

## THE THEOCRATIC URGE

MANAS has received from a resident of South India a letter appealing for support in this writer's campaign to obtain official recognition of "God" in India's Constitution. He finds it shocking that India, whose great religious traditions are known to all the world, should now have a government which neglects any reference to the Supreme Being, and whose Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, candidly admits that he is not "a man of religion." (Mr. Nehru is said to have expressed himself in this way at a Belgrade press conference.) Our correspondent writes:

Whereas references to God appear four times in the preamble to the Constitution of a so-called materialistic United States of America, there is not a single reference to the Almighty in the entire Constitution of a spiritual India! In the flush of political independence after centuries of subjugation, India's constitution-makers, in their over-eagerness to draw up an up-to-date secular state's constitution, actually framed a Godless constitution.

The writer asks for help in combating "a Godless paganism that is already eating into India's vitals," and points to the American example of recent years:

The inclusion of the words, "Under God," in the Oath of Allegiance to the U.S. Flag, and the issue of "In God We Trust" U.S. postage stamps last year amply demonstrated to the whole world that even in the land of dollar-chasers, practical godly men are very much in evidence to instil and inculcate noble ideas in everyday life; President Eisenhower's important speeches always contain respectful references to the Almighty. [But] even allusions to the Supreme Being are conspicuous by their absence in Pandit Nehru's discourses.

The writer feels that an "appalling cultural tragedy" has resulted from India's official Godlessness, which leaves "only the Devil in whom the people of India can have belief, faith and worship." Our correspondent adds that since India "has become a diluted specimen of an

atheistic state to start with, . . . there is nothing to prevent it from developing into a pukka Communistic state in the course of time."

This may not be the best possible instance of the "Theocratic Urge" to take up for discussion, since the fanatical overtones of the condemnation of Prime Minister Nehru are so weakening to our correspondent's case, yet even the extreme anxiety of the latter is a factor that ought to be considered. On the premises presented by the writer, a temperate analysis of Mr. Nehru's position could be nothing more than shallow compromise, showing "tolerance" for a man bent on delivering India to the Devil!

There are two ways to question such claims. One is by rational analysis, and the other is by the study of history. The historical approach must ask: What evidence is there that reference to the Deity in public documents and by high officials contributes to the moral elevation of the common people? The difficulty of this approach lies in obtaining a common ground of agreement on what constitutes "moral elevation," since those who demand political recognition of God seem to think that this recognition is itself an achievement of transcendent piety, whereas opponents of all theocratic arrangements feel obliged to require some independent criterion of human welfare and moral tone. One wonders, for example, what this critic of the modern "secular state" would have to say about the beneficent reign of the Emperor Asoka, an Indian ruler who, being horrified by the brutality of the wars in which he had engaged, gave up any desire for extending his conquests and thereafter devoted his great energies and skill to the dissemination of Buddhist ethics. The inscriptions of Asoka (d. 232 B.C.) are famous throughout the world, and his devotion to the public good is still remembered in the East. "If a man's fame," a historian has written, "can be

measured by the number of hearts who revere his memory, by the number of lips who have mentioned, and still mention him with honor, Asoka is more famous than Charlemagne or Caesar." Yet Asoka, following his teacher, Gotama Buddha, had nothing to say about the existence of God. The edicts of Asoka are purely ethical, without theological content.

Buddhism has certainly made it evident that there can be a high moral life for both individual and community without belief in an "Almighty." As for assistance from the state, an ironic twist to this point is added by noting what Rhys Davids says in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*—that Asoka's official support of Buddhism was by no means an unmixed blessing:

We can now see that the very event which seemed, in the eyes of the world, to be the most striking proof of the success of the new movement, the conversion and strenuous support in the 3rd century B.C., of Asoka, the most powerful ruler India had had, only hastened the decline. The admission of large numbers of converts, more especially from the newly incorporated and less advanced provinces, produced weakness rather than strength in the movement for reform. The way of compromise had come. Every relaxation of the old thorough-going position was welcomed and supported by converts only half converted. . . .

