

THE COMMUNITY MOVEMENT

THE movement loosely defined by the term “Community” represents a variety of responses to the conclusion, rapidly becoming self-evident, that modern industrial society, while it has conquered and harnessed the forces of nature, has also denatured and subdivided man. The community movement is a revolt against this process. For some, the community movement means a migration to rural localities in quest of a natural existence. Parents who want their children to have a wholesome farm environment are willingly accepting the drudgery and economic deprivation of the small farmer as the price of a family life more in harmony with nature. Others are deliberately forsaking professional careers to make their educational abilities available to backward communities and depressed areas. A conscious revival of the crafts, not as a hobby or a “leisure time” activity, but as a way of life, is proceeding in many parts of the United States. Deliberate participation in small local government is another phase of the community movement. The impotence of the single individual in relation to many national decisions is driving conscientious citizens to become conscious participants in the democratic process at the community level. In principle, the community movement exists wherever there is voluntary association of people in the service of nonpartisan objectives. It is an attempt to humanize the functions of a mechanized society, to bring moral significance to acts and relationships which were once personal and individual, but which are now institutionalized and regarded by most men with moral indifference.

In the past, the popular cry for freedom has always been against some man, group or class which is attacked as withholding liberty from the great mass. The community idea is a departure from this familiar protest. The thesis of the

Community movement is that we are oppressed by a Process, instead of by a class or a nation. Thus the enemy is not a person, but a relation; there is nobody to get made at any more, but plenty to do.

An English exponent of the Community idea, Wilfred Wellock, has put the case succinctly:

The industrial revolution destroyed the fabric of a rich and healthy social life, spiritual values which were founded on craft and skill, on personal obligations and responsibilities which it had taken centuries of devoted labour and discipline to create. It destroyed, indeed, the most precious thing man has yet created: community. So completed was that destruction, so powerful the greed, the lust for privilege and power which caused it, that re-creation of community is by no means assured. Yet upon its re-creation human survival depends.

The most obvious evil of a machine-dominated civilization is its effect on the individual worker, who is made dependent upon two large and extremely complicated forms of organization for his economic security. These are the organization of capital enterprise and the organization of labor, over neither of which the individual worker has any personal or independent control. The area of his “free enterprise” is strictly limited by the group decisions of these organization and is further affected by the conflicts and compromises between them. Of even greater importance is the effect of large-scale manufacturer on the relation of a man to his work. So accustomed are we to the fact that no single individual—except artists and a diminishing number of craftsmen—ever makes anything “whole” himself, but is confined to the fabrication of a part, or a part of a part, that it is common to ignore the drastic psychological results. The industrial system, in its present form, accomplishes a direct and ruthless mutilation of the natural creative impulse in millions of human beings; it establishes a separatist identity for thousands of

castes of workers whose skills are limited to fragmentary operations, and it reduces the concept of *work* to units of monotonous drudgery which are measured by their exchange-value of money.

There is nothing particularly new about this analysis, which has been made in detail by pioneering sociologists. Already, in a number of industries, intelligent managements are endeavoring to compensate for the debilitating effects of the industrial system. Psychologists are studying human reactions to assembly-line methods and attempting to introduce conditions which may help to restore the personal satisfactions which division of labor tends to obliterate. The fact remains, however, that there is a vast difference between the psychological independence of the craftsman and the "supervised" emotional adjustments to mass production conditions of a labor force numbered in thousands. The root of the problem involves the idea of integrity. The man of the machine age often forgets that the moral standards of a society are very largely set by the attitude of the individual toward the product of his work. Division of labor means division of responsibility, and where money, instead of a good product, has become the end of work, a sense of responsibility toward the product tends to be replaced by indifference, fear of being fired then becoming the only motive for careful workmanship. This pattern of human reaction, wherever it prevails, spells social and moral disintegration. It is the pre-condition of fascism, for it makes men vulnerable to the salve psychology of the totalitarian state.

