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PSYCHIC POSSIBILITIES

AS the editors of MANAS have long felt that one thing that they had succeeded in accomplishing was to get out a paper without any "secret" biasses or tendentious propaganda lines, the following passage in a communication from a reader came as a considerable surprise:

> . . . While I'm at it, it would seem that someone on the staff has a psychic axe to grind. Several times, paragraphs in defense of telepathy, clairvoyance, etc., have been inserted almost out of context, as if someone had some kind of a need in this direction. About as free-flowing as a *deus-ex-machina.* I felt this even before the summer suspension of publication. I'm afraid if others react to this as I find myself reacting, the result will not be favorable. . .

Which is a nice way of saying, "Why do you bother at all with that (silly?) psychic stuff?" Or possibly a nice way of saying, "Why don't you people come out in the open instead of smuggling in your opinions sideways?"

Now, we had thought we always labelled our assumptions with a fair degree of accuracy, even if we did not succeed in justifying them. But if the judgment of this reader is correct, we ought to say a lot more on psychic subjects, instead of a lot less, in order to make our position unmistakably clear.

Briefly, we incline to the view that a skeptical or unbelieving attitude toward what are called psychic phenomena has been natural—a logical consequence, that is, of prevailing assumptions—for only a limited period in human history. Rejection of the "psychic" as a reality in human experience began in about the seventeenth century, and has lasted up until the present day, although, within the past five or ten years, the denials have been decreasingly emphatic and the interested parties, including interested scientists, increasingly numerous. A backhanded way of getting at the importance of the psychic is by quoting from a psychologist who offered the following explanation, in a letter to Dr. Joseph Jastrow, for his lack of interest in the subject:

> ESP [extra sensory perception] is so contrary to the general scientific world picture, that to accept the former would compel the abandonment of the latter. I am unwilling to give up the body of scientific knowledge so painfully acquired in the Western world during the past 300 years on the basis of a few anecdotes and a few badly reported experiments.

The implication, here, is that the psychic factor, if genuine, is also a *causal* factor in otherwise "natural" events—a factor, moreover, which has been ignored during the accumulation of "the body of scientific knowledge so painfully acquired" over the past 300 years. We would not go so far as to insist that this body of knowledge will have to be abandoned, should psychic causes be a reality, but it seems reasonable to propose that the assumptions of some of the branches, at least, of scientific knowledge would undergo change or modification, should this be the case.

There is the question, first, of the nature of the world around us. How might our conception of the world of nature be altered by acceptance of the reality of the psychic factor? To answer this question, we quote from a review by Oliver Reiser of Dr. Helge Lundholm's *The Psychology of Belief,* issued by the Duke University Press in 1936. (Dr. Lundholm teaches at Duke, and the review appeared in *Philosophy of Science* for July, 1937). Speaking of Lundholm's views, Reiser says:

> To a philosopher the most interesting concept in this system is likely to be that of the memory-continuum, a "metaphysical" concept covering all the mind-units ranging from the hypothetical cell-mind at the bottom to the hypothetical deity at the top. Since, as Dr. Lundholm believes, psychical research indicates that memories survive bodily death, and since evolution is purposive (as indicated by the role

> of instincts or racial memories in evolution), the author concludes that the individual memory-continuum is a part of a wider field, eventually an infinite memory continuum akin to the transmittant universal mind of William James, or the superhuman monads of Leibniz. While Dr. Lundholm does not state this in the present book, he has elsewhere indicated that he believes that he has here a theory which may explain the results of his colleague, Dr. J. B. Rhine, in the field of *extra-sensory* perception. Of course thinkers with positive-behavioristic leanings will condemn the whole business, but perhaps the work and influence of Dr. McDougall and his colleagues at Duke University may accomplish what McDougall's influence at Harvard could not.

Numerous thinkers with Leibnizian leanings have been quick to see the relationship between experimental determination of the psychic factor and the doctrine of the monads. Dr. H. H. Price, professor of logic at Oxford, has remarked: ". . . we could suppose with Leibniz that every mind clairvoyantly perceives or represents the world from its own proper point of view, and that each is telepathically correlated with all other minds. We should then have to explain why there *seems* to be so little clairvoyance, and why the vast bulk of our perceptions or representations remain unconscious." W. Macneile Dixon founds almost his entire metaphysics on the Leibnizian idea (in *The Human Situation*). For a simple statement of the view, although without mention of Leibniz, a passage from William James cannot be improved upon:

> . . . there is a continuum of cosmic consciousness against which our individuality builds but accidental fences, and into which our several minds plunge as into a mother-sea or reservoir. Our "normal" consciousness is circumscribed for adaptation to our external earthly environment, but the fence is weak in spots, and fitful influences from beyond leak in, showing the otherwise unverifiable common connection. Not only psychic research, but metaphysical philosophy, and speculative biology are led in their own ways to look with favor on some such "panpsychic" view of the universe as this. Assuming this common reservoir of consciousness to exist, this bank upon which we all draw, and in which so many of the earth's memories must in some way be stored, or mediums would not get them as they do, the question is, What is its own structure? What is its inner topography? . . . What are the conditions of individuation or insulation in this mother-sea? To what tracts, to what active systems functioning separately in it, do personalities correspond?