One thing is certain: It is impossible to prove from history that beneficial religious results come from the support of religious beliefs or doctrines by the state. The best that can happen is the generation of a mood of pious conformity which tends to make people forget the need for independent religious or philosophical search and discovery. The king or the legislature has removed the necessity for this by declaring that the truth is already known!

However, if the political side of our correspondent's argument be considered, he is not so much interested in the discovery of final religious truth as he is worried about the threat of Communism. Religious belief in God, in short, may operate as a defense against a communist revolution. This is not a new view of religion.

However, men who have studied the role of religion in human affairs have found it worth while to distinguish between religion as *truth*—an end of the individual—and religion as the source of social structure and order. The ancient Roman, Varro, pointed out that three kinds of theology are possible. There is the poetic sort of theology found in Homer, containing tales of the Gods and their doings. Since India is richer even than ancient Greece in this sort of theology, Eastern readers will have no difficulty in identifying religious literature of this class. Then, Varro said, there is civil theology—involving State observances. It was the civil theology of Rome which the early Christians refused to conform to, causing them to be variously persecuted, not so much for heretical beliefs as for their unwillingness to display an outward respect for the political dogmas of the Roman Empire. Finally, there is natural theology, which is pursued and taught by philosophers. A. E. Taylor, the English Platonist, commenting, remarks:

It is only this last kind of theology which Varro regards as having any claim to be true. The established view about mythology, as early as the days of Herodotus, was that it had been made up by the poets, whose sole object in their stories was not to instruct but to interest and amuse. Civil theology again, has nothing to do with truth or falsehood; it is the creation of the magistrate who sanctions certain feasts and other ceremonies with a view to nothing beyond their social utility. As Scaveola the pontiff had said, in a very Roman spirit, there is only one kind of theology (the civil) which is of any social utility, and it is not true.

When, then, a man goes to the legislature and invites its members to make laws or declarations concerning religion, he is asking for an act of civil theology. He can hardly, of course, appeal publicly for official action on "religious" truth, while admitting that officially enacted beliefs or creeds are not or need not be true. It is more likely that he will campaign in the conviction that what he wants made into law, or afforded constitutional recognition, is an ultimate truth—so far beyond contradiction that he feels its rejection

to be either unimaginable or an intolerable crime. This seems to be the position of our correspondent.

We cannot, therefore, argue with him, since we think that Prime Minister Nehru is right in his policies, and that it would be a great mistake to give the constitution of India a theological coloring. A "God" that needs the sanction of the State, to our way of thinking, must be a very weak God indeed, unable to win his way to the hearts of men without the assistance of a fallible human instrument.

But the question of a civil theology remains as worth looking into further. Ancient India, like other ancient countries, was amply provided with what might be termed a "civil theology," but her scholars and historians, unlike the Roman Varro, never said that the social system inaugurated many centuries ago, under the Institutes of Manu, derived from a theological mandate which, while "useful," was untrue. Instead, they made a simple distinction between the *Vedas*, which were held to be a direct revelation from God, or *sruti*, and the code of Manu, which enjoyed the authority of tradition, or *smriti*—a collection of oral traditions.

Even so, the reader of the laws of Manu will be tremendously impressed by the high philosophical teachings of this ancient text of religious sociology, being obliged to place it in an entirely different category from the Roman state religion.