The most striking thing about the modern community movement is its direct appreciation of the moral factors which are ignored by the social organization of modern industry. Arthur E. Morgan, who has done more to articulate the idea of Community than any other American, first became active in this movement as a result of his study of the influences which shape human character. Highly sensitive to dishonesty in

business and government, Dr. Morgan came to realize that the decline of moral standards is closely related to the increasing depersonalization of human relations. He found in his study of small communities, both past and present, precisely the elements which are typically lacking in the complex industrialized society of the city—the moral qualities of "mutual respect, good will, living for and with each other by united effort for common ends." After years of research and practical efforts toward the improvement of community living, he formulated his basic credo:

For the preservation and transmission of the fundamentals of civilization, vigorous, wholesome community life is imperative. Unless many people live and work in the intimate relationships of community life, there can never emerge a truly unified nation, or a community of mankind. If I do not love my neighbor whom I know, how can I love the human race, which is but an abstraction? If I have not learned to work with a few people, how can I be effective with many?

The Small Community, from which this passage is taken, is a text on the community conceived as the fundamental unit of social organization. Community shares the importance of the family and holds in solution the same crucial influences over the attitudes and habits of the young. Well aware that there can be no return, en masse, to the economic environment of the village, Dr. Morgan defines the community idea in terms of the human spirit which the ideal community represents. His earlier book, *The Long Road*, contains in unique measure the inspiration which set his life in this direction. The value of Dr. Morgan's contribution is in its nonacademic, avowedly ethical approach to the problems of modern society. He opens the door to the creative social intelligence of every man by pointing to fields of immediate activity in service to community.

Fundamentally, the community movement is devoted to human freedom in both its ideal and its economic aspects. Although now in its first, self-conscious beginnings, this movement has defined the human problem in moral terms and is working

toward a solution by essentially moral means. The concept of Community is really the concept of human brotherhood, without sectarian dogma and without utopian emotionalism. In this sense, it is a movement for common self-reform and self-education which will benefit tomorrow's society regardless of the external form which that society assumes.

There is not space here to describe the countless ways in which the spirit of community may be practically embodied in the various patterns of modern living: for this, readers should go to the writings of Dr. Morgan and others whose thinking is along similar lines. Study of the Community movement shows that its various participants are all united by a common idea—the idea of the free but responsible individual. They also represent a high faith in the moral power of the individual man to establish himself and his life's activities on the basis of consciously chosen ideals. Actually, such men and women are creating their own environments, and to a large extent defining for themselves the nature of the human struggle in which they will participate. Their problems are not the problems described by the textbooks on economics and social science. They are pioneers, elaborating new situations from the raw material of the social frontier. They are not creatures of circumstance, but builders of a better society—and they themselves constitute a social nucleus in which men and their civilizing purposes are the determining factors in events, in which circumstances and facts are the passive material.

CHILDREN ... and Ourselves

EVERYONE hopes to teach his child to be brave and courageous. Yet of course, only those who are themselves without fear can teach others to be fearless. A now somewhat antiquated sort of Christianity proceeds upon the theory that if you are "God-fearing," you have no need to fear ordinary things. Yet the fear of many small things often creeps back in among those who try to solve the problem in this manner, for a thousand and one superstitions arise, just as they did during the Middle Ages, about the things which God especially does not like one to do. Hitler offered another solution for the fear of other countries' superior economic and military power—the solution of having a bigger army than anyone else. Yet to have such an army, a dictatorship is inevitable and the dictator a man much to be feared. So the people with the biggest God or the biggest army may still be almost as fearful as they were before. The United States has tried to retain the service of both these Powers, but is still a perpetually worried nation.

The psychological roots of fear, for the average American, seem to lie, actually, in his desire to avoid the loss of anything he has gained. The object of life is to get what you want and keep it. First you make a fortune, and then you build a high electrically charged fence and hire private detectives to guard your estate and the family within which ambitious men may wish to kidnap and hold for ransom. You are afraid of loss, and your children reflect your psychological state. You act the way a worried man acts, and a worried man's actions are both disturbed and disturbing.

These fears are closely allied with possessiveness, for as soon as a person thinks of anything as "his," he is subconsciously worried about its possible loss. The only solution is to become the sort of a human being who is completely unconcerned about what he has, or has

had, and is only concerned about the values of human relationships. Liberal religions have preached this sermon for a long time and they are perfectly correct. But just how is one to go about the matter of being unconcerned with material things? Obviously, only by thinking that other things are more important. The great saints and religious leaders of the past, the finest philosophers and the boldest men of action, were able to do this. Each had an ideal which transcended the concern over possessions. The ideal may have been to reach a state of sinlessness, or a state of philosophic vision, or a simpler abstract ideal such as the love of service to one's army or country. Yet these are *personal* idealisms, different with each man, offering no satisfactory common ground for a whole community of men who desire to rise above the fear of losing possessions.