Thus James, the founder of modern psychology in the United States, is today still almost as much of a pioneer as he was in 1909, when this passage first appeared. There is really nothing new, of course, in the idea. Whether it be called, as the ancients named it, *Anima Mandi*, or the heresy of Averroes, as it was known in the Middle Ages, the Astral Light of the Paracelsians and Kabalists, the Oversoul of Emerson, or the Mind-Stuff of Arthur Eddington, matters little. It is the theory of men as souls, as "lights" in and of consciousness, and it affords, potentially at least, a transforming power over human life.

If there is anything at all conclusive about the findings of modern psychology, including both academic research and the clinical investigations of analysts and psychiatrists, it is that man's *idea of himself* is of supreme importance in its effect upon moral decision and behavior generally. Citations from scientific literature, although they exist in abundance, are hardly needed to show that the energies and capacities of a human being increase or decrease in direct relation to what he thinks of himself, his past, present, and future. It is a sense of kinship with the rest of sentient life that makes a man compassionate, tolerant, and eager to occupy his rightful station of usefulness and understanding in the universal scheme. It is the sense of consubstantiality with the moral or soul intelligence of mankind, as expressed across countless centuries, that arouses the individual to deepened feelings of responsibility as a man. This, truly, is the contribution of *culture* to human life—to surround the growing child, the youth, and the maturing man with the best and highest estimate of what human beings are capable of, so that always, the individual may regard himself in the impersonal light of a great tradition of human achievement. This is the extraordinary virtue of epic literature, which recounts the exploits of

heroes; this is the inspiration of the dramatic poem, *The Bhagavad-Gita,* which conducts the reader to the highest reaches of metaphysical philosophy against the background of a terrible civil war. The truth, perhaps, is always an invitation to struggle. Even the uninstructed instincts of adolescent youth lead him to seek challenges and struggles. The law of life seems always to involve worthy men in some sort of strife, before it is done with them, or they with it. And so, the question for philosophers to investigate is, "What sort of strife should men seek, for the fulfillment of their lives?"

What, really, is the voyage of our adventure and the realm of our security? Have we but lately oozed, then clambered, up from the primordial slime, and is our dream of progress but the unrolling of the promise of "biological" potentiality? Must we, as Thomas Huxley insisted, learn to oppose the "cosmic process" of dog eat dog, and abandon the heritage of an ancient tribe of beetle-browed ape-men whose jungle ways are still theorized upon as the limiting foundation of subsequent human relations? Or have we a dual heritage—one coming from beyond as well as one coming from below? Wordsworth has put it well:

> Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:
> The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star
> Hath had elsewhere its setting,
> And cometh from afar:
> Not in entire forgetfulness,
> And not in utter nakedness,
> But trailing clouds of glory . . . .

But, someone well may ask, can the humdrum routine of guessing at ESP cards lying face down on the table move us to such visions? The point is well taken; we doubt very much that the procedures of scientific investigation of psychic powers will inspire anyone to very much. But the birth of an idea that *is* inspiring may at least be eased and made more possible through the conscientious efforts of men who are attempting to wear away the skepticism that has been slowly built up over two or three hundred years.

Granted, that the notions of the "spiritual life" or the "psychic life," current before the scientific revolution, were so corrupted by theology and tarred with the brush of witchcraft and demonism as to make almost inevitable their complete destruction. There were those, however, at the very beginnings of modern scientific spirit, who tried to temper the blast of all-denying materialism with the spirit of impartial research. One of the first treatises to be written on psychic research—the first, that is, in the modern age—was by a seventeenth-century Englishman, Joseph Glanvil, who tried to distinguish between the countless superstitions concerning things psychic and the underlying reality. Glanvil wrote with conviction on this subject, for he felt that a denial of psychic phenomena was also a denial of soul and immortality. As one commentator has said of Glanvil:

> Thus we get the queer spectacle of a Fellow of the Royal Society lashing his age for a type of "unbelief" which Lecky and others celebrate as one of the finest triumphs of the age. He carries his campaign against *"dogmatizing"* so far as to attack the latent dogmas of "skepticism" itself. "That there are no witches or apparitions" seems to him a piece of unwarrantable cocksureness, and to accept such a current assumption merely because the climate of opinion has encouraged it, is the mark of an unphilosophic mind.

