

THE INVITATION TO COMMUNISM

THE intention of this title is not to compel attention by shock, but to assert what seems to us a philosophical truth. The claim is not that the pressure of economic circumstances will move us inexorably toward a socialist bureaucracy—a familiar cry for some time, now—but rather that there is no hope of removing the "specter" of present Soviet-Communist threat unless we *part* company with the communists and cease asserting that economic security and political power must always rule the world. Otherwise, what we now call Communism, and particularly its aspects we like the least, will inevitably flourish.

There is a determinism in historical events, even though we know no reason for believing that Marx correctly described its origin or operations with his Dialectic. The determinism in historical events flows from the thoughts and attitudes of men. So long as certain attitudes prevail, commensurate societal conditions will emerge. But each group phenomenon is representative not only of its proponents—the opposition plays an almost equal part, and is represented in the mature development. William Randolph Hearst, for instance, must be regarded as one of the formative influences of modern Communism in America, even though he has been among the most fanatic red-baiters. Senator McCarthy has influenced the nature of the Communism of the future far more than any bedraggled Party Member. The Party Member, after all, is probably only following a routine series of religious observances while McCarthy is in a sense "creative," dealing in numerous hypos for stimulating the national communist psychosis. That psychosis, in turn, will express itself politically in terms of actions which a majority of the people will support against Russia; and, finally, the policies and persons subsequently to rule Russia will reflect powerful reactions to American attitudes. Given the

prominence of such men as Hearst and McCarthy, as well as of Marx, Lenin and Stalin, then—if our reasoning is correct—Communism has for a long time been inclined toward many of its neurotic characteristics of today. Neuroticisms breed neuroticisms without fail, and violent prejudices ensure that men will arise to embody the very destructive ideas and tendencies which at first existed chiefly in our own fancies.

All these things have been said before (for example, in Huxley's *Ends and Means*), but they are nonetheless true. The present world insanity on the subject of Communism makes an occasion for testing the validity of the "means determine the end" theory by seriously engaging our capacities for impartial reasoning, so long as use of that faculty is not yet strictly prohibited. One of the most cogent paragraphs in Owen Lattimore's *Ordeal by Slander* describes the vicious circle of self-delusion into which much of America seems to have fallen. A good way to begin our study of Communism is by listing what, as Mr. Lattimore shows, we already share with the Soviets as to policies of thought control:

We are beginning to reflect in our own conduct that which we abhor in thought control as the Russians enforce it. We are repelled by the servile way in which every Soviet contribution either to the social sciences or to the natural sciences has to be certified by the writing in of paeans on the superiority of Marxism, tributes to Stalin as the source of all wisdom, invective against "bourgeois science," arid attacks on scientists in democratic countries as camp followers of "capitalist imperialism."

It is time for us to wake up to the fact that the McCarthy tactics of bullying any man who stands up for an independent opinion are crowding us into setting up a similar vicious standard here in America. More and more we are allowing thought-control questions to be asked. "How long is it since you last denounced the Russians? In your recent monograph on the pottery of the Hopi Indians why did you not

insert an irrelevant but zealous glorification of the American Way? Can you produce evidence of having been denounced, within the last six months, by the American Communists? When were you last attacked in a Russian publication?"

The special pressure groups which promote McCarthyism have already succeeded in intimidating Washington to such an extent that fair-minded senators feel they have to be very cautious in coming even indirectly to the aid of its victims by establishing the real facts which disprove the accusations. They are political men, and they feel that they are in real danger if they attempt to go against a political tide. The pressure on them is made heavier by the fact that the Republicans are trying to stake out a claim to be the Kremlin of anti-Russian and anti-Communist ideology. The Democrats, in reply, are trying to show that they are just as anti-Russian and anti-Communist as the Republicans. As a result, both parties are to an alarming extent neglecting the most vital issue, which is the maintenance of democratic standards and practices in the face of both Communism and the demagoguery of the witch-hunters.

Nobody is worrying much about injustice to the Communists, but Socrates or Thomas Paine would probably say that if we don't follow our sense of justice most rigorously when the strain is greatest, we shall probably lose it altogether in due time. Certainly, in the present instance, the failure to discriminate before we denounce is a failure of faith in reason itself, and in a society where reason fails there is no safety. When independent thought comes to be universally regarded with suspicion, we may even begin to suspect ourselves. A piece in *The Progressive* for March, entitled "My Confessions to McCarthy," by Stringfellow Barr, is a telling bit of witticism, and the following short paragraphs have especial significance in indicating how a timid man may throttle himself long before the NKVD gets around to it.

