggested by the same word in the epoch of Hitler and Mussolini. There is, perhaps, some justification for Bonnet's view that Disraeli was one of the first to see the necessity for recognizing national responsibility for the poor food and poor housing suffered by England's lower classes. In the name and on behalf of the underprivileged classes, Disraeli gently chides all the major military and political institutions of his day, and thus, in Bonnet's version, begins that part of the tradition of modern "socialized government" which flows from a sense of responsibility for the less fortunate.

Aside from a bumper crop of moralists, the nineteenth century produced, among its public figures, a number of men with tolerance for all of life's variegations. This is the atmosphere which suffuses *The Mudlark*, and, we repeat, it is a good atmosphere to live in for a while, since it is conducive to transcending some of our habits of cynicism. Mr. Bonnet makes the "smallest and meanest" characters interesting to us, because he portrays Disraeli, the great man, as genuinely interested in them, too.

The September BoM selection is more provocative reading. It is entitled *The Egyptian*, and is by a Finnish author, Mika Waltari. *The Egyptian* is designed to suggest psychological parallels between conditions in Syria and the country of the Nile in ancient times, and our entire world of today. The essence of warfare, priestcraft and authoritarianism is, of course, always recognizably the same, despite shifts in epoch.

Waltari's background has provided him with interesting perspectives, for in his youth he was both a "Bohemian" and a "radical," and his character, Sinuhe, turns up all sorts of radicalism and Bohemianism. Of course, we are never quite sure what either of these words mean, but Waltari seems to help one get a better idea of definitions by providing a sympathetic, historically oriented account of an entirely different era of human history, where revolutionism flourishes at a

distance sufficient for reasonably clear perspectives to be formed.

Then there is this unusual point, aimed at the too wide-eyed dreamers of the world: Tremendous confusion, and hatred-breeding destruction throughout the whole of Egypt, flow from the fact that the idealistic Pharaoh, Akhnaton, impulsively introduces a new religion of humanity without benefit of rational explanation. We see that even the "best" of emotional inspiration can cause amazing confusion unless its ideals are imbedded in rational plans which take account of the inhibiting factors, only slowly to be overcome, in the immediate cultural circumstances.

We are grateful to Waltari for allowing us to retain our respect for some of the peoples of antiquity. It is the habit of authors who write historical novels in ancient settings to dwell on the primitiveness of the minds and emotions of those bygone days. But while we see some, not-too-different-from-now "primitiveness" in Waltari's story, we are told that this is but the result of an atrophy in the genius of a former and much greater Egyptian pattern of life. We doubt whether many reviewers will note this significant quality in Waltari's work, but when one stumbles upon it, it leads to considerable speculation on the conventional attitudes of novelists toward "great antiquity." Why Waltari is the exception we do not know, unless we are to respect a somewhat quizzical, somewhat intriguing sentence injected by the Book-of-the-Month reviewers in their introduction to their monthly catalogue:

It is as if Mika Waltari had returned to a former incarnation, and smelled the black earth and heard the reeds of the river rustling in the spring wind, and drunk the water of the Nile. Around him he saw again the men and women of ancient Thebes.

Pharaoh Akhnaton dreamed of a single God, Aton who was but the impersonal, unifying principle which could make all men brothers. Reminding Westerner that the best of the

Christian tradition was thus anticipated by Akhnaton in Egypt—as it was by more than one ruler of ancient India—should be a contribution to cultural sanity. And if one should be able to be objective about the tangled heritage of "Christian culture," room for a great deal of illuminating speculation over and beyond that in the author's mind is allowed by Waltari's parallels between the culture of ancient Egypt and modern times. Akhnaton's epoch, for instance, closed so swiftly that the most ruthless forces of secular totalitarianism never quite had time to work out a "compromise," directed against the people, with the priests of Aton. The Church-State combine of the rule of Akhnaton's father was bad enough, but here the fire of religious fanaticism at least did not turn the shop-worn priests of Ammon into inquisitors and conquistadors. Conversely, the short-lived priesthood of Akhnaton never discovered the many ways in which One God could be excuse for unparalleled tyranny over both the mind and the body, for, however muddled and mystical, Aton was close to being a spiritual symbol. And so the Egypt of this puzzling Pharaoh had its militarists at one time and its God-fearing, trance-driven rulers at another. Some God or other must have blest them with escape from the psychological alliances which so corrupted the culture of the West during medieval centuries.