Glanvil, along with other Latitudinarians, or Cambridge Platonists, concerned himself with psychism for philosophical reasons. Henry More wrote Platonizing verse, and Ralph Cudworth, an encyclopedist of seventeenth-century idealism, attacked the materializing influence of Descartes, just as Whitehead and others were to do three hundred years later. More argued for a "Spirit of Nature," "diffused throughout the whole universe, exercising *plastic power,* producing those phenomena which cannot be explained mechanically." The World Machine of Galileo was already on the highroad to popularity, and the Cambridge Platonists were resisting its implications. In Prof. J. A. Stewart's *Myths of Plato,* the author summarizes More's ideas:

> This plastic principle explains . . . the growth of plants and embryos, and the instincts of animals, such as the nest-building instincts of the birds, the cocoon-spinning instinct of silk-worms. The Soul of man partakes in this plastic principle, and by means of it constructs for herself a body terrestrial, ærial, æthereal (*i.e.*, celestial), according as the stage of her development has brought her into vital relation with the vehicle of earth, air, or æther. . . .
>
> The Soul, by means of her plastic power, moulds the vehicle—earth, air, or æther—to any form she pleases; but having been first habituated to the human shape in the terrestrial body, she naturally moulds the ærial and celestial vehicles to the same shape. That is why ghosts (in whom More is a firm believer), being the Souls of the departed in their ærial bodies, are easily recognized by their features, when they return to the scenes of their terrestrial life.

Here, interestingly enough, is one of the few connections of the problem investigated by psychic researchers with the problem studied by modern biologists under the heading of morphogenesis. Modern morphologists speak of the "inner architect," of "organizers," of the "morphogenetic field," which are fairly neutral terms, while More has essentially a metaphysical or theological vocabulary. The phenomena, however, are identical, and More's proposal seems as reasonable a solution as any offered by modern scientists. (The fact, rather, is that they have *not* offered any solution.)

Eventually, we suspect, the exhaustion of mechanistic hypothesis in the biological sciences will unite with the "return-to-religion" temper of our anguished civilization, producing a greater hospitality to ideas like More's—and the ideas of Dr. Rhine and others active in psychic research, generally, may find greater acceptance from the same basic causes. It is not rigid skepticism which preserves the integrity of the scientific spirit, but disciplined open-mindedness and an unending quest for profounder relevances than have heretofore been recognized. It seems likely—at any rate, we are convinced that it is so—that a general reconsideration of the psychic factor in human life will be necessary before there can be a fruitful psychology and sociology, and before, indeed, there can be a social movement with genuine promise of the betterment of the world we live in. Man, to better himself, must first learn to honor himself, and while the realities of psychic phenomena are not necessarily uplifting in character, they often suggest the presence of hidden potentialities in human beings. They may, therefore, contribute to a conception of man that will move the heart and mind of man to greater things.

Letter from **FRANCE**

A COLLEGE TOWN.—Politics here, more than any other influence, reflects the directives imposed by geography and economics. Before the elections last June, special legislation was rushed through, revising the electoral system in such a way as to prevent growth of Communist strength in the government and consequent submission of France's destiny to Russian policy; there was therefore a slight drop in Communist influence and the evident submission of France's destiny, for the time being at least, to Washington policy.

In these inflationary times, the parties—and ideas—surest to succeed are those which have strong financial backing. The socialist left and "independents" are gradually feeling that they are fighting a losing battle against the "moneyed interests." The well-known newspaper *Le Monde*, French counterpart of the New York *Times*, was recently shaken by the forced resignation of its director, Mr. Hubert Beuve-Méry. The progressive, though far from radical, ideas of Mr. Beuve-Méry were apparently far too "dangerous" in the eyes of certain conservative financiers. *Le Monde* is, like the *Times*, a very complete newspaper, therefore widely read. As an example of its objective reporting, at the end of a story about six weeks ago on General Marshall's press conference on the European army, the paper quoted from a Reuters dispatch a sentence which Marshall had asked not be published, for fear of unpleasant reactions abroad. In it he said that America was furnishing materials and dollars rather than men for the European army. Marshall was right, of course, in not wishing to underestimate the strong feeling here that Europe is being made to fight America's war. Doubtless in the future the French public will be protected from news items which might lead them to think other than well of the American ally.