The sad truth is that we believe in the supreme value of possessions because we have little faith in the enduring worth of any human relationships, and subconsciously suppose that "things" are more substantial than man's character. In this predicament we are scarcely helped a tall by conventional religion, nor the cynical flavor of modern science, which simply repeats in a new form the older belief in man's sinfulness. The immediate effect of desire for possessions and fear of losing them is to kill the creative imagination; and here we approach directly a vital matter pertaining to the education of children. There can be no real learning unless the imagination of the child is fired with the promise of a bright and noble world that may be gained. We expect too little, perhaps, of ourselves in the way of idealism, and thus automatically teach our children to expect little of themselves. And our culture is lifeless because we look for a mechanical rather than an internal salvation. Our radio programs, our books, magazines and other cultural trivia reflect the fact that most of us are resigned to continue being the human stereotypes that we presently are. The most fundamental, most common and ultimately

most degrading fear of all is the fear that we are not of much account. If you have this fear you can easily get all the others.

We teach most of our children to be sensualists in the same blundering way that we teach them to be fearful. Just as the man who suspects that he is of little worth will show by countless petty emotional reactions that he clings tenaciously to what he has because he doubts his ability to reach any nobler life, so does he impress children with his love for “things” rather than any possible love of values. He looks forward to his “nights out,” his big dinners, his hunting trip or his new car as if the ultimate meaning of life is somehow locked up in the sensations he hopes to achieve. If he is a fearful man, he will seek to drown his fear in the ultimate of sensual experience, and no child is unaffected by the psychological atmosphere in which his parents live. A child in such an atmosphere will seek his happiness in whatever “exciting” experiences offer themselves, in a similar effort to drown out everything else.

Again, in this matter of “sensualism,” a legitimate complaint can be made against the psychological effects of certain basic theological teachings. The doctrine of original fleshy sin, implying that all men are structurally predetermined to be selfishly lustful at least *part* of the time, has apparently made a lasting impression on our civilization. Popular “biological” notions in regard to man’s basic nature similarly imply that a naked selfishness in personal sexual matters is a “normal” heritage. Neither religion nor science has encouraged reflection on the possibility that man can fully express all of his sensory capacities without being either selfish or sensual. Parents who fail to distinguish between the sensory and the sensual expect an unthinking sort of lustful behavior as an inevitable expression of human origin. These are potent factors of our modern psychological background, which further encourage us to cling to sensationalism instead of to some form of a

rational idealism, and suggest that much of parental as well as juvenile delinquency has its roots in attitudes of mind.

Letter from **CENTRAL EUROPE**

INNSBRUCK – The “divided States of Europe” have become the nervous volcano of Europe. Our continent lives on fear and from Care Packages. It still is a question for us Europeans, who have lost our political balance, whether we are going to become the buffer between two world powers—the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R.—and, as such, will have the honor of being the first to become well acquainted with the atomic energy, or whether we shall be able at the last minute to save our sinking ship. “Rats,” they say, “always leave a sinking ship.” Daily I see many such “rats” standing in line in front of the emigration office; I see worn faces whose eyes tell of horrible happenings of war and dictators; I see hunted Europeans coming from those parts of Eastern Europe where a block has been established—people who flee the punishment accorded anyone still having any feeling for the West.

The European disease is “totalitis.” It grips all parties, and all want to conquer and have total power to lead “their” country in *practical* ways. The more dictatorial an ideology, the easier is its work among the great number of simple people.

The bugbear for all Europeans is the word “Bolshevism.” It works wonders in producing resignation and lethargy, even with the Marxian socialists whose doctrine is still very similar to that of communism. The European, tired of concentration camps and dictators, refuses a second 1938—the year when the democratic world gave in for the first time to the dictator, Hitler, in regard to Austria. But the closer the people live to the Iron Curtain, the more they fear to declare themselves for the side which alone could save them from chaos and a third war. According to polls held in Italy, Germany, Austria and the central states, the middle-class man never sees any remedy coming from the country that has concentration camps, censorship of the press, and labor camps, but only from countries where the

mind is free and where the individual still counts. And if we listen to what is said by people standing in line to buy food, waiting for a small piece of bread, or for the baby’s milk (grown-ups do not get a drop in Central Europe), while all the time looking around as if they were still threatened by a fifth column, one can hear remarks which are the same for all Europeans:

A boy 24 years old: Is that what they call democracy? It is hunger and despotism—and from time to time they give us a baby’s rattle to suck on and make us believe our mouth is full of food. That is all our politicians can do. Formerly, we had one dictator. Now, the Big Two dictate, and each one something different.