## *COMMENTARY*

### **A FACE TO THE FUTURE**

THERE are things about Sun Yat-sen which no printed words can convey, such as the sense of distant gaze in his eyes that appears in his later photographs. The English poet, Auden, once wrote of Abraham Lincoln that, for anyone who had seen Lincoln's picture, there was no need to inquire about his character; one could be sure about Lincoln, simply by looking at his face. Sun Yat-sen's face has similar depths, and the most striking thing about it is that it does not seem to be a "Chinese" face. It has Chinese or "oriental" features, of course, but these superficial effects of heredity are completely dominated by the humanity of Sun Yat-sen's spirit—here, one thinks to himself, is a man, and the fact that he is Chinese seems unimportant.

A brief passage from the biography of Sun Yat-sen by Stephen Chen and Robert Payne, which space considerations eliminated from the Great Reformers article, helps to explain the quality of the power in Sun Yat-sen's life. As a child he went to the school in the village of his birth and along with his fellow pupils was made to learn by heart and to recite to the schoolmaster the verses of *The Three-Character Classic*. This "discipline" was accompanied by continual blows on the head from a cane wielded by the teacher who stood behind him. Then, in Robert Payne's words—

One day, when he had suffered enough, he so far forgot himself as to turn around at his teacher and shout: "Sir we have a great deal of this book, but we cannot understand a single word of it. Have the goodness to explain it to us. I don't see any use in memorizing such nonsense!" Accustomed to obedience and even to reverence, the schoolmaster exploded: "You young rebel! Do you dare to criticize the sage's teaching?—nothing could be more unfilial in the world." "I am not rebelling," Sun Yat-sen answered quietly, "but I want to know what the characters mean."

It was this drive to *know* which singled out one child among many millions of similar Chinese

children and pressed him on to become the liberator and educator of his countrymen. His rebellion was no stubborn fractiousness, but an expression of the will to understand. Perhaps the Chinese students who, in the generations since, have been a source of China's revolutionary strength, have caught this spirit of their great predecessor and are keeping it alive.

It is natural, today, to wonder about the relationship of Sun Yat-sen's revolution to Communism, now that its future seems to be in the hands of the Chinese Communists. Like other revolutionists of this century, Sun Yat-sen was deeply influenced by the socialist movement, but he was no Marxist so far as the doctrine of the Class Struggle was concerned. "Class war," he wrote, "is not the cause of social progress. It is a disease developed in the course of social progress, and the cause of the disease is starvation, and the result of the disease is war." It would be difficult, we think, to improve this simple definition.

## CHILDREN

### . . . and Ourselves

QUITE possibly, the two recommendations of reading matter for young persons we now intend to make will be regarded as "controversial." In the first place, one book is by a pacifist. The other happens to be written by Howard Fast, who is said to be either a Communist or a "fellow-traveler"; and, what is worse, not only are we *recommending* a book by so suspect a citizen, but we are saying that this book, through its reading by children, may be an influence toward the establishment of World Peace.

*The Last Frontier* is the name of Howard Fast's book (now published in a twenty-five cent edition by Avon). This is the least pretentious and, we think, the most historical of Fast's novels. It is the story of three hundred northern Cheyenne Indians who, a few years after their imprisonment on a barren reservation, chose flight to their native country in preference to slow starvation.

This migration of the Cheyennes occurred not long after General Custer had vicariously atoned for a few of the white man's crimes by perishing, together with all his men, under Indian attack. The Indians were, therefore, still popular hate-objects. Custer's debacle rankled deeply in many military minds, also. A troop of United States Cavalry was sent to enforce the Government's decision about where the recalcitrant Indians should reside. Subsequently, the three hundred Cheyennes managed to outwit the United States troops, finally numbering twelve thousand, for an incredible period of time and over incredible distances. But the real drama of the story, and what we feel to be instructive and worthwhile for children, is the refusal of the Cheyennes to take any life except in self-defense, their lack of anger or resentment in battle, even when fighting against overwhelming odds—and the linking of these traits with the inspiring character of the Northern forest background to which these Indians had been accustomed.