Economically as well as politically, France is finding itself an unwilling partner in the western anti-Communist bloc. Unable to develop its life after the war without outside aid, France has become so largely dependent upon American assistance that it feels forced to go along with the political program of the United States. Rearmament aid must be accepted or there is danger that all other aid will stop. The reduction of Marshall Plan monetary aid in favor of military aid "in kind" has reduced the counterpart fund of francs required for monetary aid. This counterpart fund has been a constant source of help to the French government, and now, with its sudden decrease, it is realized to what extent the budget was artificially balanced. More U.S. funds are being sought, not because the government needs dollars, but, paradoxically, because it needs francs!

For a long time France has been opposed to German rearmament, but this opposition is now mitigated by the fact that German industry, less burdened by rearmament, is becoming able to outsell French industry on the world market. If Germany also had to rearm there might not be so much competition!

The rearmament program has had an immediate effect upon prices, which have accelerated their upward climb, making the adjustment of salaries—apparently necessary every autumn—even more imperative than in the past. (In July of this year, the retail price index, based on 100 for 1938 levels, was at 2300, and in the same month the salary index of a skilled worker was at 1400.)

The growing interdependence of economics in the Western World appears—at least to this observer—to tend toward the equalization of standards of living in all the different countries cooperating economically, even as, during the second World War, with its economic effort, price and salary rises brought about a large degree of equalization within the bounds of the United States. Today food prices in France are approaching American levels, clothing has already attained them, and rents—and salaries—remain low. How this unstable situation is to be resolved remains to be seen. And if it is resolved, it remains to be seen how long such a "Western World" standard of living can exist separately and simultaneously with a vastly different "Eastern World" standard on an interdependent globe.

FRENCH CORRESPONDENT

REVIEW
"POLITICAL" FICTION

THIS week we should like to set out to solve a puzzle—not a new puzzle, but one which presents itself regularly and which is now in evidence as a result of a reading of Helen MacInnes' *Neither Five Nor Three,* a story of postwar America. The puzzle is this: why do practically all the novels which have anti-communism as their theme fill us with dissatisfaction, and even irritation?

We certainly are not sympathizers with the communist proposals and scheme of things, so that cannot be the explanation. We bow to no one in our conviction that the Soviet system, in both theory and practice, is based upon false premises as to the nature of man, the nature of society, and the drama of history. Certain classics of modern political criticism, in which what we regard as the basic mistakes and delusions of the modern communists are pitilessly exposed, have several times been mentioned in these pages. We have in mind such books as Vladimir Tchernavin's *I Speak for the Silent Prisoners of the Soviets,* André Gide's *Return from the U.S.S.R.,* Gide's essay (*Partisan Review,* January, 1938), "Second Thoughts on the U.S.S.R.," and that devastating volume prefaced by T. S. Eliot, *The Dark Side of the Moon,* dealing with the Russian occupation of Poland, 1939-45.

Accordingly, we can hardly be regarded as bemused victims of "subtle" propaganda from the Kremlin. There are, of course, many and more recent "anti-Russian" books, but few if any of them go as deeply into the question as do these works, which were written before a cheap popularity could be gained simply by throwing together a few clever paragraphs attacking indiscriminately Bolshevism, Communism, Socialism, their satanic origins and their diabolical intentions. The fact is that the modern communist movement is a vast historical phenomenon involving too many human beings for any essayist to dispose of by sheer rhetoric. It is also, we think, a vast historical tragedy, bespeaking a background of centuries of betrayal followed by an equally betraying nihilistic reaction. The hideousness of that reaction was quite plain to all who would look, after the Moscow trials. It continued to be plain during the heroic defense of Stalingrad—there is really nothing to prevent the victims of a delusion from being heroic, but their heroism does not abolish the delusion, even though they fight, for the time being, on "our side"—and it is plain, today. The Stalin of today is the same Stalin whom the dowager president of the D.A.R. described during the recent war as a strong, silent Christian gentleman with a college education; and he is the same Stalin whom Lenin castigated in 1923, shortly before his death, as "too brutal" for the post of Inspector of Popular Culture. Lenin himself was hardly a sentimental type, so that a man too brutal for Lenin must have been brutal indeed! As Lenin fell ill, he appealed to Trotsky to take up the struggle against Stalin's growing power. Lenin's last letter, according to the testimony of his wife, Kroupskaia, was "a letter to Stalin to break all relations with him."

