

## THE DECLINE OF POLITICS

THE practical end of all politics is power, so that the man who labors in a political cause ought to be reasonably confident of what he will do with the power, once he obtains it. It is this obligation which slows the editors of MANAS down to practically a dead stop when an invitation arrives in the mail to become interested in a major political movement, such as socialism. We vote, of course, and try to execute a measure of our responsibilities as citizens. We are aware, further, of the slow process of collectivization which has been taking place in the United States during the past fifty years or more. This collectivization is not, however, ideological, nor even especially political. One has only to read Seba Eldridge's *Development of Collective Enterprise* (University of Kansas Press, 1943) to realize that this trend has been a natural response to the needs of a technological society, expressed, as Eldridge puts it, "in the pressure of consumer and general public interests, not in pressures applied by labor groups."

At present, the major force in the direction of collectivization is the harnessing of the nation's productive plant for military purposes, and this is hardly an "ideological" influence. It is political only in the fact that military organization is totalitarian, and since the gearing of the civilian economy to the requirements of military armament must eventually transform the civilian economy into an obedient servant of military authority, there seems little point in talking about politics or significant political changes until some credible solution for the problem of war has been worked out.

There remains what may be called "pacifist politics" to be considered. This is a revolutionary position. So far as we can see, it is the only *rational* political position that can be assumed.

Yet the concept of power in relation to pacifist politics remains obscure. If it be argued that the pacifist politician will rely upon *moral* force to gain his ends, it seems to us that he will either have to be a fantastic spellbinder—and this, after all, is not a very sound basis for political power—or he will have to wait until he has strong support from people who share his ideals and objectives. But if he is to wait that long, he does not have a political program at all, but an educational program. By the time the educational objectives he works for are reached, the political issues of the time will probably be radically transformed—beyond, at least, our capacity to imagine them. So why talk about politics? Politics, that is, as the means to power.

The next question to be discussed is: Well, what will you *do*? The trouble with this question is its assumption that if you are not active in politics, you are not doing *anything*. There is no doubt about the fact that a lot of people who are not active in politics are not doing much of anything, and that the obvious frustrations to which a political career or interest is likely to lead make a splendid excuse for them not to do anything. The worst thing about the assumption that only political activity is "doing something" is the bad consciences it produces. Take for example the relative infiltration of Hollywood by communist sympathizers. A writer for the films makes—or used to make—a lot of money. It takes a flexible, fairly sensitive intelligence to write dialogue that people enjoy, and writers with flexible, sensitive intelligence are likely to feel "guilty" when they make a lot of money by using their brains. So they gave contributions to the Party to buy off their consciences. It was nice to make the money and to enjoy the luxuries of a "corrupt" capitalist civilization; and nice, too, to do one's bit for the masses by giving money for a

"revolutionary" cause. You may think the logic a bit curious, but the assumption that only "political action" is "doing something" made the logic seem sound.

The dream of a social order based upon cooperation and sharing may be a possibility, but exploiting mass audiences at the Hollywood level of communication in order to get the money to support a political apparatus dedicated to a nihilistic attack on the already weakened mechanisms of self-government is not the way to bring it about.

But we can't get off so easily. No man has a right to shut his mind to political movements unless he has soaked for a considerable period in the moving idealism of political idealists and revolutionaries of the past. In the days of Gene Debs, it was possible for an honest man to believe that he would know what to do with power, once he got it. And it was possible for other men to believe in him and to support him in good faith. The Socialist movement in the United States was wrecked by the first World War. So was the Socialist movement in France. Socialism in those years became ambivalent, unable to choose between nationalism and internationalism. World War II produced a similar dilemma, only this time the decision was simpler—between reluctant but "righteous" war, and eager but politically impotent pacifism. It was the idealism of the socialists which weakened and destroyed them as a political entity with a claim to attention in political terms. It is to their credit, perhaps, that they could not operate according to the rules of *Realpolitik* in the twentieth century.

We should add that we do not speak of the political impotence of the pacifist socialists of the present to dispose of them with a cavalier gesture. To be politically impotent at a time when politics itself is morally impotent is to be in harmony with the needs of the times. This idealism will have to find new channels of expression. Meanwhile these young men and women are calling themselves "socialists."

It is a pretty dreadful thing to watch all the old avenues of humanitarian endeavor seal themselves off into dead ends. Other young men who might have joined the Socialist movement twenty or thirty years ago are now shipping off to Paraguay and Primavera to join the Bruderhof, or are wondering if Vinoba has a place for them in the ranks of the Sarvodayists. The career of a civil liberties lawyer holds some attractions, as a way of fighting the "good fight," and then there are the various cooperative communities started by young couples who dream of a life, if not on a clean frontier, at least in the interstices of our acquisitive society, where elements of a constructive relationship with nature and other human beings may be restored. These outlets, however, are not easy to find, and they demand an exceptional temper of the people who use them.