Until this week [writes Mr. Barr], I would have sworn that I was just as loyal as Sen. McCarthy or Mr. Budenz, but the Senator has uncovered so much disloyalty in apparently loyal persons that I grew unsure of myself. When I shaved in the morning, I stared at myself and wondered what might lie behind that impassive face and all those innocent-looking soapsuds.

I determined to vote Republican. My determination to vote Republican in 1952, even if Dewey ran again, buoyed my spirits all that day against the suspicion that I was indeed a Creeping Socialist, slowly creeping my way towards Communist Party membership.

Although I am not a manufacturer, I speculated on the possibility that I could secure some sort of associate membership in the National Association of Manufacturers.

I wanted to write a letter to the *New York Times*, urging a repeal of the anti-trust laws as an unwarrantable attack on free enterprise and healthy competition and the profit incentive, an assault on the dignity of the human individual, and the worst example of statism.

Reporting my neighbors would help, and I resolved to do it; but there was still the possibility that the face staring distraughtly from my shaving mirror was the face of a man who badly needed reporting, himself.

If Stringfellow Barr were describing his true attitude of mind he would probably be correct in assuming he had many of the makings of a true follower of Stalin. But there are other things about the Soviets that need understanding, too. What, really, is "Communism" today?

A hard question, indeed, for Communism is obviously a complex, rather than simply a social philosophy or doctrine, and complexes, though easily nameable, are not easily understood. Let us for a moment dispense with the definitions-by-epithet with which we are currently bombarded—"a threat to America, to decent living anywhere," etc. These are probably true statements, but they tell us nothing of what Communism actually is, and if decent living really is threatened, the best plan would seem to be to find out precisely what is threatening it in order to prepare our defenses.

Even the more obvious ingredients of Communism are both multitudinous and diverse. Impacted in the total complex, of course, is the dream of Utopia—that dream which no age has lived entirely without. Whether men believe, as during the middle ages, in the attainment of "The Heavenly City" after death, or, as later on, in the

perfect community which better economic planning and better technology may bring for life on earth, it is congenital in man to visualize an ideal for cooperative living. This aspect of Communism is not attributable to Marx, Engels, and their Communist Manifesto. Nor were Marx, Lenin or Stalin responsible for the Labor Movement, however influential were the first two in maneuvering its destinies, particularly in Europe. The Labor Movement grew out of two realities—the economic facts of exploitation of labor and the psychological facts of a materialist world-view. The first gave the movement the courage of what seemed to be a righteous cause, and the second gave it brutality. "Communism," as we know it today, embodies both qualities.

If we seek the origin of that callous indifference which holds that a system must always be served before the humans who are involved, let us seek it here. The Russians, incidentally, have not cornered the market on indifference to man. Gandhi's assassin was not a Communist, but a highly fanatical religious zealot, determined to liquidate a threat to his faith. The execution of General Yamashita was perpetrated by the presumed custodians of democracy, who strove to create the impression of inexorable power as a lesson to a defeated populace—an effect supposed to assist in the smooth continuance of the System imposed by the victors. The incredibly prolonged persecution of Owen Lattimore was the work of Sen. McCarthy—the man who sets himself up as the Number One "anti-Communist," and therefore, presumably, the man who should put justice before political expediency.

Readers of contemporary analyses of Communism will probably be sufficiently familiar with the claim that, as R. H. Crossman, English MP, has put it, "In the U.S.S.R. we have seen the elimination of the last trace of revolutionary communism, and the development of a managerial state run by a privileged and despotic elite." Assuming that this is true—and it may be difficult

to find reason for assuming anything else—are we to be happy about the turn of events, or further terrified? Is it better to be confronted with a revolutionary doctrine or a chauvinistic State? Our most vocal witch hunters will claim that Communism is both, but the claim is hardly logical. Or, at least, if Communism be both, then serious divisions of opinion within the total Communist front must develop, for we cannot expect men who really believe in "the classless society" to forever support an intensely despotic elite. In this case the intelligent thing to do would be to encourage what we consider to be the "better" tendencies within the total Communism complex to prevail over the "worst." Fighting a duality as if it were a unity creates a unity; civil wars have often stopped with the opposing sides joining in temporary harmony to meet a common aggressor. But in order to separate the best from the worst in a prospective enemy, *before* the war, we need a lot of study and discussion, and above all a capacity to resist making judgments by slogan.