We do not raise these ghosts to compare modern communism with "the good old days," but to show that for years there has been plenty of evidence at hand concerning the inhumanity and tyranny of the Soviet regime. The terroristic rule of the Cheka, the GPU, the NKVD, the MVD—or whatever is the present name of the Soviet secret police—is not a new discovery to be dwelt upon by indignant haters of the communist conspiracy—it has existed for a generation, just as the Nazi concentration camps were a terrible reality for thousands of Germans, years before the war-happy "liberals" of 1940 and 1941 decided to exploit their existence in the Great Crusade.

To return to our "puzz1e": Miss MacInnes (Mrs. Gilbert Highet in private life) has put together a story of the frustration of a communist plot to dominate certain widely circulated publications in the United States. Two Americans return rather late from military service, after

participating in intelligence activities during the Occupation. One of them immediately starts an amateur counter-propaganda group to work against the infiltration of communist agents and sympathizers into American publishing; the other joins him early in the book, as soon as he recognizes that the menace of "slanted" articles is not a fancied one, but terribly real. The book has a well-developed "cloak-and-dagger" atmosphere, and we, for our part, have no doubt that it comes close to reality in many cases. The "volunteer" counter-propagandists and amateur intelligence agents are given a good character:

> We're from different parts of the country. Politically, we're a mixture—Democrats, Republicans, Liberals, and Norman Thomas Socialists. As far as religion goes, you'll find Catholics and Jews and Mormons, Christian Scientists and Protestants like you and me. We've some agnostics too. It would be pretty hard to produce thought control with that variety. The only thing we have in common is a real loyalty to our own country. We happen to like it a good deal."

But some of these people who love their country, besides being against communism, sound as though they think that loyalty oaths are fine things to have, and that a less than eager admiration for the Korean war is somehow the mark of a fellow-traveler. If we may presume to get a little personal about the author, it almost seems that Mrs. Highet, who is from Scotland, is saying, "You silly Americans, you don't realize what a good thing you have over here, and if you're not careful, those unhappy neurotics, the communists, will take it away from you." It may be true that we *do* have to be careful; that, if not the communists, some other aggressive and unscrupulous minority may rise to power; but there is still the question:

Are loyalty oaths and academic and political purges the right way to be "careful"?

In favor of *Neither Five Nor Three* is the fact that the villains are something more than mere stereotypes of evil men. They are human beings—bewildered, fearing, but determined human beings who come to a tragic and unhappy end. There seems to be some slight attempt to account for their ideological aberration on psychiatric grounds. Obviously, the book is not intended to add to the fervor of witch-hunting for communists, even though it disapproves of the people who are so foolish as to call some of the loyalty investigations a species of witch-hunting. It is an effort to show forth, in something like true proportion, what is fine and good about America, in contrast to the mechanical formulas of an imported theory of revolution which sneers at *everything* American.

The communists do just this. In condemning the American system—which is surely in need of *some* criticism, although you will never learn this from Mrs. Highet—the communists reveal their inhumane, automaton intellectual processes, and also expose to view their unmistakably pie-in-the-sky psychology with respect to their revolutionary program. Why, then, are editors, even apparently good ones, so foolish as to buy their articles? Why are talented students drawn into their ranks by obvious flattery? What is the matter with the American mind, that it is in danger of being so easily beguiled? Again, Mrs. Highet does not say, except for her title—borrowed from Houseman's lines—

> To think that two and two are four
> And neither five nor three
> The heart of man has long been sore
> And long 'tis like to be.

which means that, in the earnest, indignant, depression-bred 'thirties, when every literate person let himself get a little bit pink, Americans fell into the habit of believing that two and two make five or three.

The charge is true enough. But why are we so sure, now, that the communist two-and-two adds up to five or three, while ours comes out triumphantly at four? What was wrong with the eager-beaver radicalism of the 'thirties? Is it only that the Soviets are *now* doing Bad Things, and making us terribly uncomfortable? Did we have

to wait until we came into head-on political conflict with Soviet policies before we could see the evils of Marxist materialism and the sins of the Comintern?

There is in fact a strong unreality about Mrs. Highet's book. Her study of typical communists and what goes on in their minds is unconvincing because she offers no *philosophical* analysis of what we, pretty much without knowing it, believe in common with the communists, and of what, having discovered these mistakes, we ought to do about them. We shall be told, of course, that this is no time for philosophizing—that the wolf is at the door, the chips are down, that black is black and white is white, and it is time to stand up and be counted.