A man 50 years old: Be glad that we got rid of the war and the nights with bombs! It is better to have two dictate than one. It is no life, but still better than Bolshevism.

A woman with a baby in her arm: The Americans will help. Look at Paris and the Marshall Plan.

A student: They will not help us if we act like beggars. We put our milk bottles in front of the American dairies, go home and expect delivery free of charge. We all ought to be ashamed to see how our diplomats made a list, in Paris, of all the articles we need, without first finding out what we can produce ourselves. We should sufficiently be “Europe-conscious” to help ourselves. Even if we are hungry, our duty as an old center of culture calls at least for that much pride.

A girl 25 years old: What is pride? What center of culture? A heap of ruins. When I am hungry, morality ceases. The one who gives is our friend; it is all the same if he lives in the East or the West. If the Americans and their democracy are so slow in trying to decide to defend or “save” Europe, it will serve them right if in the meantime their capitalists, as well as those of Switzerland, are finally overcome by a dictatorship of the Atlantic coast. I have nothing to lose and all to gain from a change; I would be

glad to lose my miserable life. And believe me, I am not the only one; we are Europe's starving youth.

An old man (at the very head of the line): Don't be so excited! I understand your point of view perfectly well, but even the Americans cannot perform miracles. Just think of the boats Hitler destroyed. They lack quick transports. And in regard to the Americans' indecision . . . well, we Europeans must first prove that we are willing to admit our past errors and blindness.

Student: And that we will put aside our old dusty traditions. With all our party doctrines and national hate, we are not going to make a very good impression in the U.S.A. With cowards as ministers (diplomats) and a Polish mess of porridge, we will make no impression on the East. I can't help it, there is just only one solution: let us put an end to hatred between nations and citizens. The parties have had enough of a chance to govern in the last three centuries; now, let the experts (specialists, professional men) decide. We need experts at the head, men who are not afraid to say what is lacking and act accordingly.

Old man: That is right, young man. Even if what they do is not popular—if we know it will be of use, we will stand it gladly. Only, let all that is going on—all that is chaotic and senseless—stop. But who should take the initiative in our country, so weakened by hunger?—I mean in any of the countries, for one country alone would be powerless. How do you expect to succeed with the poor left-overs of our past elegance? Don't get mad, young man, but. . . .

Student: How did Hitler begin? (Everybody, even those who were indifferent, takes notice now.) I am not afraid to say it openly: exactly as centuries ago the Masons, the Jesuits, and now the Socialists. They all started with a few courageous souls. . . .

"The milk! Gentleman, said the milkman, as he interrupted and was greeted with laughter. I waited until the Europe-conscious man, who was

certainly a follower of an idea unknown to me, reappeared with his half-pint of milk (for his little sister). I let pass by the street cars so overcrowded with people that they looked like bunches of grapes, and watched how a lady, not badly dressed, picked up some coals from the street and put them in her bag next to some wrinkled old apples.

I listened to the young man. I was right; he spoke enthusiastically about a new idea which was already supported by millions of Europeans. It is an idea against the repetition of vandalism, leaning a little toward the West without supporting a plutocratic spirit. All I can now say is this: We Europeans must not look any more for doctrines, nor bake bread the socialistic way, nor build the Catholic way, nor tailor the liberal way, nor dance the communistic way; but we must produce according to need, and as progress requires it.

This is all for today, for as a writer I must quickly go to the *Landwirtschaftskammer* to get a coupon for wood, which coupon I must have stamped at the industrial center; then, I give this coupon to a friend of mine, a paper manufacturer, who does not have paper any more, but who gets from his brother-in-law, the director of a tobacco factory, some cigarettes, "under the counter." For these cigarettes he obtains from a former client, who still has a little reserve, 50 sheets of writing paper for me. I must get that paper or my American readers will wait in vain for the next installment.