Then, too, there is the educative psychological story of the cavalrymen who were ordered to pursue and "bring in" the Indians. One of the officers, in particular, makes an excellent character study. Forced, under orders, to wage a warfare in which he does not

believe, he finally comes to *hate* the Indians, albeit in a peculiar way. The hate is simply the result of realizing that the actions of the Indians forced him to see the actual "soullessness" of army life. When the story concludes, this man resigns from the army. . . And so young people who still encounter a considerable amount of moving-picture and cheap-novel lore about the "brave white settlers" who fight off the "treacherous Indians" will find Fast's book an excellent antidote. In *The Last Frontier* it is the *Indians* who are the real heroes, in every respect. There are no villains in Fast's story, and this is good, too. Even the men who give themselves over to the mob frenzy of an Indian hunt are men victimized by the callow thinking and immature emotions of their time.

*The Last Frontier* offers, also, a little of the vision of each man's great potentialities. This vision comes to us unannounced, through Mr. Fast's excellent description of how various members of the cavalry regiments close in on the fleeing Indians, and, in description of the Indians themselves—especially of the dignity and calm fearlessness of an old Cheyenne Chief.

This book puts in a fair bid to weaken permanently anyone's predisposition to fight for prestige or "on orders." The adolescent who is moved by *The Last Frontier* will be forever less inclined to respond to the call to arms, and this seems a good precautionary bit of modern upbringing, if we are among those who feel that our civilization can benefit from careful evaluations of "military necessity." The Indians were long ago accepted as legitimate hate-objects—and if we give ourselves license to have only *one* hate-object, we are justifying the acquisition of others in the future. "Indian-fighting" was definitely the seamiest side of our pioneer days, and when this is realized it may also be recognized that whatever physical fighting we do is the least praiseworthy portion of any venture. What seems to us another consideration of major importance is that such books predispose readers in some degree to reading that would otherwise be unknown and unrecognized. We have been wondering for some time how to make use of a small volume with the title, *International Voluntary Service for Peace*, issued by Allen and Unwin of London. According to the title page, this book is "A history of work in many countries for the benefit of distressed communities and for the conciliation of the

peoples." This does not sound very intriguing. But the point is that unless we are able to develop a sense of adventure about *constructive* activities on behalf of our fellows—sufficient to match our preoccupation with warfare—we will continue to be a psychotic civilization. And we are a psychotic civilization whenever we allow ourselves to externalize our dissatisfactions with life by creating enemy myths and feeding on the excitements of warfare.

We have recommended Howard Fast's book because it provides a mood which may lead to reversal of the positions of some of our favorite symbols for the glamor of warfare. *International Voluntary Service for Peace* supplies a story of strain and struggle without hatred, the pursuit of a truly adventurous ideal, which, amazingly, requires no blood-letting.

The first chapter draws on William James's essay, "The Moral Equivalent of War," and quotes from Laurence Housman's suggestion for "an army of peace service." Wickham Steed, too, is made to testify:

Even if we manage to prevent war by firm agreement among non-neutral nations we shall have only stabilized non-war; we shall not have created peace, which if it is to attract adventurous minds, especially among the young, must be conceived as something go-ahead, risky and, therefore, interesting.

The beginning of *Service Civil* in 1920 did not, perhaps, seem very "adventurous," except to those pacifists who found absolutely no glamor in warfare anyway. The first experiment was a plan to rehabilitate ruined homes and land along the old Hindenburg line. A group of voluntary workers, French, German and Swiss, began work at Esnes: The plan was to contract for the erection of a number of wooden houses at the price paid by the Government and, after meeting the teams' expenses, to turn the profits to some work of utility in the district."