The point, here, is that some forms of civil theology; if not "true," enjoy at least a closer resemblance to philosophical truth than others. Returning, then, to the question of "designing" a civil theology, which is what in principle is involved in the request for an official recognition of God in the Indian Constitution, there is the problem of how to go about it—supposing for a moment that it is a good idea. We have a fairly complete description of the procedures that were followed in one instance—that of Numa, the Sabine who was so admired by the early Romans that they invited him to become their king. After

some persuasion, Numa agreed to serve, and soon after he assumed power he gave some attention to religion. Plutarch's account is instructive:

When Numa . . . won the favour and affection of the people, he set himself without delay to the task of bringing the hard and iron Roman temper to somewhat more of gentleness and equity. Plato's expression of a city in high fever was never more applicable than to Rome at that time; in its origin formed by daring and warlike spirits, whom bold and desperate adventure brought thither from every quarter, it had found in perpetual wars and incursions upon its neighbors its after sustenance and means of growth, and in conflict with danger the source of new strength; like piles, which the blows of the hammer serve to fix into the ground. Wherefore Numa, judging it no slight undertaking to mollify and bend to peace the presumptuous and stubborn spirits of this people, began to operate on them with the sanctions of religion. He sacrificed often and used processions and religious dances, in which most commonly he officiated in person; by such combinations of solemnity with refined and humanizing pleasures, seeking to win over and mitigate their fiery and warlike tempers. At times, also, he filled their imaginations with religious terrors, professing that strange apparitions had been seen, and dreadful voices heard; thus subduing and humbling their minds by a sense of supernatural fears.

This method which Numa used made it believed that he had been much conversant with Pythagoras; for in the philosophy of the one, as in the policy of the other, man's relations to the deity occupy a great place.

Numa's conception of Deity is of particular interest:

His opinion, also, of images, is very agreeable to the doctrine of Pythagoras; who conceived of the first principle of being as transcending sense and passion, invisible and incorrupt, and only to be apprehended by abstract intelligence. So Numa forbade the Romans to represent God in the form of man or beast, nor was there any painted or graven image of a deity admitted amongst them for the space of the first hundred and seventy years, all of which time their temples and chapels were kept free and pure from images; to such baser objects they deemed it impious to liken the highest, and all access to God impossible, except by the pure act of intellect.

Considering his times and the material he had to work with Numa seems to have been a very wise man. There is no reason to believe that his "inventions" in respect to the social aspect of religion opened any avenue for tyrannizing over the people, while on the ultimate question of the highest Deity, he made particular provision to prevent an easy superficiality. If this first principle of being is to be known at all, he said, it is through abstract intelligence alone. Images or likenesses pretending to convey this idea he condemned as profanation.

Turning to the present day, it may be argued that the great revolutions of the eighteenth century accomplished two important objectives. First, they declared that there was no longer any necessity for there to be a "civil theology." This is the meaning of religious liberty, which is implemented by means of the Secular State. The philosophical implication of the Declaration of Independence of the United States, with its reference to "Nature and Nature's God," represents the absolute rejection of either the right or responsibility of a political authority to "design" any kind of religion for anybody. Henceforth, as the Constitution implies, we shall govern ourselves by rational means, without invoking supernatural sanctions. The institutions of democracy neither affirm nor deny the truths of religion. By omitting any committing reference to religion, they reserve to the individual his complete freedom to choose for himself and to work out his own salvation without prejudice as to which of the religions and philosophies of the world has the highest "truth-content."

The second objective achieved by the epoch of revolution was the dethronement of authoritarian power in both politics and religion. European history is a bloody record of the abuse of power by kings and priests who claimed supernatural justification for their authority. If we take to heart the instruction of past centuries in this respect, we shall say to ourselves that no man should permit himself to seek political power or

office until he has understood thoroughly the origin and philosophy of the modern anarchist movement, as the climax of long and bitter experience of irrationalism in politics. And no man should presume to say what is "good for others" in religion unless he is able to comprehend the historical forces which, from the seventeenth century on, produced so large a crop of atheists in the Western world. Atheism, in the West, historically speaking, has represented the dignity of man as contrasted with the follies and impositions of authoritarian religion.