There must be many ways to describe this predicament, but one that seems effective is to say that there is no longer a widely acknowledged institutional solution for the troubles of mankind, to which men of good will can apply their energies. In other words, social morality, which for several generations has seemed to be the only kind of morality worth having or talking about, has lost its overt channels of expression and now appears to have only *subjective* forms. Gandhi has had a lot to do with this change—Gandhi, and the failure of various political programs.

The politician, even the "idealist" politician, of the past was usually willing to use truth as a weapon and would embrace principles so long as he could win with them. But the weapon that was effective often became his "truth," and he often lost interest in the principle which could bring no victory.

Gandhi took an opposite view. Truth, for him, was both end and means, and the principle *was* the victory. Only as the principle was embodied in practice could the victory become real. Gandhi stood ready to throw away every apparent victory which lost its principle before the struggle was over.

This is revolutionary politics, and the gears of revolutionary politics nowhere mesh with the gears of the old politics.

Hitler saw this very clearly. After he occupied a country, the first thing he did was to find its pacifists and shoot them. He knew he could manage to deal with people who believed in the old sort of politics, but the people whose political views were direct projections of an inward, personal, subjective morality were completely and uncompromisingly subversive of the order Hitler hoped to establish.

Part of the world's confusion, today, stems from the slow infiltration among idealists and humanitarians of the idea that subjective morality comes *first*. It is an idea which usually disables conventional institutional operations, however "idealistic" in traditional terms. In every walk of life are people who are asking themselves if they can continue to do institutionally what they would not do personally. As they begin to think they cannot, they grow disgusted and discouraged. Life has a rancid taste. The days seem soiled by the daily occupations, from which no easy escape appears. Perhaps unhappy realizations of this sort mark the beginning of death for many of our institutions.

How long can a civilization animated by the vigor of physical youth, as America is animated, continue in a life without heart?

The frustrations of men with ideals are matched by the slowly growing frustrations of the great mass of people who follow along in the old ways, carried by the sluggish flow of institution-dominated existence. "Success," in our war-dominated society, is increasingly a spurt of activity in some kind of parasitism. Not genuine production, but astute accounting procedure, brings the big rewards these days. Government contracts for the socially useless machines of war are the plums of modern manufacture. Living costs pursue rising wages in a tiresome economic fugue, until both workers and employers darkly

suspect that a *Götterdämmerung* end to it all is just around the corner.

It is enough to make us sick, and it *will* make us sick. We are sick already, but not sick enough to admit it publicly.

But when we are ready to admit it, we shall also admit the impotence of politics to help us. Then the strong will become weak, and the weak strong, and the social scene will be invaded by dozens of cults bearing promises of psycho-religious magic.

This, we think, is the sort of "reign of terror" that must be prepared for—not a struggle at the barricades between the freedom-loving and freedom-hating peoples, or between the "radicals" and the "reactionaries." We might best begin by throwing all those labels away.

The great issue of the present is the equation between private morality and public morality, with the added problem of deciding whether our failure lies in not being able to write the equation, or in not having a private morality that is capable of practice on a public scale. The decline of politics has had to take place before we could see this issue clearly.

## *Letter from* **Canada**

VANCOUVER, B.C.—A noted Canadian musician and educator recently broadcast a series of programmes in which modern music of the atonal variety was played and "explained," the general idea being to re-emphasize the notion that history everlastingly repeats itself in the matter of unsympathetic lay reaction to the "divers strange sounds" of musical genius, and to administer both a gentle rebuke and a shot of Come-Hither serum to the musical laggards.

It is time a lot of our musical prophets pulled up their intellectual slacks, ceased running down blind alleys, and found out what it is they ought to teach. Admittedly, if they took an opposite or much modified course they would sacrifice a great deal of material expediency along with the approval of the *avant-garde*, but what they lost on the contemporary roundabout they might conceivably gain on the immortal swings.

The claim that all "great newness" in music is at first execrated by public and professional conservatism has become a rather nauseous cliché of current musical apologetics. It is by no means wholly true. Our frequent attempts to argue artistic legitimacy for the worst noises of modern music by appeal to such past incidents as Bach's quarrel with the Arnstadt Consistory (1706) over his "surprising variations in the chorales," are a distortion of the historical picture, for it is also true that the same J. S. Bach, who was taken to task by the Neuen-Kirche for his musical heresies, was regarded by many in his day as "a harmless old man working in an outmoded style." But this part of the story does not appeal to our immature conceptions of the nature of musical progress, so we largely ignore it.