Maybe so, but we stand with Dr. Hutchins in proposing that the Communist Manifesto, if not a Great Book, is surely a book—and a very short one—which needs to be understood. It needs to be understood, again, as Dr. Hutchins put it, *lest* we become communists. And this means, simply, to understand, as well as we possibly can, the roots of both good and evil in our civilization. What, really, are the roots of communism—this thing we hate so fearfully that people jump when you use the word? Our theory, to put it very briefly—too briefly, perhaps—is that communism, and every other 'ism which would degrade the social order into an anthill of regimented economic units, is rooted in the denial of the creative powers of the individual man and mind. The danger lies in the denial of the potentialities of free men to come to wise and just conclusions, and of free societies to adjust their differences—even their differences with tyrannies—in a cooperative and friendly spirit which wills to *give* instead of withholding to *secure*, which sees and attempts to deal with the man behind the delusion, instead of increasing the delusion by hating and attacking the man.

COMMENTARY
NOTES ON THE "GOD-GUIDED"

WE had occasion, not long ago, to ask a friend and admirer of the Moral Re-Armament movement (see Frontiers) if there was any chance of it developing into some sort of theocratic fascism. The answer was a categorical and slightly indignant "No!" And, reflecting upon the avowed code of the followers of Mr. Buchman, who are resolved to practice "perfect purity, perfect truth, perfect self-sacrifice, and perfect love," it seemed reasonable to go along. How could anyone with such ideals allow himself to be drawn into *any* kind of autocracy?

Then, after some more reflecting, this time on the Sermon on the Mount, and on the things that have been done by people who professed to accept the Sermon on the Mount, some further doubts occurred. Perhaps it is the expression, "God-Guided," which fostered the doubts. As Hamilton Fish once remarked, "Torquemada said he was God's instrument; and he solved the last bewildering problem of many a poor wretch by consigning his charred or racked body to the grave."

It is possible to agree wholeheartedly that neither Mr. Buchman nor any of the MRA'ers have even a remote interest in theocratic power, or any kind of temporal power over their fellow men, and still find it pertinent to note that other "God-Guided" men of history have succumbed to this temptation. The notorious Robespierre, for example, was in early life a gentle soul. In 1782 he gave up his post of judge on the bench at Arras, on the ground that he could not, in conscience, pronounce the sentence of death. Twelve years later the Revolutionary Tribunal, which Robespierre eloquently served, averaged thirty victims a day for the guillotine. Yet on the eve of the worst period of the Terror, Robespierre persuaded the National Convention to recognize the existence of a Supreme Being. Shortly after, a mad woman declared him the new divine Savior of the world. Robespierre apparently agreed, for only a conscienceless brute or a man with Messianic delusions could tolerate such mindless slaughter.

In his personal life, Robespierre was himself the very portrait of virtue "scrupulously honest, truthful and charitable. . . . simple and laborious." There have been other such "inspired" souls—Pope Urban II, for one, who sent the flower of Europe's manhood off on a "God-guided" crusade. It was the guidance of God which prescribed the extermination of the Albigenses to Innocent III, and the same bloodthirsty deity sanctioned the murders of Montezuma of Mexico and Atahualpa of Peru.

These haunting memories are enough, we think, to raise questions about the future of any movement which grandly claims or seeks the "guidance of God." At any rate, the guidance of simple and fallible reason seems far less dangerous, in terms of historical precedent. Reason may not be as potent as divine inspiration, but at least it offers some checks upon itself. Divine inspiration often becomes wholly unaccountable to any rule or principle of justice, simply because it is supposed to be "divine." And this, it seems, is an "absolute" which tolerates no competition—even truth, self-sacrifice, and love may have to give way to the compulsive insistence of a "God-guided" man.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves

THE recent visit to Los Angeles of Dr. Frederick Allen, director of the Philadelphia Child Guidance Clinic, provided a much needed opportunity for getting behind the oversimplified "pro-psychiatry" and "anti-psychiatry" educational views of parents and teachers.

Resentment has often arisen among parents at the apparent insinuation by child psychologists that they, the "experts," are the only ones truly qualified to raise children. While a certain amount of arrogance may be expected to accompany men who have risen to prominence in the psychological field—as in other fields of endeavor—it is probably also true that parents have often been defensively hypersensitive when their ordinary habits of child-training are criticized. It seems likely, however, that the most rewarding and progressive attitude for parents to assume would be to the effect that psychiatrists are continually suggesting *critical perspectives* on family relationships, and that these should be examined for *possible* merit.