The Esnes project did not last very long, but the *idea* behind this new sort of organization developed considerably. Later, 710 volunteers appeared at the scene of a Swiss flood, and in 1937 the *Service Civil* supporters numbered approximately eight thousand. The founder of the *Service Civil*, Pierre Ceresole, was a sort of modern saint, for he knew how to work on comradely terms with those who disagreed emphatically with his pacifist views. Ceresole's brother was a Colonel in the Swiss army. Yet, this

brother worked with *Service Civil* throughout central Europe—in a group composed largely of pacifists. *Service Civil* performed rescues of the victims of avalanches and floods, reclaimed waste areas, marched to the aid of communities overtaken by catastrophes of every sort.

Pierre Ceresole's "army" proved that it was supported by a stronger element within man than expansive sentiment, by meeting a host of emerging situations. The "glamor" of *Service Civil* is in the story of men who fought disaster, without pay, with the same or a greater fervor than that which usually accompanies armies to battle. It seems to us that parents should read books such as *International Voluntary Service for Peace*, and should consider its implications in respect to the development of their children's values.

But neither the parent nor the child will be able to see anything exciting about such a work unless both are helped to rid themselves of the peculiar enemy-myths and traditions which suffocate our human understanding— and of which the "savage Indian" is but now a subconsciously remembered prototype.

We have intended this column as a sort of three-way sermon to parents, feeling that we are, after all no *more* presumptuous in speaking of giving parents "moral lessons" than are some parents when they try to teach "morality" to the young: Lesson No. 1 is supposed to be that a man may help our understanding considerably even if he is reported to be a Communist. No. 2 is that we must re-evaluate much of our popular history. No. 3 is that *some* "pacifists" have been wonderful and powerful people, and that service for Peace can have the adventurous stimulation mistakenly reserved in our minds for warfare.

## FRONTIERS

### The Continuing War on the Co-ops

ACCORDING to Jerry Voorhis, formerly a California Congressman, and now executive director of the Cooperative League, the co-ops of the country are having to defend themselves against "one of the best-laid propaganda campaigns of the century." The enemies of consumer cooperation repeat over and over again that "co-ops don't pay taxes"—a statement which, while untrue, seems to have made its way with many people who are without personal knowledge of co-ops.

The consumer co-op is a buying club in the form of a partnership. Goods are sold by the co-op store at the prevailing market price. Then, at the end of the fiscal year or dividend term, the difference between the cost of selling the goods and the actual selling price is returned to the customer-partners of the co-op in the form of patronage dividends. It is this dividend which, some say, ought to be taxed.

But, as Mr. Voorhis points out in an article in the *Christian Century* (Aug. 17), to tax the patronage dividend would be like taxing as income the six dollars a woman saves when she buys a dress that is marked down from \$19.99 to \$13.99!

There are, it is true, a number of non-profit co-ops, organized and operated in accordance with Section 101 (12) of the Internal Revenue Code, which need not pay taxes on their preferred stock. These are mostly farm co-ops, and their inclusion as non-profit enterprises under the Internal Revenue Code is probably due to the government policy of encouraging farmers to work out their own economic problems—an objective to which the co-ops have proved to be dramatically successful contributors. It happens, moreover, that many farm cooperative leaders would not object very much if the qualification of farm co-ops under Section 101 were removed from the law, as they feel that this provision has led to more misunderstanding than it is worth.

One further claim is made with respect to the payment of taxes. Sometimes a co-op will retain its patronage dividends. Instead of returning them to the members, it issues certificates of ownership,

which amounts to a reinvestment of the dividends in the co-op by the members. This is done, of course, by the vote of the membership, or by individual choice. Co-op critics argue that funds obtained in this way should be taxed as "profits." The fact is that unless the co-op credits its members with these funds, they *are* taxed.

The dividend does not belong to the co-op, but to the patron, and cannot, therefore, be taxed as income to the co-op. But if the stockholders (not the patrons) of a coop leave the interest or dividends (*stock*, not patronage, dividends) in the hands of the co-op, to be used for expansion, etc., then such funds are taxable, as would be the case with any corporation.