CENTRAL EUROPEAN CORRESPONDENT

COMMENTARY
THE AMERICAN DREAM

Not many years ago, James Truslow Adams gave currency to the expression, "the American Dream." The phrase contains the daring of Columbus, the peace-seeking of the Pilgrims, and the lusty enterprise of British explorers. It comprehends the ever-receding horizon of the colonial frontier and the expanding boundaries of a proud young republic. It bespeaks the world-girdling voyages of Yankee skippers, the cotton empire of the South, the factories and baking houses of the North. It looks across a continent upon endless fields of corn and wheat, and sees beyond the herds of the great plains. Forests, mountains, rivers, stretch to the setting sun where a vast and temperate sea dissolves into measureless distance.

The American Dream was a vision of inexhaustible opportunity, and something more. It was the projected imagining of Europe's greatest hearts, the symbol of a land where men could live and work, wax wise and good, without even the memory of ancient wrongs: a vision that could fill the breast and make moist the eyes of those who spoke of freedom, not as a precious heritage, but as a dawn still hidden from view.

This dream belongs to the past. Its strength is spent and its ardor can no longer be renewed. Its physical objectives have long since become humdrum facts. Today, we are sated with the rich fruits of our freedom, and slackly unaware that the vision has become a lusterless memory.

It is time to begin another dream for America. It is time to create a new challenge for our energies, lest they waste or grow ungovernable and destroy us from within. We found no difficulty in subduing the wilderness made by Nature, but how shall we deal with this wilderness of the modern world, made by man?

One thing is certain: we need, for this task, a vision wider by the circumference of the earth than any now afforded to us, and a subtlety of

moral perception which can penetrate a thousand irrelevancies and ignore the shallow lusts of private and public life. But before this, we need to regain some wholeness for our lives, and some nobility of purpose in what we are doing with our lives. Then we may at least be able to help make "one" a world that has never been so consciously divided as it is today.

REVIEW

BOUNDARIES OF SANITY

Books like *The Snake Pit* by Mary Jane Ward, and Harold Maine's *If a Man Be Mad*, bring the horror of insanity home. Books like these should be read, but if you read only one, read Maine, who endured and survived nearly every ordeal that a patient in a mental hospital can go through. Maine was himself an alcoholic who became psychopathic under the influence of liquor. After being a patient in several mental hospitals, both public and private, he resigned himself to the conclusion that he could not safely remain at large, so he became a ward attendant in institutions similar to the ones in which he had been confined. It was this that cured him. His intense desire to relieve the sufferings of the inmates made him forget his own need for freedom from alcohol; no longer haunted by fear that he would drink, Maine was a well man.

His book reminds the reader of *A Mind that Found Itself*, by Clifford Beers, first published in 1907. Beers, like Maine, recovered his sanity when he began to think more about the misery of the other patients than his own misfortunes. In 1909 he founded the National Committee for Mental Hygiene, which is now an organization with cooperating groups in several states, carrying on varied activities on behalf of the mentally ill.

Although similar in origin, there is nevertheless a vast difference between the Beers book and *If a Man be Mad*. Beers, once he was well, was optimistic and "progressive." He received the endorsement of the leading American psychologist of his time, William James, and worked with the philanthropic, well-intentioned forces of modern society to establish a constructive organization. He died in 1943.

Maine, who returned to normal life forty years later, wrote his book in passionate revolt against the terroristic routine which governs the lives of the insane in public institutions. While working as an attendant, he had asked a leading

psychiatrist what might be done to improve the conditions in mental hospitals. The replay began: "*You raise a difficult question which is ages long and cannot be well solved under the present conditions of our civilization . . .*"

The psychiatrist told him to write about his experiences, but where would Maine find an audience? Already, magazines had returned several articles saying they were "distorted," or that the conditions described were now improved. He says in his book:

I who had been a constitutional liar in regard to my personal life found that America is a constitutional liar in regard to its national life. Is one to hate one's own kind? Was I in a position to rebuke my country? Like me, it wanted to be comfortable; like me, it wanted only those responsibilities its lies sometimes created. It went about reform as I went about my cures. It would admit and even get desperate about its surface symptoms, but in the depths the disease was always hidden—left for a comfortable day when it could be quietly and surreptitiously cured. While I had maintained a half-dozen false continuities—personal myths—my country maintained thousands, one for almost every trade and profession. Nothing was allowed to appear as it actually was, only as what it seemed to be. . . .