If it is difficult to understand why the Russians, or any other Communists, can allow, on the basis of their own professed ideas, the establishment of a new class of despots, we need only to examine objectively the evidence of Personal Leader Worship as an internationally diffused neurosis. Behind the will to believe in a Leader who will do our thinking as well as our national planning for us, is the same materialistic philosophy of values we began to criticize a few paragraphs back. People are led to forget *human* values if they are promised sufficiently rapid delivery on material improvements, and a political leader always promises the most of these. *Only the men whose first interest is in what they can promise themselves in the way of integrity will feel they have the time to think and evaluate for themselves.* Materialism never gives us time for anything but gambling that someone has finally found the shortcut that will bring us home to security or happiness.

Letter from **ENGLAND**

LONDON.—The attack made by the Prime Minister of South Africa (Dr. Malan) upon British colonial policy continues to provoke the Commonwealth. His present grievance is against the grant of an elected parliament to the Gold Coast. He fears that the "common interest" and "homogeneity of cultural and political outlook" which existed when the Commonwealth contained only five members—Britain, Canada, South Africa, Australia, and New Zealand—no longer prevail. In short, Dr. Malan has challenged the whole non-racial basis on which the Commonwealth rests. He is afraid that "white civilization and leadership" are in jeopardy. He even complained that India, Pakistan and Ceylon were admitted to the Commonwealth without consultation with or approval of other Commonwealth members.

Here are grave issues affecting the whole future of the world. An immediate answer to Dr. Malan has taken the form of a motion in the House of Commons here, supported by about 100 Labour members. It should be put on record in view of probable future developments:

That this House reaffirms its confidence in the course of British Commonwealth and colonial policy in the last five years, and, while realizing the difficulties encountered today in communities where different races have reached different stages in development, calls upon white people everywhere to free themselves from the conception of racial superiority and to follow a course directed towards the brotherhood of man and based upon the declaration of human rights of the United Nations that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and in rights.

It should be mentioned that the policy of working towards self-government for British colonies is nothing new. It has been announced and reaffirmed by successive governments in the past 20 years. To protest, therefore, against recent elections in the Gold Coast is to imply that

African Negroes must not ever achieve freedom and independence, "a thesis which cannot be defended" (as the London *Times* Cape Town correspondent pointed out), "without abandoning the principles of Western civilization which white South Africa purports to uphold."

Events in the Far East have thrown into high relief this searching problem of racial discrimination and antagonism in the international affairs, and the last half of the century is likely to see many accounts being settled between the white and other races. Many will agree with the historian, Mr. Arnold Toynbee (who has just coined an admirable slogan, "No annihilation without representation") when he said, in a recent broadcast here, that "the great event of our time is the meeting of east and west." He believes that future historians will record that, after the non-western peoples had been forced to adjust their traditional ways of life to the requirements of a westernized world, they began to exert counter-influences on the west, "and this blend of eastern and western civilizations was the origin of the world civilization of the third millennium after Christ." This suggestion has universal scope and applies to all non-western peoples, for there is no doubt that coloured peoples everywhere feel some common bond against white people, whom they identify as their oppressors. Quite evidently what happens in South Africa will have international significance.

In refreshing contrast to Dr. Malan's invidious reflections on non-white members of the Commonwealth, is the reference to Mahatma Gandhi by Viscount Samuel, Liberal statesman and philosopher, in the course of a recent address on the general subject of "The Mark of Greatness." He said: "I think it possible that later generations, if they were asked to choose, regardless of nationality, one man above all others as having been the greatest, in this first half of the twentieth century, might select a name which today may perhaps be received with surprise: it is that of Gandhi." Summarizing the vastness of the

scale on which Mahatma Gandhi worked, the loftiness of aim, the resolution to seek his ends without violence, and the amazing measure of success achieved, Lord Samuel suggested that we might search in vain "for any other man of our age more worthy than he of the honour and reverence of future generations."

Certain it is that no lasting brotherhood can co-exist with racial arrogance or exclusiveness. We shall have to give up the habit, also, of talking of abstractions—Japan or India, America or England, of black and white—and try to remember always the wise words of Dr. Albert Schweitzer, written in 1923: "Wherever there is lost the consciousness that every man is an object of concern for us just because he is a man, civilization and morals are shaken, and the advance to fully developed inhumanity is only a question of time."