One of the aforementioned "educational" broadcasts was taken up with a violin and piano sonata of Schönberg's. Despite the recondite technical engineering claimed for this sonata, its actual effect in sound is that of two complete and

irredeemable idiots simultaneously scraping on a fiddle and banging on a piano. There is nothing more to be made of it, despite any shouts of blasphemy from the grimly determined people who choose to accept this sort of thing as fine art. From a standpoint of Creative experience in the realm of sound, the piece simply does not exist. It is a mere nine-minute Impact. It says precisely nothing of qualitative importance, and it utters that nothing with all the insensate violence of a teen-age hoodlum.

"Cacophony" is really no part of the issue. No one on the inside of contemporary music is likely to talk of musical values in terms of consonance and dissonance. We have travelled too far along the road of musical liberation to be paying any more attention to the harmonic terrain. It is not at root a technical matter (*per se*) at all, be the technique atonal, polytonal, polymodal, pentatonic, diatonic or any other. It is a matter of the Essential Nature of musical speech, and of the Substance which over the long view justifies and qualifies musical speech. In other words it is a question of WHO is speaking, WHY he is speaking, and to WHOM. Granting that the violences of contemporary music are an entirely suitable way for a particular sort of man to address "the like of himself"—granting also that no sensible person questions the musical rights and privileges of either composer or listener—there remains the vital problem of the WHY. Why is the composer the sort of man he is; Why is he speaking in this way; Why does his patron accept and value him for the manner of his speech and the sort of man he is? In a word, what particular *Zeitgeist* animates both of them, and what is its ultimate cultural validity as an animating force?

An adequate answer lies beyond the scope of this letter. But any modern composer whose mind is still capable of objective and heretical thought about the tendencies of contemporary music will find plenty to exercise him in Eric Fromm's recent book, *The Sane Society*. Quite evidently from the title, it is not—except by implication—a book

about the arts, but no musician whose Intelligence can justly lay claim to the capital "I" will fail to find some pertinent parallels between Mr. Fromm's "alienation" in twentieth-century capitalistic society and the long spate of gibbering robotism served out to us as musical Substance by the votaries of "progressive" modernism. If any book can stimulate today's "educator," artistic or otherwise, to discover some solid ground from which to teach, *The Sane Society* will be among the most helpful.

The creative artist of this century is suffering from a bad case of Historicalitis. He has come to believe that the application of the word historical to his subject-matter and his techniques automatically justifies them both in point of evolution and in point of quality. For some astonishing reason, it does not occur to him that nearly everything he hails as indicative of the truest greatness in man has arisen out of a dynamic refusal of the individual to comply with "historical" conditions and pressures.

CANADIAN CORRESPONDENT

## *REVIEW*

### POCKET BOOK PARAPSYCHOLOGY

To the best of our knowledge, Signet-Mentor's *The Unknown—Is It Nearer?* is the first pocket book to provide an easily comprehensible summary of the "paranormal world." The authors are Eric J. Dingwall, a director of the American Society of Psychical Research, and John Langdon-Davies, an experienced writer on scientific subjects, whose collaboration results in well-planned and interesting coverage of such frontier mysteries as clairvoyance, apparitions, mediumship, and psycho-kinesis. The book also surveys the rapidly developing techniques for paranormal study and evaluation—which yearly draw more men of scientific training to further exploration. Initial interest is aroused by a few abbreviated tales of wondrous occurrences, "just a few stories collected from thousands like them," which describe "brushes with the unknown by ordinary people." Dingwall and Davies then state why they have written about parapsychology for the ordinary reader:

We are going to discuss in this book some questions which everybody asks at one time or another. These questions have been considered to lie outside the field of science, as we usually think of it, and many scientists still consider them disreputable and of no interest to anyone except the woolly-minded. Yet within the last few years a new branch of science has given reasons for considering them seriously, reasons which nobody can deny.

Children, almost before they are able to distinguish their dreams from waking reality, ask one another: Do you believe in ghosts?

Young people, especially when they are in love, ask one another: Do you believe in thought reading?

Businessmen as well as other gamblers wonder: Are there such things as hunches?

Young married people watching their children grow up in a not very easy world wish: If only I could foretell the future.

Lonely people all over the world ask: Can I get in touch with absent friends, dead or alive?

And, especially when we are getting on in life, which of us would not like to hear an affirmative answer to: Is there life after death?