We do not hesitate to repeat what was quoted in these pages two weeks ago from Paul Tillich, a professor of philosophical theology, on the subject of "belief in God." Dr. Tillich offers mature religious thinking which incorporates the lessons of Western history and provides full justification for the silence of political documents and officials in religious matters, not by reason of secular disdain for religious truth, but in order to preserve the attitude of mind in which genuine religious discovery is possible. Tillich said:

Unfortunately, many theologians . . . begin their message with the assertion that there is a highest being called God, whose authoritative revelations they have received. They are more dangerous for religion than the so-called atheistic scientists. They take the first steps on the road which inescapably leads to atheism. Theologians who make of God a highest being who has given some people information about Himself, inescapably provoke the resistance of those who are told they must subject themselves to the authority of this information.

## *REVIEW*

### A BOOK FROM RUSSIA

A SHORT time ago we were afforded what seemed an unusual opportunity to get "inside Russia" by an advertisement in Britain's *Manchester Guardian Weekly*—and availed ourselves of it by the expedient of mailing a few shillings. This advertisement called attention to a book produced in Moscow, in English as well as in Russian, by one of the "Commissars of Education." The author is A. S. Makarenko, and his *Book for Parents* (1954) has been translated into English for the Foreign Languages Publishing House in Moscow by Robert Daglish.

Actual inspection of such a book produced in Russia is a fine thing, even if the book is not outstanding, since any work intended to better relationships between adult and child cannot be altogether worthless, especially if, as in this case, its pages demonstrate that Russian teachers are not so *humanly* different from our own as we might imagine. Books, furthermore, being addressed to the mind, speak a universal language. Coming from dreaded Russia, this volume assists the realization that there are no abstract "Russians," any more than there were—as we unfortunately used to think—abstract "Germans."

Mr. Makarenko, it happens, is a starry-eyed idealist, not a hard-bitten materialist. Of course, his idealism, his optimism, his love of children and his reprimands for parents are couched in the idiom of the ideology to which he was born. But it is the idealism we are first concerned with, rather than the naïveté of its expression. Take for instance the glowing paragraph which opens the first chapter. Here Makarenko speaks of his hope that the youth of Russia will fulfill the high promise of a dream that all men be Citizens of the World. For this writer, "the revolution" presents the youth of Communist countries with something other youths lack, especially in the "democracies." For in Russia, he vehemently affirms, there is a *recent* tradition of high pioneering courage:

Our youth is a world phenomenon which defies comparison, a phenomenon whose greatness and significance we are, perhaps, incapable of comprehending. Who gave it birth, who taught it, educated it, entrusted it with the cause of the Revolution? Whence came these tens of millions of craftsmen, engineers, airmen, combine-operators, commanders, scientists? Can it be that we, we old people, created this youth? But when? How did we fail to notice it? Was it not we who grumbled at our schools and universities, grumbled, more often than not, unthinkingly, for want of something better to do; was it not we who considered our People's Commissariats for Education only fit to be grumbled at? And meanwhile the family seemed to be creaking at every joint, more chilled by emotional currents than warmed by love. And anyhow there was no time. We built, we fought, then built again, and we are still building now, we do not down tools for an instant.

Everywhere there are tens of millions of new, young and terribly interesting people.

They are modest. Some of them are not very refined in their conversation, sometimes their humour is rough. . . .

There is no denying that.

But they are the masters of life, they are calm and confident unhesitatingly, without hysterics and posing, without boastfulness and without complaining, at absolutely unforeseeable speed—they are doing the job.

By all odds the most interesting revelation of Mr. Makarenko's book is that a Commissar of Education can be an inveterate moralist—a Puritan, if you will, when it comes to family relationships and "clean" language. This is a rather puzzling discovery, and even amusing since Mr. Makarenko exhorts in a manner reminiscent of like efforts by the conventionally religious people of fifty years ago in America. Note, for instance, these passages on obscenity. "It is essential," writes Makarenko, "that we begin a resolute and persistent struggle against foul language, if not from aesthetic considerations, then from purely educational ones." He continues:

Very many people, particularly between the ages of 20 and 22, like to show off with bad language. It

would seem that one had to spend very little mental energy to realize that Russian revolutionary zest is something diametrically opposed to the Russian zest for drinking, but not everyone realizes it! Not everyone realizes the simple and absolutely obvious fact that the swear-word is a cheap, wretched, utterly petty foulness, a sign of the most savage, most primitive culture—the cynical, insolent, ruffianly denial both of our respect for woman and of our striving for profound and genuinely human beauty.