ENGLISH CORRESPONDENT

REVIEW

RELIGION AND THE STATE

IN a current series of advertisements, Republic Steel gives joyful thanks for our "strong and free America." Just suppose, the copy-writer warns—"suppose we had no Freedom here? Suppose the State took over religion, the press and professions like music, medicine and art?" . . . The implication is plain. Religion in Russia, if not absolutely discouraged, is certainly subordinate to the political authority. For a while, candid atheism was the official Soviet credo, although today, doubtless for reasons of "State," a measure of tolerance is allowed to the Greek Orthodox Church, and possibly to other groups. But there is hardly "freedom of religion" in Russia—not, at any rate, the kind of freedom of religion that is specified by the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States. So, it is easy to share Republic Steel's sentiments on this point. For the State to take over religion would be a very bad thing.

But what about Religion taking over the State? The advertisement doesn't say anything about this, for the obvious reason that while Republic Steel can make no important enemies by being against Communism, to question the boring-from-within activities of a powerful religious institution that gives numerous evidences of wanting to take over the State—or at least some of the most important functions of the State—would be very bad "public relations" for a large corporation with customers belonging to all religions.

Republic Steel has a right to its "say," we suppose; and having quite a lot of money to spend on advertising, Republic Steel can say a very loud "say"—much louder, for instance, than the weekly magazine, the *Nation*, which a year or so ago was removed from the shelves of the libraries of the New York City public school system, on the ground that certain *Nation* articles would be disturbing to the religious beliefs of Catholic

schoolchildren. Both the *Nation* and a number of distinguished American citizens have done their best to regain the free circulation of this weekly for New York students, but without success. A marked access of piety on the part of the New York School Board still bars the *Nation* from the library shelves.

It is in the realm of fantasy, of course, to try to imagine how a Republic Steel advertisement on behalf of free circulation of the *Nation* would read. Just wondering about it makes for a lot of confusion. For example, a conscientious copy-writer charged with this responsibility would probably want to read the *Nation* for a while (a lot of copy-writers read it anyhow, which in itself is something of a puzzle), just to get into the proper spirit. He would look up Paul Blanshard's series on the Catholic Church (later published by Beacon as *American Freedom and Catholic Power*) to look for angles. Then, turning to later issues, he would find that, after being banned from the schools because of Mr. Blanshard's series, the *Nation* went right ahead and sent Mr. Blanshard to Rome in 1950 to report the doings of the Holy Year to its readers. And this was followed by still another series by the irrepressible Mr. Blanshard: "The Vatican vs. the Public Schools," appearing in the *Nation* for Jan. 20 and 27, and March 3 and 24.

By this time, almost any intelligent copy-writer ought to be a bit steamed up as a human being and American citizen. In the last-mentioned series, for example, he would find plenty of material about the last-ditch opposition to clerical domination of public education in countries like France, Belgium, and Holland. He could tell how Mussolini—always a popular target—sold out free education for Italy with the concordat signed with Pius XI in 1929, establishing Catholic religious education in the public schools. He could tell how the present Italian Minister of Education, Guido Gonella, is a former editor of *Osservatore Romano*, the Vatican organ, and

borrow Mr. Blanshard's analogy to convey this fact's significance:

To parallel this situation in the United States one would have to imagine Cardinal Spellman, with Cabinet rank, dominating our entire educational structure. Discrimination against critics of Catholicism permeates the Italian educational system from the central office in Rome down to the tiniest village in Calabria. In his public utterances Gonella treats culture and Catholicism as Siamese twins.

He could tell how, in both England and Holland, although government schools do not teach the Catholic faith, the citizens are taxed to maintain a separate Catholic school system; and then show what this sort of compromise with Catholic separatism may lead to by quoting from Camille Huysmans, former Belgian prime minister and minister of education, who told Mr. Blanshard:

Catholic leaders have been the saboteurs of the public school since 1831. We are in favor of an agreement for genuine equality of support for public and private education, but the bishops want a Catholic monopoly in the control of the schools. They did not act this way in the beginning. They were moderate then. A Catholic is a gentleman when he is in the minority. Let America take warning. You must not be foolish as we have been. Every father and mother should have a fair choice in matters of education, and the Catholic hierarchy is attempting to defeat that fair choice.

All over Europe, the principle of free, secular education is threatened by Catholic political power. The Catholic position, as stated by Mr. Blanshard, is that "the church and not the state has the primary right to educate. The state owes the church support in its educational enterprise and must not attempt to supersede the church." It is necessary to read Mr. Blanshard's articles to realize how crucial is the struggle for free education in Europe; fortunately, the series is available from the *Nation* in pamphlet form (Write to 20 Vesey St., New York 7). The concluding sentences are revealing:

The American occupation authorities might have had the public school favored after the war, but they chose to go along with the old dual system.