Now, there are three sources to which you can go for an answer to these questions. You may belong to a church or organized religion, and you will then find that some at least of these questions are answered for you. The answers will be part of your religious belief. For example, no Christian of any denomination who accepts the teaching of his Church thinks twice as to whether there is life after death. Ghosts or other supernatural beings, as well as knowledge of at least some future events, seem vouched for by the Hebrew and Christian Bibles. In short, some religions, at any rate, teach what they think people ought to know or are able to know about supernatural things, and they very often discourage all attempts to find out more from any other source.

However, the thirst for certainty and the curiosity about particular aspects of the supernatural have never been fully satisfied in many people by orthodox religions; and there have always been many ways of seeking to supplement their teachings on these questions.

The authors discuss the history of the spiritualist movement, always the focus for virulent controversy. With such frequent exposure of fraud and trickery, it has been difficult for men of scientific background to realize that, even here, the old smoke-and-fire adage may be applicable. Dingwall and Davies summarize:

Fortunately, . . . both in England and in America, a few open-minded philosophers, scientists, and psychologists [have been] prepared to believe that where there was so much smoke there might perhaps be some valuable flame. These men risked their reputations and even their careers by mixing with what almost all their colleagues regarded as intellectually and morally disreputable. There was only too much excuse for believing that all mediums were fraudulent, and in any case the so-called facts were of a kind which could not easily be incorporated into the picture of the universe which nineteenth-century scientists had painted with so much pride and self-assurance.

Men like the eminent Cambridge philosopher, Henry Sidgwick, and the equally eminent Harvard philosopher, William James, accepted the risks. In 1882 the former helped to found in London the Society of Psychical Research, and, three years later

the latter inaugurated a similar society in America. The Unknown was to be approached by these groups of scientifically minded people from another and possibly more promising direction.

It is this approach to the Unknown that will be described in the following pages. Let us say at the start that those readers who hope to approach the Unknown along this route will meet with many discouraging experiences. They will find that there is much fraud even here. They will find that many theories are built on insufficient evidence, on faulty investigation, on bad research technique. The authors, both of whom believe that the question "Is the Unknown nearer?" can be answered in the affirmative, have no intention of hiding the weak places in the chain of evidence. Nor can the results be regarded as satisfying more than a very small section of our hopes. Even if the Unknown is nearer, it is certainly not just around the corner.

But having willingly admitted all this, we must emphasize something else: it would be a mistake to suppose that psychical research is the only kind of scientific research in which insufficient evidence, faulty investigation, bad research technique, are to be discovered. There are plenty of research theses in chemistry, biology, psychology, which are far less scientifically respectable than the best work in parapsychology. And every branch of science today is honeycombed with unsolved gaps in knowledge. Nor is psychical research the only place where unsolved mysteries abound. Does any zoologist pretend to have produced a satisfactory explanation of such day-to-day things as bird migration or fish migration? Yet nobody regards zoology as a disreputable science.

A chief service rendered by this readable pocketbook—constructed with the simple aplomb one associates with the *Reader's Digest*—is that it brings all manner of supernatural and paranormal lines of inquiry into a single frame of reference. While not purporting to provide any central theories of interpretation, the authors nonetheless carry one solid argument throughout the whole series of discussions—that the fascinating horizons of the future may have more to do with psychology and psychism than with space travel. And by separating the wheat from the chaff during discussions of spiritualism and clairvoyance, they invite further reading. The book concludes:

Is the Unknown nearer? It is possible that the reader of this book may feel that the amount of fraud, careless observation, ignorance of scientific method and rules of evidence, and sheer silliness that we have had to mention gives a depressing over-all picture. Now, we have had to emphasize these negative aspects of psychical research in the interests of psychical research itself. Caesar's wife must be above suspicion; careful and skeptical inquirers have had much excuse for doubting whether paranormal phenomena are worth while investigating. But that is only the negative aspect. If the reader is in any doubt as to there being a positive aspect, let him consider fairly and open-mindedly the related facts. The fundamental facts of psychical research are at least as clearly authenticated as facts about the behavior of insects, bird and fish migration, or the workings of the unconscious mind. Meanwhile a technique of research method has been slowly evolved until it stands comparison with the research techniques of any other science.

Surely, then, we can claim, first, that those who research scientifically into the Unknown now know their job and, second, that some of their results disarm all sane criticism. No one can pretend that the phenomena do not exist; no one can accuse the scientists studying them of being unfit for their job. And for those reasons alone, even if there were no others, we can say: Yes, the Unknown is nearer and is likely to be much nearer still in the not very distant future.

## *COMMENTARY*

### NO WINGED WORDS

OCCASIONALLY, a reader asks why we don't devote more space to the arts—or why, instead of being so "self-conscious," we don't publish original works of literature, as a change from all this essay-writing and criticism.