But if for women that loosely used obscene word is only insulting, for children it is extremely harmful. With amazing light-mindedness we tolerate this thing, we tolerate its existence side by side with our great and active aspirations for education.

So it surprises you—as it did us—that the Russian government is apparently enthusiastic about a book claiming that "genuinely human beauty" and an aesthetic ideal may exist apart from direct service to the State? And this peculiar matter of obscenity: obscene language could otherwise be defended on the ground that it unites human beings at the level of their common frailties, and that frailties, frankly realized in common, become a common natural language of revolution against the artificially cultured rich. But Makarenko does not argue in this fashion. He continues with the zest of a churchman, insisting that the whole subject of sex must be kept pure in the minds of the young. And there is no doubt about his sincerity:

For a grown-up a swear-word is simply an extremely insulting coarse word. When saying or hearing it, the grown up experiences only a mechanical shock. An obscene word rouses no sexual images or feelings in him. But when a boy hears or speaks that word, it does not come to him as a relative term of abuse, it brings with it its inherent sexual meaning. The essence of this misfortune is not that the secret of sex is unveiled before the boy, but that it is unveiled in the most ugly, cynical and immoral form. The frequent uttering of such words trains him to pay exaggerated attention to sexual matters, to perverted day-dreaming, and that leads to an unhealthy interest in woman, to limited and blind visual sensitivity, to the petty, wearisome sadism of catchwords, dirty stories and bawdy jokes. A woman appears to him not in the full splendour of her human charm and beauty, not in the full harmony of her

spiritual and physical tenderness, of all the mystery and strength of her being, but merely as a possible object of violence and utility, merely as a humiliated female. And such a youth sees love from the back yard, from the side where human history has long ago dumped its primitive physiological standards. It is in this garbage heap of cultural history that the boy's first vague conception of sex is fed.

It is unnecessary, of course, to exaggerate the unfortunate results of this phenomenon. Childhood, life, the family, school society and books give the boy and the youth a large number of pushes and impulses in the opposite direction, our whole way of life, practical and comradely association with girls and women bring new food for higher feelings and more valuable conceptions.

But neither should they be underestimated.

Every man who denies himself the use of swear-words, who encourages a comrade to do the same, who demands restraint from any and every rampart "hero" he happens to meet will bring enormous good both to our children and to the whole of our society.

What do Mr. Makarenko's admonishments amount to? A plea for patience, forbearance and tolerance in parental attitudes toward children. His book is simply another effort to revitalize the flagging idealism of those who seek to help the young, but find it difficult. He wants, in effect, the parents of Russia to live ideal lives no matter what it costs them in terms of sacrificing personal pleasures. So Makarenko is a humanist, not a materialist, and an idealistic one, too.

## COMMENTARY THE FREE SOCIETY

THE one thing that must never be attempted in the name of religion is coercion of belief. Even benevolent indoctrination is in the long run an obstacle to religion worth having, since it substitutes authority for free investigation by the individual.

But if people are without interest in religious truth—if, indeed, they are subject to the unplanned and haphazard indoctrination of a civilization which is grossly indifferent to either morality or religion—what is to be done? Children, especially, it will be said, need to have *something* to go by.

This is the sort of question we wish the gentleman in the South of India had asked, instead of proposing the easy answer of State intervention. For this is a question of genuine importance.