What could I say to a doctor, for instance, who delivered a lecture to a club on "The Therapeutic Value of Kindness" while he knew men were being throttled and beaten in his ward? Knowing the magnitude of his pretentiousness didn't make me an iota more secure; socially I was still his inferior, which implied that I was incapable of understanding him because of the limitations of my intellect. He was secure within the accepted lies of a group; I was isolated because of guilt.

In the notes of his personal journal, Maine recorded his own decision:

There is nothing to do, apparently, but adjust ourselves to the very beliefs that isolate us; to stop fearing our individual bents and renounce all society stands for, should it go against us as individuals. Each hero will have to be his own lonely spectator and become something less than a hero because of that. . . .

Maine's work is a final indictment of the endless institutional compromises of modern

civilization, of the unspoken agreement among those who have status and place: “Brother, I understand. . . . You protect my lies and I will protect yours.” Maine’s personal honesty is demonstrated by the fact that he refused to “expose” any particular institution or persons. He names only hospitals he can praise, such as Bellevue in New York.

Reform in treatment of the insane involves something more than the discharge of a few brutal attendants. Maine is a radical who attempts to get at the root; and the root, in this case, is the lies the “sane” portion of the population tell one another, in order to maintain the fictions which give the illusion of “security” and support the common self-esteem.

Maine’s diagnosis has the same clear ring that is found in Tolstoy’s *Confessions*. He belongs to that small company of men who have experienced truth and have also the courage to declare it.

For about ten years, professional students of mental disease have been urging the public that insanity is no longer only a personal disaster. In 1937, Dr. Horatio M. Pollock returned from a World Population Congress in Paris to say that disorders of the mind are affecting the population of all civilized countries. Unless discoveries in the field of prevention can be found, he warned, mental disease will supersede physical disease as the primary menace to health in the United States. In 1939, Walter L. Treadway of the U.S. Public Health Service announced that mental cases in that year were four times the number (proportionate to population) of cases in 1880, and he predicted that a million children then in school would suffer mental breakdown at some time in their lives. Throughout the war, newspapers and magazines were filled with alarming accounts of the prevalence of mental and emotional ills among men drafted for the armed services. If the victims of mental disorder continue to increase at the present rate, a generation from now hardly a family in the United States will remain untouched. According to a

New York specialist, one in every sixteen persons in America is now psychotic. Figures for Los Angeles show that actual psychopathic cases investigated by the police have almost doubled in the past four years, and while California is known to have an exceptionally high rate of incidence of mental disorder, there can be little doubt but that similar increases have been experienced in other states.

The insanity of our age is one of the consequences of our fundamental dishonesty. Madness is a penalty paid by men who lie from fear, and only half-believe their own lies. Some deep conscientiousness in human nature has been profoundly violated, and the attempt of men to justify themselves to themselves produces strains in the mind and the feelings, until finally a split occurs.

The conventional meaning of frustration is the thwarting of a natural impulse or desire. sometimes physical circumstances are responsible, sometimes a psychological or emotional block. But this may be only half of frustration, and the lesser half, at that. j What of the inward impulses of the soul, the need to receive and do justice, the moral necessities of a higher life: can these be frustrated, too? These questions ought not to be brushed aside with the impatience of an amoral psychology. The reality of soul and its deep-seated aspirations may be themselves the stuff of mental health.

Occasionally, some psychiatrist dares to hint publicly at what Maine’s correspondent wrote: that there is no hope for reducing mental instability or improving the treatment of the insane until here are fundamental changes in human society at large. Karen Horney, in *The Neurotic Personality of Our Time*, touches briefly on the “contradictions in our culture—Maine calls them “lies”—which underlie neuroses:

. . . that between competition and success on the one hand, and brotherly love and humility on the other. . . . We must be not only assertive but aggressive, able to push others out of the way. On the

other hand, we are deeply imbued with Christian ideals which declare that it is selfish to want anything for ourselves, that we should be humble, turn the other cheek. . . .

For this contradiction, says Dr. Horney, there are only two “normal” solutions—to take one course and discard the other. To adopt both would mean that the individual will become “seriously inhibited in both directions.” Dr. Horney adds, however, that the “normal person” is able to cope with the difficulties in this choice “without damage to his personality,” which seems to mean that “normality,” in our culture, is the ability to maintain a nice balance between ruthlessness and following the Sermon on the Mount.