An honest answer is that we don't know how to write about the arts well enough to communicate anything that seems important. We are grateful to our Canadian Correspondent, who is himself a composer, for writing a letter on music this week. We couldn't have done it, and know better than to try.

It is difficult enough for the artist himself to write about his art. In an excellent book on painting (*The Science and Practice of Oil Painting*, by Harold Speed, Chapman & Hall, London, 1924), we found a passage that gives a more precise answer:

One has an uncomfortable feeling, after the very uncongenial task of writing about the creative side of one's craft, and trying to find logic behind things done by intuition, that one's labour is vain. On thinking it over, I cannot remember occasions when such knowledge as I may have received from books has been of much use in my own practice. . . . There is always . . . something that escapes the cold process of analysis in all life, and consequently in the arts which express vital experience. One needs the winged words of the poets to convey such things; you cannot write of art, except in terms of the sister art of letters. All that one who has not this poet's magic can do is write of the science of the means of expression as far as he can; but it looks cold stuff when written.

We are quite willing to admit that the ultimate in philosophy naturally finds expression in a great art form, so that "Beauty is truth, truth beauty," as Keats declared. But the art of philosophic utterance is really "artless," and not to be confused with the beauty of its form, which is an effect rather than a cause, of what it contains. We have noticed that when men have great things to say, they somehow find stately words to say them,

and this without any adventitious devotions to the Muse.

Great art is therefore "sacred," although not in any familiar meaning of this word. It declares a new revelation in a vocabulary that has never been used before. Unlike sacerdotal forms, it is incapable of imitation or repetition.

There is an unhappy resemblance between the intuitive and immediate expression of the artist and the insistent cries of the revivalist—a resemblance, that is, in that neither one requires the assistance of reason. This resemblance produces counterfeiting delusions when someone who is ostensibly an artist trades on the privilege of being suprarational and, with the collaboration of a beguiled public, becomes the leader of a cult in the arts. There are of course all degrees of both innocence and craft in these goings-on.

So, having rendered unto Intuition and the Arts what is due them, we return to the safer ground of reason, hoping thereby to help prepare a place where both philosophy and the arts can live and be practiced with honor.

# CHILDREN

## ...and Ourselves

### ALONENESS AND INFERIORITY

As we have before remarked, a careful reading of Bruno Bettelheim's *Truants From Life* leads the reader ineluctably to the conclusion that all children, and all adults as well, share at least some of the disturbances of the psyche described by this author. These often seem contradictory. We discover, for instance, that a child is capable of a hunger for discipline during the very period when resistant of most controls—may even long for adjustment to the restraints imposed by rules and agreements of family and society. It is normal, in other words, to want others to "help make us be good."

But for the person bordering on serious neuroticism, there is a prerequisite to willingness to accept suggestions which will aid in achieving self-discipline. We can only allow those to help us whom we can trust, whom we feel we *know*—whom we need and love. The neurotic child or adult seeks privacy, but for an entirely different reason from that which moves the creative genius; the neurotic seeks privacy because of fear, while the self-reliant man treasures his solitude as an aid to contemplation. Bettelheim describes ambivalence in respect to privacy during his discussion of "Paul—a Case of Institutionalism":

Fear of being alone typically develops at a certain period in the rehabilitation of children who, on coming to the School, loudly assert their desire to be let strictly alone. Like Paul during their first months with us they fight furiously against what, in the light of their past experiences, they consider intrusions on their privacy. Only after our actions have convinced them that we respect their privacy, and will not misuse their trust by imposing our will on them if they come out of their shells, can they give up their angry, anxious withdrawal. Paul, too, like many other severely disturbed children, had cut himself off from an unbearable reality and spent his time in angry and grandiose phantasies. These were his only solace, and he had to protect them against

our interference as long as he could not believe that a good reality was within his grasp.

After such children begin to relate, they feel guilty about the old, hostile wishes that they still harbor, and fearful that they may lose the comfort offered by the new relations they have formed. If the person who by now has become useful to them (for love may not yet have developed) must leave them even for a short time, they feel a double fear: that they may permanently lose the only person for whom they care, and that they may fall back into the hostile isolation they once preferred but now dread. Part of their developing fear of loneliness is due to the realization that hostile phantasies no longer satisfy them, but on the contrary, create unmanageable guilt. While at first they hate our presence because it prevents them from thinking and acting aggressively, they eventually fear our absence because it permits them to indulge again in such thoughts or actions.