Neither in West Germany nor in any other part of Europe are American leaders recommending the separation of church and state as an organic part of the democracy they preach. That part of our constitution, in fact, is considered not exportable; the emphasis is on less beneficial features of the American way.

While our representatives in Europe avoid the question, apparently out of fear of Catholic criticism at home, public money for Catholic schools is the first plank in the platform of every Catholic political party in Europe. In the light of European experience, the small but fierce skirmish in Washington over federal money for parochial school busses must be regarded as only a foretaste of a more severe struggle—the struggle of a free culture for continued freedom from ecclesiastical controls.

Obviously, it would be difficult for a Republic Steel spokesman to write vigorously against religion taking over the state. And his essay would be further complicated by the fact that the opposition to Catholic control of education in Europe is almost exclusively confined to *socialists*—who are, other spokesmen of free enterprise tell us, merely immature and undeveloped communists. Plainly, the problem is far too complicated for an advertising man who wants to win friends and influence people for Republic Steel. So while we, too, are against the state in religion, and religion in the state, we are also against high-toned editorials in the middle of advertising pages. Such editorials always leave out the real issues—on good advertising principles, they have to.

COMMENTARY A GREAT TRADITION

IN the life of Albert Schweitzer, mentioned briefly in *Frontiers* this week, are two ideas which ought to come out more strongly. Schweitzer's resolve to go to Africa, and his voluntary break with the life of a talented and cultivated European, were, it is true, a kind of "imitation of Christ." But they were also something else—they represented the spirit of genuine aristocracy. The man born with gifts, Schweitzer felt, is under a profound obligation to share them with the less fortunate of men. Throughout his youth he was haunted by this idea. There was in him a feeling akin to the ancient conception of kingship or nobility, under which the degree of a man in the hierarchy of human capacities and social relationships established that man's responsibility to all the rest. The young woman, Helene Bresslau, whom Schweitzer married shortly before leaving for Africa, and who accompanied him there to share his work, felt the same way. As Hagedorn tells it:

They met in recognition that their lives were not their own to do with as they pleased. Both, it happened, had set a terminal date in their lives beyond which they must take on responsibility for other lives than their own. Schweitzer had set his at thirty; Helene Bresslau, hers at twenty-five. Both recognized that they were, in a very real sense, trustees. . . .

This is a cultural ideal which has almost entirely departed from Western civilization—at any rate, from the United States. It derives most naturally from the ancient idea of *castes* of society, in which, however, to be of high caste creates special responsibilities instead of special privileges. According to Hindu tradition, the Brahmin, for example, who is of the highest caste, is the *servant* of all others, in terms of his moral responsibility. With the corruption of the caste idea, and its replacement by the oversimplifications of the political concept of equality, the idea of the special responsibility of the distinguished individual has been lost sight of and forgotten. Something like it occurs in the

United States in the idea of the public servant—as the Founding Fathers conceived it—but it is no longer a family and community ideal.

Schweitzer's feeling about the popular "quest for happiness" is also worthy of note. It is difficult, perhaps, for a man to speak of outgrowing the longing for personal happiness, without sounding somewhat self-conscious or even slightly pompous, and in the passage quoted by Mr. Hagedorn, Schweitzer's words seem affected by this quality, yet his point is worth making:

To a friend who asked him whether he were happy, Schweitzer answered, "Yes, when I am working and getting somewhere. As an individual I have really ceased to exist, and I don't know personal happiness any more."

An echo of the elegiac yet challenging words rang through a talk he gave to the boys in an English school: "I don't know what your destiny will be. But one thing I know: the only ones among you who will be really happy are those who will have sought and found how to serve."

So, it is worth while to question, and to question deeply, why are there not more people like Albert Schweitzer and his wife?

CHILDREN ... and Ourselves

A RECENT lecture delivered before the teachers and interested parents of a nursery school brings to mind the tendency among child psychologists to confidently classify the emotional and mental reactions of children—often either oversimplifying or overcomplicating what is actually happening with the young ones. The lecture was on "Hostility Reactions," and it seems worth while to pose a few questions about this phrase, since it is carefully elaborated in so many books on child guidance.

The danger of error, as we see it, lies in assuming that "hostility" is a thing in itself, a kind of natively perverse ingredient of each child's psyche. But what is called "hostility" may very well be an effect rather than a cause, a result of many compounded experiences and stimuli. If this is so, we must be careful not to be misled by thinking that each child is compounded of easily measured portions of "love," "aggression," "hostility," etc. The personality is not a chemical retort. It is composed principally of mysterious, subtle elements which defy classification because of the stubborn refusal of the personality to be other than original.