One answer deserving respectful attention is that of the Humanists, and of educators who have endeavored to work out programs of ethical education which draw on the vast reservoir of human wisdom without reference to any supernatural source. Of all the books which give such counsel to parents and teachers, Henry Neumann's *Education for Moral Growth* is one of the best, and will probably surprise readers who imagine that merely "secular" morals must be without moving inspiration. Mr. Neumann was long connected with the Ethical Culture Society and its educational undertakings.

Naturally, however, the problem of moral education is not solved for either children or adults by reading a book, however good. There is still the question of the large-scale disorders of society, producing the various statistics of crime, delinquency, and social decay that are so disturbing. The impulse of the man in India is to *do* something, and there are many like him in all parts of the world.

Well, we have no satisfactory answer for such people. We find the "mass" or "political" solution for the problem of moral disorder fully as bad as the condition it sets out to remedy. It may even be worse, since it creates the delusion that moral issues can be settled by people who "know" for the others who "don't know."

This has nothing to do with the question of whether or not some people know better than others what is the truth. Our point is that the people who do know something of the truth are never the people who try to order either the lives or the beliefs of others. People who know even a little of the truth are far too wise to attempt this. So, categorically, we say that the insistent "authorities" on religious truth are really the most ignorant people of all!

But there are also those who, while they know better than to want to dictate beliefs to anyone, feel great concern for the general moral problem. What can they do? So far as we can see, all they can do is help to create an atmosphere of questioning, of open-minded wondering and inquiring, in the home, in the school, and in the community. This is the mood and quality of genuine culture, and it is the greatest educational force in the world. In our eagerness for "final" or "mass" solutions, we often overlook the fact that all true learning involves a private sort of alchemy which is unique to every individual. It is impossible, in moral education above all, to bypass this secret process. Nor is there even any guarantee that it will take place. The educator is a human being possessed of high faith that it *will* take place, sooner or later, here or there, in enough human beings to nourish a humane culture. He labors in this faith, invincibly alien to any other.

A teacher of this sort can be trusted with the young, no matter what he himself "believes." He can be a hard-headed skeptic or an enthusiast of metaphysics; he can be, in fact, anything or everything but a dogmatist or an indoctrinator, so

long as he is, in principle and intent, an impartial man.

Such a man, of course, may lead his pupils into occasional errors. But they will be the correctable sort of errors, due to honest mistakes, and not the result of violation of the integrity of thought. In this world of interdependence, who has not helped others to make mistakes? The greatest gift of the teacher to others is the habit of *self*-correction he is able to impart, for with this habit, any man can learn to stand alone.

This kind of teaching, it seems to us, is the only available foundation for moral education, and it is built by and for individuals. Every parent, every friend, is already doing a little of this kind of teaching, simply by trying to be a decent, intelligent human being. What we need to do now is to turn these efforts into a conscious, deliberate, and consistent undertaking—with the full realization that it is something that no one else can do for us, for this, in the final analysis, is to become free.



## CHILDREN ... and Ourselves

Editor, Children . . . and Ourselves:

Reading Children and Ourselves in the June 8 MANAS, dealing with divorce, brought into focus certain ideas.

Though recognizing that the interests of society, or the State, are involved with the advent of children, most of my life I have felt that the State has no business to interpose obstacles to the dissolution of the marriage contract—that it should confine its power to insisting that the welfare of the children be provided for by those who brought the children upon the scene.

However, your suggestions regarding the dissolution of the marriage contract seem not to consider certain elements—the religious element in many marriages, for example. Especially the religious-institution feature. People contracting marriage under this authority probably can not contemplate divorce without a pervading sense of guilt—not if they had a deep reverence for the requirements when they accepted them. Being bound in this manner would probably cause a frustration resulting in anger, recrimination, accusation, etc. In other words, a situation develops such as you suggest should be remedied by a "philosophical" divorce. But, so long as such people are dominated by the ideas under which they entered into the partnership—how can they experience such a divorce?