Paul's feeling of identity had to develop to allow him awareness of himself *as a genuine person*. He was not isolated in his orphanage life. Yet, though surrounded by directors and attendants who tried to help, the effects of unfortunate experiences with his parents kept him from joy in human contact. He had no real *desire* to think or live in any way which required that he "relate himself" to others. So, in the embryonic stage of rehabilitation, the new fear of being alone can be an indication of progress, meaning that sufficient relationship has been established to reveal that one *lives* more truly when able to receive help.

Therefore we can say that there are two kinds of "privacy" or "aleness," and it may be difficult to determine—even in the case of ourselves—whether one is passing *into* or *out* of either one. The aleness which springs from fear is an isolation of the spirit, precluding all learning. No indulgence is too great, no method out of hand, if it will break through this barrier.

The child or adult who fails to "relate" to others is, as Bettelheim shows, incapable of a feeling of inferiority—at least in his conscious mind. To *know* another of warm and understanding nature is to be able to distinguish

between that one's personality and one's own, and to make some effort at emulation. But if one is afraid to come close enough to another human being to really know him, the spur of emulation will not be present. It is for this reason that, in a later stage, when some closeness has been established, feelings of inferiority may be regarded as an awakened desire for self-appraisal—and an indication that self-appraisal is beginning.

Bettelheim also highlights the meaning of various dimensions of time as perceived by those suffering emotional disturbance. One reason why self-discipline is in such instances so nearly impossible is that the sufferers literally have no "sense of time." Time—that is, psychological time, which is the only sort worth being concerned with—is simply a sense of continuity, or of progress, that which links the events of one's life in meaning. Paul, in the orphanage, like many adults completely submerged in routines which prohibit their truly "relating" to any other person, later revealed that his life there seemed "timeless and unending." He had always thought he would stay in the orphanage until the day he died, and also expected to remain in exactly the same state himself. It was a far cry from this to the last stage of development reached before Paul left the school; for by then he had learned to love, first one teacher, and then teachers in general, because through them he achieved a sense of egoic progress by way of his own accomplishments. He would one day be capable of the sort of "privacy" which aids self-knowledge.

While the reading of case histories may, as critics have suggested, make one morbid or oversensitive in respect to his own shortcomings, Dr. Bettelheim's works seem to have the effect of drawing the reader closer to understanding himself and to a more compassionate feeling for the disturbed feelings of our children, parents, friends and acquaintances. Self-reliance, as Emerson made clear, is never characteristic of the average man. But the person in "mental trouble," whether child or adult, is no longer average. In this one

respect he is like inspired leaders of thought, who have, apparently without design and yet by inexorable necessity, cut themselves off from routine existence. When one discovers himself "alone" in this sense he must find himself anew—if he is to find himself at all. All old ties have proved themselves insufficient to provide an adequate sense of individual identity. Those psychiatrists who point out that the "neurotic" may have keener sensibilities than the average, that he breaks down because he feels so strongly the characteristically inane compromises between the ideal and the "practical," help throw a clearer light upon the essential nature of man.

The man—or the child—who finds himself terribly alone is not truly so. Millions share his aloneness, though neither he nor they may be aware of it—and the reasons for the condition are also apt to be very much the same, differing only in form of expression. Some day, as we never tire of saying, the message of philosophy will come through clearly enough to bring common recognition that the brotherhood of man must rest on aspiration and "divine discontent," rather than upon common weakness. Only this view can sustain those who are "alone" in their many hours of need.

## *FRONTIERS* New Heroes for Old

THE story of how, in 1879, a small band of Cheyenne warriors led by Dull Knife, their patriarch chief, broke out of confinement in Fort Robinson, Nebraska, and with five Winchesters and a dozen hand guns fought their way to the free prairie, where all but Dull Knife, three women, and five children met death covering the escape of these nine, has been told over and over again. It is a tale of extraordinary courage, desperation, and incredible discipline. The chief, his braves, and the women and children had gone without either food or water for four days. This was the method chosen by the commanding U.S. Army officer to compel their agreement to return to Fort Reno, in Oklahoma Territory, whence they had come, without permission, seeking the country which they knew, and where they would be at home. Living on the humid Oklahoma plains, the Cheyenne had sickened and died. The Indians chose death in battle instead of a wasting decline in the South. Their cause was just, their hopeless struggle heroic, their intransigence an ultimate human dignity.

Among versions of this episode in the tragic account of how the Indians of the Western plains were subdued, the freshest in our memory is that of Clay Fisher's story, *The Brass Command*. Mr. Fisher, who also wrote *The Tall Men*, is one of the better authors of Western stories, and here, as in other of his tales, his sympathies are with the Indians. Such stories, well told, have brought the beginning of a new mood in our memories of the Western frontier. This "revisionist" version of American history with respect to the Indians, reporting their struggle as *they* saw it, began to reach mass audiences a few years ago with the filming of Elliott Arnold's *Blood Brother*, the Hollywood title for the story of Cochise, the Apache chieftain, being *Broken Arrow*. Dozens of "pro-Indian" pictures followed, not all of them good, but the total result has been to install a new respect for the American Indian, even at the level of popular culture.