Dr. Allen, for instance, raised several points worthy of consideration in his press interview last summer. Though the headline in the Los Angeles *Times* report read, "Adults Cause Children's Troubles," Dr. Allen's tone was proof that he is not pressing an indictment of parental stupidity, but is rather pointing dispassionately to an obvious fact. Unless one is securely tied to the doctrine of original sin—or original, unmitigated, animal selfishness—as explanatory of how the child's embryonic character is formed, it is reasonable enough to conclude that erroneous habits of thinking and feeling are intruded upon the child from his environment. As Dr. Allen puts it: "Child psychiatry is family psychiatry with emphasis on the child. And there is only a small percentage of children in need of psychiatric treatment." He adds:

> "The natural parents are the most important factor in the life of the child.
>
> "Without their emotional guidance, a child may withdraw into itself and feed on his own emotionally barren life. What happens then? He escapes into a world of fantasy. . ..
>
> "The trend today is against institutions for children, because institutions necessarily mean regimentation," he said. "We are not interested now in squeezing kids into uniformity; we want to make each child feel the value of what he is and to show the parents their responsibility."

Help is given most effectively, it seems, by introducing the parents to an impartial or objective attitude of mind, the only just way of dealing constructively with our children. To accomplish this end, according to Dr. Allen, psychiatrists have concluded that they can gain a great deal by inviting parents to sit in on meetings among psychiatrists and social workers, where particular children's problems are discussed without bias or emotion. This has proved to be a much better procedure than "taking on the case" of the individual problem-child and attempting, by psychiatric investigation, to straighten out difficulties. Furthermore, the newer method does not restrict psychiatric patients to the educated or wealthy.

For those who have been wondering if psychiatrists would ever get around to recognizing the need for "discipline" in the home, Dr. Allen also brought evidence of widespread discussion on this point among his colleagues, stating that some kind of discipline is a definite need in *helping* the child to follow its own *good impulses.* The ordinary quarrels on the discipline question usually overlook the fact that most psychiatrists are not for "unregulated freedom" at all, but simply believe that discipline should evolve naturally from parents who have learned not to make the mistake of over-management and over-protection. When we "protect" a child by never allowing it to feel the effects of frustration of its wants and desires, they say, for instance, that there is then no psychological basis for any form of control other

than sudden compulsion, bribery, or a system of rewards and punishments. (We can, in other words, produce generations susceptible to fascism *either* by too much discipline or too little. A natural "authority," also, by implication, grows from trust and regard, earned by the parent, rather than by threat or cajolery.)

Dr. Allen's remarks are not unusual among child psychiatrists: we call attention to them here from a desire to suggest respect, where respect is due, for the large number of clinical workers with children who share Dr. Allen's outlook. Moreover, we are afforded an opportunity to refer once again to several ideas noted previously in this column. For instance, although we desire no more than does Dr. Allen to recommend more institutions for children, there is a fundamental psychological value in considering Plato's design for a society in which *all* parents are communally and equally interested in *all* children—not simply in their own. For illustrative purposes, and perhaps shock-effect, Plato considered separating parents and children at birth, so that parents would know only that babies born at a certain time of year *might* be their offspring. In this, we think, he was advocating an *attitude* of impartiality toward all children.

Suggestions for work projects for the child correlate, we feel, with Dr. Allen's reasoning. In the course of the responsibilities involved in productive undertakings, all sorts of natural and normal frustrations have to be met by the child. A parent can help the child to solve them when there is some context of useful work. His youngster is secure in the kind of early training which will give him knowledge of the power of decision, the power of will—and awareness of the frustrations encountered in evolving self-discipline. Finally, we can suggest again that parents try to realize that the child may need the peculiar assistance of someone who is *not* his own parent, in his struggles to control himself, form his ideals, and understand the complicated patterns of society around him. Neighbors and teachers may bring to a child the very elements which parents are temporarily incapable of supplying, while an impartial or impersonal attitude toward our child in terms of its *needs* may prevent us from resenting a supposed "interference," and encourage us to assist the child in forming a wide circle of friendships.

FRONTIERS

A Play by Moral Rearmament

WE wonder how many readers, like ourselves, seem to have rather automatically adopted a slightly looking-down-the nose attitude toward the doings of Moral Re-Armament. There are certainly phases of MRA history which give ground for reservations or criticism. But the recent Los Angeles production of an excellent play, *The Forgotten Factor—an Industrial Drama*, serves to remind that, ideally we must seek to judge all men and movements in terms of their specific achievements, as well as in terms of their past history and background. For instance, we seriously doubt if anyone, save a Marxist, could see this play without feeling some sincere approbation. Brilliantly written and executed, *The Forgotten Factor* has undoubtedly awakened many thousands of persons to the possibility of intelligent arbitration in respect to social, political, and even family conflicts. The play has been translated into eleven languages, acted on five continents, and has received thousands of fervent testimonials.