The most obvious cause of the hostility-reaction is "rejection," as so many psychologists have pointed out. But is it not possible that this "rejection" may be, in many instances, of quite a different sort from that most commonly known, which is attributed to a parent's failure to understand, or love, the child, or to the unwillingness of a group of children to admit a new child to its companionship? Like adults, children can *themselves* "reject" certain opportunities, or decline certain challenges. When this is done, hostility is fairly guaranteed. Rejection is always bad, whether done to us, or by us. In other words, if a child attempts something half-heartedly, and fails, he may easily feel that failure so strongly that he begins to dislike himself.

And the person who dislikes himself is always hostile to others.

If we switch over to the adult world, where the same psychological ferments are brewing in older and wider crucibles, we shall perhaps be willing to admit that when any person rejects a given experience, opportunity, or challenge, he is subject to what is colloquially known as a "sour-grapes" attitude. We have all known persons who have stored away an abundance of this commodity, and probably there have been times when we ourselves have gone through months or years subtly poisoned by the criticisms and vituperations we indulged as a reactive defense for our own failures or inadequacies. Even when we resort to criticism of an ideal we might have held, or a principle we might have defended, except for timidity—or when we criticize actions which might, save for laziness, have been our own—we are definitely "hostile" people, even though our friends and surroundings may cause us to temper expediently the hostility or even bury it beneath several layers of camouflage.

So we think that very often the child becomes hostile, not to one activity or one person or group of persons, but, like adults, through personal failure. There is perhaps a common sort of tragedy in all this, for it seems to us that only an inadequacy of religion and philosophy allows concepts of personal failure to be afloat in the world at all. This may be the greatest crime against the child on the part of parents, teachers and society—inculcating acceptance of the Idea of Failure.

Proof of this contention is perhaps impossible and, in any case, would involve us in metaphysical debate, but it seems reasonable to argue that we might naturally expect to find any society preoccupied with the Idea of Failure whenever that society envisions success in primarily material terms.

Now the child, though he does not attend courses in business administration, nor listen to clever professors describe shortcuts to success—

nor hear even-more-clever fraternity alumni tell how they did it—is still confronted with the same materialistic scale of values. Success and failure become the god and devil of daily life, while the idea of continuously striving for improvement—a *philosophical* vision—remains unnourished. The idea of *improvement* of our capacities, however humble those capacities may be, as the goal of life, is of course the psychological opposite of a success-and-failure code. But we cannot believe that improvement—the determined becoming of something more than we presently are—will be a sufficient ideal unless we have some conviction of what may be called the self-directed evolution of the individual human soul. If there is a "soul," an inner man whose real experiences are moral rather than physical, what men call success and failure are simply incidents on the road to learning, and what appears, on materialist assumptions, to be "success" may be as damaging to continuous advance as "failure."

So when psychologists discourse on "hostility," however learnedly and helpfully, we feel it needful to assert again that until a "soul-view" of human nature and destiny becomes more prevalent in society at large, most teachers and most parents will fail to get at the roots of the "hostility reactions" of their children. The worst enemy of the child is a negative, easily discouraged attitude of mind. Frequently, though probably not always, this is absorbed from home environment. Parents scarcely have the right to indulge themselves by constantly bemoaning their lack of adequate opportunities to become "successes" if they are going to complain just as loudly of their children's "hostility." The two, we submit, inevitably go hand in hand. The child of parents who seek for constructive meaning in every reversal of family fortune, and whose ideals depend on nothing but the opportunity to *keep trying* for a more meaningful life, will seldom be hostile to anyone or anything. And this simply because he will have been encouraged to have high and heroic expectations of himself.

One of the strangest and yet most wonderful things about the human being is that he takes his setbacks best when his aims are highest and his efforts most prodigious. Those whose concerns and stakes are great enough, may, like Gandhi, never know a morbid moment

FRONTIERS Great in Goodness

DIFFERENT ages of civilization seem to have different destinies or modes of fulfillment. The eighteenth century, for example, was a period of rebellion and protest, while the nineteenth century was largely a period of partial realization of eighteenth century ideals. New protests, of course, were born during the nineteenth century, but these belonged to another cycle of development, and the synthesis which they sought is still far from being achieved. Another example of a cycle of protest occurred in the sixteenth century—the Lutheran revolt. Luther attacked the sacerdotal status quo with bombast and shafts of bitter condemnation. But in the sixteenth century another sort of current also affected the course of Christian thinking—the gentle irony and temperate humanism of Erasmus. It is difficult to decide between Luther and Erasmus—difficult to know which of the two accomplished the most. Luther, one could say—Luther, or the great historical movement of which he became the instrument—broke the psychological monopoly of Rome, but also created new rigidities of doctrinal authority. Perhaps freedom grows only one step at a time, and if the Lutheran reform fell back into relative reaction, it was still an advance for the freedom of inquiry and of human conscience.