We have no complaints on this score. If Hollywood is willing to rewrite the history of the

Indian wars in reverse English, the price of a little sentimentality and some whitewashing (of both sides) may not be too high. But the troubling thought occurs that movie-goers may too easily assume that the wrongs done to the Indians all occurred in the nineteenth century, upon which we may look back with a regret made complacent by a feeling of present virtue. No one, of course, on the mailing list of the Association on American Indian Affairs can harbor any such delusions, but movie-goers, as a rule, are not crusaders for righteousness and justice, nor are the exhibitors who profit from this new exploitation of the Red Man's virtues inclined to hand out tracts on the latest iniquities of the Indian Bureau. So, for readers who, along with our notes on Dull Knife, would like some more contemporary facts, we suggest an inquiring letter to the Association on American Indian Affairs, 48 East 86th Street, New York 28, N.Y.

Meanwhile, lest it be supposed that the heroism and discipline of the Indian are things of the past, there is a story repeated recently by John Collier, who was U.S. Commissioner for Indian Affairs from 1933 to 1945. Mr. Collier is Professor Emeritus of Sociology and Anthropology, City College, New York, and this story is taken from a lecture given last summer at the Merrill-Palmer School. Mr. Collier tells about what happened in 1922 at Tasuki, a little New Mexico Pueblo with only 130 inhabitants:

A social crisis existed caused by one of those periodic outbursts of madness that take place in Congress. Legislation was pending on transferring all the land of these Pueblos to white people and requiring them to reveal their religious secrets in a court of law. I was at Tasuki discussing the situation with them for two days and nights. I didn't stay there all the time, I went back to Santa Fe, eleven miles away, to eat occasionally. And only at the end of that time was I told by some white people that the Tasukis didn't have any food at all. They were entirely out of food. They were starving. They never told me that, and nothing in their demeanor indicated that they were starving. Later we discovered that the Pueblo Tasukis were living on \$15.33 per capita per annum. All that they consumed was worth \$15.33. Well, in the middle of this, some white friends in Santa Fe started a hullabaloo. "We must feed the starving

Tasukis!" And the only reaction it brought inside Tasuki was one of annoyance. Something irrelevant was being projected. They didn't want to be distracted. Their whole mind was concentrated on their crisis, their social problem. This is a commonplace experience among the so-called primitive people, and illustrates how far away they are from this standard of living concept we are trying to force down the throat of the whole world right now.

The point of Mr. Collier's remarks, developed earlier in this paper, is that human excellence is not measured by a "standard of living," whatever the relative importance of food, clothing and shelter. Dissatisfaction with a material norm for the good life does not represent an indifference to human need, but a deeper awareness of what life is about. Mr. Collier is troubled by the idea, already widely accepted, and particularly in the United States, "that well-being and happiness are simply measured by or are functions of having plenty of goods, food, clothing, transport, gadgets." He continues:

We have even convinced ourselves that the teeming millions of India just want that standard of living; that the Bantus of Africa just want that standard of living. The teeming millions of India want something much more than that. And the Bantu would be very much amazed if he were told that is what he wants. When people are concentrated simply on getting possession of goods, then they readily may accept over-centralization because over-centralization can supply the goods. They may accept authoritarian rule, because authoritarian rule can deliver the goods in standard of living terms.

Mr. Collier's address is titled "The Attitude of Heroism," and its theme is the need for a new image of the hero. The thing that our rationalist and economically-based histories have overlooked is the divine restlessness which human beings, in their most excellent embodiments, have always revealed:

From the very beginning man had to live with that almost superabundant psychical endowment. It was a kind of doom. He couldn't escape it; he couldn't become the ordinary sensual man. Nature or God had arranged it otherwise. And he found himself in an environment calling for the severest activity, resourcefulness, inventiveness. But that strange brain of his, that soul in him, never was able to look at that

environment as a hostile power that he had to fight or exploit. Always he saw it as an extension of the world into himself. Always his feeling was one of reciprocity, brotherhood. And that was a world of storm and cold, and tempest, centuries long ranged. Such was the environment of ancient man after the Ice Age. . . .