The plot, which is flavored with notable humor, involves a behind-the-scenes portrayal of the home lives of a stridently contending union organizer and a rich employer. The same human foibles are shown in both homes, together with many potentially admirable qualities. Through the agency of the son of the rich industrialist (awakened to a new view, we are to assume, by MRA), and after many misunderstandings, the two are finally brought together to discuss, without suspicion, a fair settlement for both sides. Most of the situations strike one as extraordinarily true to life, and the "moral" message never becomes monotonous or long-faced, though there is no mistake about the fact that it is the MRA policy of "let God speak to you" which brings about the happy ending.

Everyone who sees this play can learn a great deal from it. Here are the difficulties of both employers and of those who have devoted themselves to the cause of the Labor Movement, an effort having been made to present the two "sides" in an impartial fashion. But now, after definitely recommending that everyone see the play, and also attempting to give full credit where credit is due, we might add some other observations in respect to such dramatic productions, and Moral Re-Armament in general. *The Forgotten Factor* has actually been the core—and perhaps the original inspiration—of an MRA conversion drive through the painless medium of Good Theater. (MRA has also put on tour a musical called *Jotham Valley*, wherein well-chosen folk music, qualified voices, excellent acting and production once again combine to give audiences the most favorable impression of the capacities and tastes of MRA.) While one might ask, "What need of criticizing the sponsorship of any cultural contribution that is both technically fine and morally instructive?" it seems obligatory to remember that human emotions perennially betray men into accepting oversimplified answers to important problems. And the trouble with an oversimplified solution is that it will eventually lead either to authoritarianism or disillusionment, depending on the temperament of the individual.

When people leave the theater after viewing *The Forgotten Factor*, they have seen how human beings, despite an atmosphere of prejudice and tension, may be able to solve their differences in a rewarding and brotherly manner. But they have not, we submit, seen anything that will help them to an understanding of all human problems, nor even of all problems affecting the relationship between labor and capital. In the first place, all labor leaders and all capitalists are not replicas of the Jim Rankin and Mr. Richard Wilson of this play. Also, and obviously, "misunderstanding" is not the only force in bitter disputes. The thirst for retaining power, or the equally potent hunger for achieving it, effectively spoils any kind of mediation or arbitration. Further, there are fundamentally necessary criticisms of capitalist society which would still have to be made, even if

all the Marxists were converted to MRA, which is hardly likely.

We are, we suppose, searching around for forgotten factors in *The Forgotten Factor.* Here, we think, is one: it is almost impossible for any of us to rid ourselves of bias or prejudice, and it is certain that the author and sponsors of this play are convinced that there is absolutely no excuse for the existence of Communism or Socialism. *The Forgotten Factor,* in fact, is MRA's own plank-of "anti-Communism," aimed at the Marxist thesis that the class struggle must continue until a people's State is established through revolution. Although on this question in especial we definitely side with MRA rather than with the Communists, it is nonetheless true that the class struggle *is a historical phenomenon,* and true, also, that it has involved many sincere persons in fighting for "the rights of the common man." MRA-ers, so far as we can see, are not at all averse to a potent Theocratic State, and they seem to believe that with the defeat of the class-struggle ideology, all will then be well in a God-directed world.

These views can lead to embarrassing situations, as is illustrated by remarks of Dr. Frank Buchman, original leader of the MRA movement, as reported in 1936 by the New York *World Telegram:*

> . . . Human problems aren't economic. They're moral, and they can't be solved by immoral measures. They could be solved within a God-controlled theocracy, and they could be solved through a God-controlled Fascist dictatorship.

In summary, though, we should like to say again that the phenomenon of Moral Re-Armament is worth more than contempt, and that its specific achievements need specific praise. On the other hand, we think that one of the best uses to which the Moral Re-armament Movement can be put is to serve as a point of departure for evaluations of *all* our prejudices and of *all* the social forces so inextricably interwoven with them. And the Prejudices, by the way, certainly include religious beliefs. MRA's new version of come-to-God-in-my-house, though a more sophisticated variety, is still the same old evangelism with its very personal, strong emotional appeal.

While we would rather recommend attending *The Forgotten Factor* than attending "the church of your choice," neither occasion, we feel, can be substituted for diligent, solitary thinking. Nice emotions are good things to have, and stimulation of men's better instincts through dramatic productions is also a fine thing, so far as it goes. Yet the World will not be Rebuilt that easily, especially when the emotions generated from such productions still retain some elements of political and social partisanship. We suggest a *study* of the MRA movement, rather than a joining of it, and believe that in this way a greater contribution could be made to reaching the objectives MRA professes than by a too enthusiastic and uncritical acceptance.