Erasmus, on the other hand, broke no institutional forms. He was the refiner of private reflection, the civilizer of attitudes, the humanist educator and inspirer of distinguished individuals. Doubtless we need both Luthers and Erasmuses, and who is so certain of his own ways as to be able to proclaim the *best* course of action for all men? And yet, the desire to establish "the best way" on rational grounds certainly should not be suppressed. Perhaps, on some far-off plane of omniscience, we might be able to decide between Luther and Erasmus, and to explain why the course of one did more for the human race than the course of the other . . . perhaps, and then again, perhaps not.

This train of thought is inspired by letters from several readers, all suggesting that there be some discussion and appreciation of Albert Schweitzer in MANAS. In some respects, Schweitzer has been a twentieth-century Erasmus, working from within the Christian tradition. His life has been one to capture the imagination. He was not pressed into a career of self-sacrifice by a series of bewildering misfortunes. Fortune smiled on him, as a boy and as a young man. No determinism of events created his outlook, his love of his fellows. There is, apparently, an *inner* determinism, or some sort of uncaused cause in human behavior. The classic illustration of this is the life of Gautama Buddha, who rose from a couch of indescribable luxury to seek an explanation for human suffering. Schweitzer, in his own way like Gautama, chose to become a doctor to the natives of French Equatorial Africa instead of pursuing his already promising career in music and in theology in Europe. In passing, it is pleasant to note that these Buddha-like motivations are not unique—they are not reserved to the great saviors of mankind, but occur in men like Schweitzer, closer to us in time.

Schweitzer's father was a preacher. Albert grew up in a religious atmosphere, but his rapidly maturing mind joined intuitive acceptance of the ethical ideas of Christianity with a sharply questioning spirit. In his teens, he wanted to know why the family of Jesus remained so poor after the Wise Men of the East brought them all that gold and frankincense and myrrh. There were other such questions. Yet Schweitzer remained a Christian. As Jesus worked as a carpenter until he was thirty, so Schweitzer would live his own life until that age. He would drink deeply of the culture of the Old World before undertaking the ministry of Reverence for Life. It is the depth and deliberateness of Schweitzer's convictions and decisions, even at the age of twenty-one, which impress, and inspire.

Schweitzer's later life is already a redeeming part of the history of the twentieth century. His

gentleness, his strength, the romantic tale of his life in an African village where he has built a hospital to care for the sick and diseased of the native population—how he has supported the hospital by giving organ recitals in Europe—these things are known, wondered at, and revered throughout the world. He has already become a symbol of human goodness. Why, people ask, are there not more such men as Schweitzer?

Why, indeed? Dr. Schweitzer himself has no answer to this question—and, so far as we know—has sought none. Of a certainty, Christianity has no answer. Yet the mystery of the individual may not be quite so insoluble as Christians have supposed, and in this day, in this time of absolute crisis for individual man, the problem of the individual is not one to be ignored. Perhaps we should say, simply, that the example of a man like Schweitzer is enough and more than we can ask of anyone. His has been a life of fulfillment of the Gospel counsels of perfection, and those who have had the courage to carry out any counsel of perfection to the end of human possibility are extraordinarily few.

We have been reading Hermann Hagedorn's *Prophet in the Wilderness*, a thoroughly enjoyable and well-written book. There we find something of a key to Schweitzer's orientation. It speaks of his agnosticism with respect to ultimate philosophical explanations, his affection for the practical ethics of the Stoics: "The important thing for the human creature was not the nature of the universe, or the problem of knowledge, but how to come to grips with the ordinary issues of life—sorrow and pain, marriage and children and death, the sense of individual littleness under the stars, the hunger for security." And so the life of Schweitzer is more important than his books. *Quest of the Historical Jesus* will not lift the reader at all in the way that Schweitzer's biography may. We are drawn to the conclusion that the age and the European cultural tradition made Schweitzer an agnostic toward ultimate questions—he must have felt that knowledge on

these subjects is impossible. But is it? Schweitzer certainly has *feelings* about the ultimate questions, and part of the business of life is to understand the nature and implications of our feelings—to rationalize them, in short.