Even for those who enter into the bond of marriage without any reference to church religion, it would seem well to incorporate in their agreement a provision anticipating conditions which would make separation imperative, or, at least highly desirable. In the absence of this one is faced with the problem of disregarding a solemn obligation voluntarily accepted. If each party to the contract freely absolves the other this does not erase the fact that they solemnly covenanted to the contrary—evoking a specter that would militate against an "ideal" divorce.

So it would seem that at least a large part of the solution depends on the wording of the contract.

Incidentally, Socrates is credited with asserting that being married to a trying partner may be very good training for a philosopher!

We'll admit at once that our contribution to the discussion of June 8 failed to consider some important elements pertaining to marriage; the writer wished to focus particular attention on a single point. We now have opportunity to add to what was said. A British psychologist, Dr. R. F. Hertz, has recently reported on an interesting experiment (*This Week*, July 14). Together with other psychologists, educators and school authorities, Dr. Hertz "questionnaired" almost 100,000 children in the U.S., Britain, Canada, Latin America, Australia, India, and eleven European countries on their attitudes toward their parents—inviting suggestions and criticisms. The most striking thing about the results of the survey was that the *number one* complaint of children was not that they suffered too much disciplinary action, but that they wished their parents would find some way of avoiding quarrels. To quote Dr. Hertz:

What surprises psychologists is that children everywhere seem to have the same grievances. The differences between children of various nationalities were smaller than expected. (The countries behind the Iron Curtain did not participate in the test.)

The 100,000 little documents leave no doubt about the principal fault of parents, seen through the eyes of their own children.

Little Evelyn in London, aged 11, put it this way, in the form of a prayer:

"Dear God, please do not let Daddy and Mummy quarrel so much."

Young John, 11, in New York, ruled more strictly: "The parents are always forbidden to quarrel." And 10-year-old Jean in Paris formulated his fifth rule: "When Papa and Mama quarrel, one of them must stop at once."

It seems that quarreling parents too often underestimate the impression their quarrels make upon young minds. Harsh words spoken in anger, threats forgotten immediately afterwards fester in the minds of the children for months or even years, and make them feel unhappy or insecure.

This explains why the desire to stop parents from quarreling was expressed by such a large number of children everywhere.

The relationship between these findings and our original contention should be quite obvious: a marriage should be either an amicable and loving partnership or, if this is impossible to maintain, should be regarded honestly by the parents as a problem which demands settling, *without* quarreling, for the sake of the children, as well as in the abstract cause of philosophy. There is little doubt that a great number of neuroticisms develop when children are constantly witnesses to expressions of parental hostility. Withdrawal from reason is simply not excusable when children are concerned. And while, in the event of divorce, the child cannot be expected to understand the necessity for his parents' separation, he can come much *closer* to understanding this than the necessity for dislike and animosity.

There are times when every human being, whether young or old, needs encouragement to adopt an impersonal view of personal discord. But it is impossible for a child to be objective about the real issues and difficulties in his parents' lives if, instead of being allowed to progressively understand those difficulties, as his own intelligence and perceptiveness matures, he encounters instead only the unpleasant proof that his parents are not meeting those difficulties courageously or wisely. The child senses that the quarreling parent is failing, and the failing parent will, of course, be apt to fail him.

As for the "religious" side of this question—and by this we will agree to include whatever sense of sacredness goes along with the uniting of two lives in marriage—we can agree with our correspondent that the wrong sort of religion is productive of strong guilt feelings when termination of a marriage is contemplated, and also note that there may be something intuitive and genuine about the feeling that *no* marriage, even if childless, should be lightly terminated. But true religion, in our view, is designed to increase the desire for self-discipline and meaningful self-sacrifice. The *trouble* with religions is that, in their institutional forms, they so often involve the

efforts of the righteous to make others righteous. No harm will come to a marriage in need of radical alteration from those religious feelings which heighten the innate sense of ethical responsibility on the part of the marital partners—and no divorce will suffer from the effort of each to be forgiving, gentle, understanding, in relation to the other parent or partner. But whenever religion is interpreted as an inflexible commandment to do this and not do that, this religion needs to be combated by sound psychology and sociology.