Readers of Marquis Childs' *Sweden: The Middle Way*, are familiar with the victory of the Swedish co-ops over the galoshes monopoly and the electric light bulb monopoly in that country. When the prices of these articles rose far above their actual worth, from the viewpoint of the cost of manufacture, the powerful Swedish coops built plants and made galoshes and light bulbs to sell for much less. Prices were soon equalized and the interests of Swedish consumers were protected. This has always been the policy of the co-ops in Scandinavia. They will not interfere with the course of private industry unless to establish a cooperative enterprise in competition with private industry is clearly in the public interest.

The oil co-ops in the United States have a similar history. When, in the early 1920's, the farm co-ops of the Middle West began to distribute oil products, the supplying oil companies would give them oil only at relatively high prices. The co-ops then organized their own wholesale organization to gain the purchasing power to buy oil at reasonable prices. Similar organizations were formed in various regions, and in 1933 eight wholesale associations combined to form National Cooperatives, Inc. At this point, according to Sydney J. Neal in the *Nation* for Aug. 20, the manufacturers of petroleum products began to withhold oil from the co-op buying associations. This compelled the co-ops to build their own refinery, which they located at Phillipsberg, Kansas, near an independent oil field

which lacked refinery facilities. However, by the time the plant was completed, much of the oil was being piped away by the oil companies, and the independent producers told the co-op refinery they were "sorry." The Kansas farmers got oil for their refinery only after they had brought considerable pressure on the State legislature and the governor of Kansas.

Mr. Neal's article in the *Nation* is largely devoted to the contents of a report issued by the Petroleum Industry Research Foundation, entitled, *Cooperatives in the Petroleum Industry*. Quite evidently, the smaller oil companies are feeling the competitive strength of the co-ops in the production and sale of oil, and the leaders of the industry believe that the time has come to mobilize opposition to this threat to private profits.

A measure of the alarm among the oil companies is provided by the fact that Dr. Ludwig von Mises, most venerable of the economists who condemn the interference of government in business, was retained to write Part I of the pretentious study of the co-op threat. Dr. von Mises is author of a volume, *Omnipotent Government*, which is probably the most extreme statement of the case for *laissez faire* economics that has been printed in modern times. One would think that, as a critic of government monopoly, this scholarly advocate of free enterprise would be equally opposed to monopoly in any form, for it is not only government monopoly or interference which menaces the "unhampered market" economy to which he is so devoted. Any sort of monopoly threatens free trade, and that is precisely why the co-ops are of such great value and significance.

The practical opposition met by the oil co-ops during the period of their growth thus far has been plainly the effort of semi-monopolistic interests to freeze out a dangerous competitor. The writer of Part II of *Cooperatives in the Petroleum Industry*, Dr. K. E. Ettinger, leaves no doubt of the fears of the oil companies.

It is characteristic [he writes] of the integration of the coops that it rests on a broad basis of consumer acceptance. Moreover, the growing interest of labor unions indicates that consumer support will continue

to increase in the future. Secondly, many companies in the oil industry are in an extremely vulnerable position.

The same writer, in a passage of notable impartiality, pays his respects to the question of payment of taxes:

Actually the implications of the cooperative movement go far beyond the scope of preferential taxation. Many cooperatives do not even claim formal tax exemption today and are satisfied with having their profits treated as savings of their members, taxable only as income of the patron. The cooperatives are among the most aggressive opponents of business as it is today. This has nothing to do with their statements on being for or against free enterprise.

In other words, the future of the co-op movement depends upon the capacity of the cooperatives to meet competitive marketing on its own grounds and its own terms—as they have been doing in the past—and upon increasing public recognition of the essentially democratic, anti-monopoly character of cooperative enterprise. Some people may be confused by the nonsensical claim, made by one enemy of the co-ops before a Senate investigating Committee, that the trend of co-op expansion will "take us right to Russia," but no one who gains the slightest acquaintance with co-op principles will remain impressed by such attacks. Co-ops can become in the United States what they have already become in other parts of the world—the foundation of economic democracy. They are opposed in principle and in practice to all types of dictatorship, all types of monopoly, and they are also a training ground for practical self-government in economic affairs. Bertram B. Fowler's recent book, *The Cooperative Challenge*, would be helpful reading for those who wish confirmation of these suggestions.