Actually, if Dr. Horney, or any other psychiatrist, were to develop the implications behind this analysis of present-day culture, the result would be a scathing denunciation of our most respected institutions. The writer would be outcasted, almost at once, from professional circles; he would lose all his wealthy patients, and probably end up impoverished and declassed.

So it is fear that enslaves the doctors to mediocrity, just as fear enslaves the insane to their manias and delusions. And it is fear, also, which enslaves nations to militarism, producing the madness that is war. Years ago, Caroline Playne wrote *The Neuroses of the Nations*, a study of the causes of the first world war in psychiatric terms, and M. E. Ravage contributed in 1923 *The Malady of Europe*, a similar analysis of the wars of Europe. In every case, fear is the dynamic of destruction, and “liberation” only the slogan which touches off the conflict. War is only a larger, more generalized form of insane behavior, in which sane men participate because of the universal self-deception.

It seems clear that psychotherapy must learn to be revolutionary in the fundamental sense of this term. It must admit, with Dr. Edward L. Strecker, “that, judged by the criteria of mental illness, the world is insane,” and stand by that

judgment until a few outposts of genuine sanity have been established. But psychiatrists, willing or not to take this position, can do little without intelligent moral support. Doctors, as a class, have seldom been very far ahead of the mass. The pioneer spirit is not the prerogative of any particular profession, but belongs to those human beings, of every class and condition, who determine to find and live by principles rooted in integrity. Of such an effort, any man can be a part.

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Besides the books mentioned in Review, readers may wish to refer to **Out of Sight, Out of Mind**, by Frank L. Wright, Jr., published by the National Mental Foundation. Wright summarizes the testimony of scores of wartime attendants in mental hospitals, where the brutality and indifference to human suffering are unbelievable—unless you read this book. For contrast, see Harold Maine’s **Satevepost** article, “We Can Save the Mentally Sick,” the story of the Menninger Clinic at Topeka, Kansas (**Post**, Nov. 15, 1947). Brief, simple analysis of mental and emotional disorder is provided by Edward Strecker in **The Man and the Mob** (1940), a pamphlet issued by the National Committee for Mental Hygiene. ON the contemporary epidemic, read Leslie C. Barber’s “The Age of Schizophrenia” in **Harper’s** for December, 1937.

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FRONTIERS Biology and Politics

The name, Vavilov, means very little to the average American, but to American biologists—and doubtless a number of Russian biologists as well—it represents a tragic fragment of current scientific, and social, history. The obscure death in a Soviet prison, probably in 1943, of Nicoli Vavilov, for years the leading geneticist of the Soviet Union, is reported by Eric Ashby in *Scientist in Russia*, a new Pelican volume. Once highly honored by his Russian colleagues, and awarded important scientific offices by the Soviet government, Vavilov fell from grace when it was discovered that he was spreading “counter-revolutionary” doctrines in biology, and that his field of Genetics was a “foreign science”—containing vicious capitalistic teachings opposed to dialectical materialism. Vavilov, a scientific rival pointed out, believed in and taught the laws of physical heredity as formulated by the Austrian priest, Gregor Mendel. These supposed “laws,” the geneticist’s enemies declared, gave support to the hated Nazi theory of “race,” and were contradictory to the Marxian principle and economic environment. Vavilov’s ideas, therefore, were false, and must be erased from the memory of man—at least, from the memory of Soviet man.

There can be no doubt of the reason for Vavilov’s death. Ashby, who writes as a friend of the Soviet Union, admits that “Vavilov was killed because he adhered to bourgeois genetics.”

Thomas Hunt Morgan, American Nobel prize-winner for gene research, and Vavilov, are generally regarded as having been the pioneers in developing formal genetics. Vavilov directed the Soviet plant-breeding projects. For years, he was President of the Lenin Academy of Agricultural Sciences and Director of the Institute of Applied Botany. He was a foreign member of the Royal Society of London and in 1939 the delegates to the Edinburgh International Congress of Genetics

elected him President, although he was not permitted to attend. From that time on, nothing was heard of Vavilov, nor of his work—the latter being called by an inquiring British scientist “one of the most important contributions of Soviet Russia to the science of the world.”