We talk about that epoch as an epoch of scarcity. It was an epoch of scarcity, but the significant thing is, what man did with the scarcity? He met it through building the qualities of a hero into himself. We find this in the Australian aborigines, in the American Indians. Everywhere they expected storm, pain, death, and they didn't fear any of them. They never admitted that their spirit could be broken by anything that could happen to them.

So also with the sagas of the Norsemen:

They all deal with implacable fate that cannot be overcome in a world profoundly imperfect, that man cannot make perfect. They are all tragical. That in these sagas they recognized darkness and fate, imperfection, is not the important point. What they do is to proclaim the indestructible courage, and will, and joy of man. They use all their anguish to build a splendid life. The sagas merely happen to have come down to us; no doubt they could be repeated or duplicated or surpassed, in a thousand human cultures of ancient times.

Perhaps, with the help of men like John Collier and Joseph Campbell, we shall get around to the idea that the figure of the hero is the seed of transcendental man, which must be planted in the soil of our dreams—and that this sowing and fulfillment are as natural and necessary to the whole human being as the processes of physical procreation are to the human body. After we made ourselves free from the terrors and enslavements of our ancestral religion, we embraced the fascinations of matter, almost to the point of obsession. Can we now be free of both, and thus discover the full nobility of human life by restoring those ancient visions?

It was the corruption of religion which led to the loss of the hero-ideal. But we stand now upon a shore of thought which permits us to leave the corruptions of religion behind us. For, since the great achievements of science—since the depersonalization of the forces of nature, and the

establishment of the order of the Cosmos as ruled by impersonal law—we can no longer go back to anthropomorphism in religion. It is always the personal God who makes possible the authoritarian priest. And from such causes flow the corruptions of religion.

This, indeed, may be the true challenge of the present—that we must *think* our way to new justifications for courage and heroism, but without the anthropomorphic images of ancient symbolism. Mr. Collier draws a parallel between the physical extremities of the Ice Age and the subtler hazards of the present:

We live in a world which in another way is just as terrible as the world of Northern Europe after the glacier had retreated. We live in a world of boundless insecurity, of swift movement of vast forces we can't control, a world in which the very universe seems to have selected out of itself the demonic elements and projected them into human life, until we human beings are the Ice Age environment of ourselves. So that I think that each of us has to cultivate, and consciously cultivate, this hardihood, this determination that, weak as we are, we are not going to be inwardly frustrated, and we're going to communicate to each other this will to conquer. . . .

Today's wilderness is one of man-made forces and conditions. Mastery of nature is no longer the problem, but mastery of human nature, and the marks its unleashed powers have left upon the world. Mr. Collier sees a phase of this conflict in the struggle of the people of Israeli—not against the Arabs, for that is not the real struggle but with the larger problems of a people endeavoring to forge a new human community in an inhospitable world. There are many other illustrations of the complexity of the modern human situation—peoples wrestling with themselves and their outlived traditions, hesitant to discharge what has served them well for centuries, yet eager to discover the new freedom of the traditionless societies of the West.

Generations, perhaps, will pass before the hunger for a new ideal of the hero becomes articulate. Since the Renaissance, we have been trying to dream a lasting dream, but the image keeps changing. We have had the Soldier-Explorer, the Ruthless Individualist, the Proletarian Worker, and

scores of petty but passing idols which only emphasize the poverty of our imagination. Perhaps the real ideal, when we get it, will not be an *image* at all, but rather a great idea. Mr. Collier has his own account of this vision, which begins with a thought expressed by W. H. Hudson, to the effect that "man is rediscovering his unity with all life, is reintegrating himself with all life." Albert Schweitzer has been spreading the same idea—"the sacredness of life, which came to him as a revelation, a sort of second birth and wholly altered the look of the world to him and the meaning of his own life." Mr. Collier continues:

That is coming to us all. It is a slow dawn. It is a dawn held back by the obstacles of specialized science, the special disciplines and mechanistic world view and thought. But flooding over the barriers it's certainly going to possess the consciousness of mankind in the decades and centuries ahead and in so doing it will entirely alter each man's feelings about his own destiny, because he will know that, whatever happens to him, he can only be taken back into that eternal web of life. He cannot die out of the web of life, he cannot die out of the universe. And that realization of wholeness, as it takes possession of the human mind, certainly will break down barriers of race discrimination. It will stop cruelty to animals; it will put a check on the wastage of natural resources; it will cause people no longer to pollute their rivers and streams; it will put an end to the dumping of oil on the ocean; to the destruction of the birdlife for hundreds of square miles of ocean at the continental shelf.

Mr. Collier ends with this thought—the "oneness" of all men, with each other and the world. To embrace this idea and put it into practice, in these troubled times, would be heroism indeed. To find the conviction that will make us do it—that is the problem.