Has it Occurred to Us?

WE are every once in a while reminded that, however little we may actually know, there are some things we cannot be unconvinced of. This is well, for what would the human being do without some sense of independent certainty? The business of knowing has its mysterious moments, but, even when pressed to the wall of thought, we "know" that we know. Now, some psychologists take the view that conscious thought emerges from the "Unconscious," which is tantamount to saying that rationality naturally develops out of irrationality. This theory has the charm of the bizarre, but that does not prevent it from being utterly useless as a psychological principle.

Has it occurred to us that if intelligence could possibly arise out of ignorance, impulse, delusion, and fantasy (some of the contents of the "Unconscious"), man need not bother to think about anything any more? We *think* in order to bring reason out of chaos: if reason will traipse up on its own momentum out of the pit of unreason, the efforts of the human mind are a foolish waste of energy. It might be asked of the psychologists, that, if completely convinced of the truth of their hypothesis, should they not immediately desist from further attempts to themselves evolve understanding, and let the miracles of spontaneous generation carry on in their own way? No; psychologists, full of faith in the boundless potentialities of the Unconscious, are still as busy as ordinary folk in unearthing new truths and unveiling old ones.

How, actually, do we learn? Is it not usually by understanding a little that we find ourselves able to understand more? Suppose it could happen that we were presented with something—anything—*of which we knew absolutely nothing*. We know what would happen. No matter how odd and unusual the sight, how amazing or disconcerting the event, its newness would be apparent only because it was "different," yet its difference could not be seen unless it was also *similar* to some more familiar object, idea, or

event. As a modern novelist has written, "Being shocked only stuns your sense of judgment." Judgment is suspended, not obliterated, and with the sense of judgment we are more or less confident that we can in time reduce any sight, sound, feeling, or thought to reasonableness. We might just as well assume, therefore, that nothing completely new and unknown can ever happen to us. Our minds, grappling with so-called unknowns, look upon them always as *comparative* unknowns, and proceed to transform them gradually into comparative "knowns."

It may be said that we never begin learning without some knowledge to start with. A dangerous axiom, but the facts of experience will comfortably support no other. Consider the young child, the babe—that curious bundle of consciousness which psychologists as well as the mere layman delight (doubtless for somewhat different reasons) in "observing." Many observers of children have been most disrespectful of their tiny subjects, for the inarticulate toddler is supposed to be babbling meaningless sounds because he cannot think.

Yet the overpowering impression given by the infant whose "talk" cannot be understood is that there is something to understand, something meant to be communicated—and not that we are listening to senseless throat noises. Are grownups so seldom visited by ideas they cannot find words for, that they prefer to credit the babe with mindlessness rather than with incoherence? Words must be found for ideas, under our present arrangement of not-very-satisfactory human intercourse, but it would be rash to conclude that we cannot have ideas without words.

Before we tumble the theory of "Unconscious" out of the cosmos forever, let us admit *all* its contents—race memories, individual instincts, irrational emotions, and the rest. We may even conceive that there is a great medium of intelligence interpenetrating all human beings and somehow preserving an almost illimitable past as if it were "present." Through this medium the

isolation of one human mind is modified, although it is never fully destroyed. This field could be named the "Past-conscious mind," if we think of it as containing memories and habits which were once the conscious activities of the pre-historic human race. But whatever the designation, we cannot blink the fact that a universal mind presents an inescapable dilemma—is the mind individual or collective, or both, and *why*?

The assertion that we never begin learning without some knowledge to start with, is not formidable at first sight. But when we try to find the original point at which the learning process takes effect, we head straight into infinity. Backing away hurriedly, we can shut our eyes to the far-reaching consequences of the axiom, and simply keep on learning without bothering to decide how, when, and where we acquired the habit. If we choose, we may think of our own minds as a fragment of the "Past-conscious mind," and then "our" learning would start simply with the acquired instincts of the collective human intellect, in much the same way as today's bee remembers all that his species has ever learned. This formula will not cover the question of individuality, but unless we can face up to the prospect of infinity, we had best not dwell too long on the origin of *our* consciousness.

When it occurs to us that we may have always been learning in the same manner as we now do—going from the known in ourselves to unknowns which promise an extension of our present knowledge—it will be time enough to realize that the "end" may also be out of sight.