The attack on Vavilov began in 1936 with the charge by T. D. Lysenko, a plant-breeder, that formal genetics was inconsistent with the dialectical materialism of Karl Marx. It culminated in 1939 with publication in the government organ, *Socialist Agriculture*, of a letter signed by 24 students of a Soviet agricultural academy who demanded suppression of a text based on Mendelian principles and called for another textbook free of genetic “superstition.” Lysenko, known popularly as the Soviet Burbank, the students said, should write the new book.

There was grim significance in the printing of this letter by the controlled Soviet press, under the heading, “Chase Formal Genetics from the Universities.” Mendel’s non-Marxist laws were in effect “repealed,” and Vavilov was through. A year later, in 1940, Lysenko replaced him in authority and Vavilov lost both his job and his life.

The task of the commentator would be easy if one might say that the case of Vavilov is simply another instance of Soviet barbarism. This personification of guilt is the familiar pattern of moral judgment, but it misses almost entirely the realities of the problem. Actually, Vavilov was killed, not by innately vicious men, but by the ardent materialism of ignorant men—a materialism which Vavilov, for all we know, may himself have shared.

Marxist doctrine defines man as a creature of circumstance—a thing of matter and physical laws. Salvation for man, according to Marxist theory, will come by changing the circumstances, which, in turn, will change the man. Mendel’s laws of physical heredity, on the other hand, seem to prove that basic physical traits are transmitted

from generation to generation, and that environment is relatively powerless to change them. If the Marxist theologians had been content to admit that Mendel's laws apply to plants and animals, and to certain biological attributes in man, leaving the higher human qualities free from hereditary predestination, they would not have felt it necessary to attack Vavilov and condemn his scientific achievements. After all, the science of genetics is not founded on the data of human breeding, but on work with plants and animals. Only the materialism which identifies man with animals demanded the "liquidation" of Genetics in Soviet Russia.

Marx wrote his program for the reconstruction of mankind from a background of science in which Mendel's laws were unknown. His bitter hatred of injustice, coupled with incomplete theories of nineteenth-century biology, created the fierce fanaticism of the Communist Revolution, and also the militant theology of materialism of those who adopted his ideas. It was this theology which destroyed Vavilov, as surely as another kind of theological materialism made Galileo recant his great discovery of the movement of the earth, hundreds of years before.

Galileo, like Vavilov, had endangered a theory of Salvation. The doctrines of the medieval Church, like Marxian theory, were involved in antiquated science, in this case the Ptolemaic astronomy. Galileo declared the earth a planet, one of several which revolved about the sun, thereby threatening the eternal bliss of Europe's millions. "His presented discovery," said an accusing priest, "vitiates the whole plan of Christian salvation." Another objected: "If there are other planets, since God makes nothing in vain, they must be inhabited; and how can their inhabitants be descended from Adam? . . . How can they be redeemed by the Savior?" Such interference with the Church's cosmic scheme could not be tolerated, and Galileo was disciplined by the Inquisition.

Vavilov, however, according to available reports, refused to recant. Instead, he asserted that to drop Mendel's laws from Soviet science would set its progress back 70 years. But the devotion of his accusers to political dogma was more powerful than Vavilov's loyalty to scientific fact. Like any other unrepentant heretic, he was put to death.

A final irony lies in the fact that genetics based on Mendel's laws is today taught in the University of Moscow, and according to Anton Zhebrak, a Russian geneticist, in several other Soviet institutions. Vavilov, it appears had the misfortune to offend the political prejudices of the non-scientific majority, who condemned him with the eagerness of heretic-hunters of the Middle Ages. Meanwhile, the heresy quietly continues, on the supposition, of course, that Vavilov was right.

But before Americans wallow in self-righteousness at Soviet persecution of scientific pioneers, it would be well to investigate the hazards of unorthodox research in the United States. True, the bias of academic science in America is more stately in its formulations, and hardly resembles at all the expedient flip-flops of the Party Line; but doubtless Dr. Rhine of Duke University could tell us something about prejudice in high places, and of the suppression of facts by "reputable" authorities during his long struggle for recognition of extra sensory perception. Along the same lines, *Scientists Are Human*, by David Lindsay Watson, is recommended reading for a recital of specific instances of academic bigotry in the United States.