The aspirant to genuine philosophy can surely turn the experience of a trying wife or husband to good account, but this, again, is a matter wherein each must decide to become philosophical himself. As soon as we go about expecting others to become philosophical according to *our* lights, the word has ceased to have meaning. And, on the other hand, too, it seems quite obvious that the most pressing human difficulties grow from inability to endure disagreements intelligently. Whether we view the international scene or the endless difficulties involved in the jockeying of power between capital and labor, we can hardly fail to recognize that all genuine progress is achieved by a growing capacity to view the position of the other—however apparently inimical to our own—with dispassion; finally, perhaps, with a sense of compassion.

## *FRONTIERS* Indonesia's First Ten Years

THE August issue of *Eastern World*, a British magazine devoted to over-all coverage of Asian affairs, has an article by the Indonesian Ambassador in London on the first ten years of Indonesian independence. This island Republic, despite many difficulties, has major achievements to report. Something of Indonesia's struggle to create a stable political and economic structure for her eighty million people is conveyed by an *Eastern World* editorial:

The Dutch did not relinquish their colonial grip [on Indonesia] with the good grace that Britain showed in India, Pakistan, Burma and Ceylon. The Indonesians had to fight for their independence, and having won it after numerous setbacks, were left with a large and multifarious group of islands in a state of chaos, with the former colonial power hindering and refusing to wish them well. The Dutch had discouraged the indigenous people from sharing in the running of the country under their rule, and when deep-seated nationalism had achieved its aim, Indonesia was left with a paucity of administrative ability and equipment with which to begin the task of reconstruction. They had to start from scratch with an upset economy, little capital investment, and a fervent desire to do things their own way. Freedom, after all, meant freedom to correct their own mistakes.

Indonesia, it may be noted, is the third richest area in the world, in terms of natural resources, and the sixth largest nation, in terms of population. (Those who turn to the 1953 edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica* for further information are likely to be discouraged, since about all that can be found about the new republic is a short paragraph under "United Nations," but we suggest a look, anyway, at the plates facing page 271 of volume 12, for evidence of the art treasures the Indonesians were producing more than a thousand years ago.) Writing of his country, which obtained formal admission of its independence from the Dutch only in 1949 (the Indonesians *proclaimed* their independence in 1945), Prof. R. Supomo, the Indonesian

Ambassador in London, speaks of the problems referred to in the *Eastern World* editorial, then places the situation of Indonesia in historical perspective:

The general nature of our situation may be more clearly understood by calling to mind the fact that Indonesia is having to face problems of political stabilization, which the Western democracies managed to solve—not without pain—centuries ago, at the same time as those of modern industrialization. The instabilities of Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and her technological advances of modern times now jostle each other.

Prof. Supomo writes of the cultural palimpsest of Indonesian history, bearing the impress of dozens of varying and conflicting influences. As he says: "Such conflicts are not merely a part of history, but are a living force continually tearing at the fabric of our young country, causing dissension and making it difficult for many of us to realize that we are at last Indonesians, owing a wider loyalty to our country and an ultimate loyalty to civilization." Then there is the question of synthesis between the old and the new:

Added to that is the impact of the outside world on Indonesia. Modern methods of communication mean that today's events have immediate repercussions in places far removed from their original source. This situation has a bearing on every aspect of reconstruction, the pull of the old and the counter-attraction of the new causing doubt and delay. In a post-revolutionary period, when traditional communities are being transformed into new and larger entities, conventional solutions are inapplicable. Old values are being called into question, but what is to replace them? It is no use flinging aside every vestige of Western influence in a fit of patriotic fervour, but Western standards and values cannot provide Indonesia with a solution for her difficulties. While making use of Western techniques, we must somehow find a means of refashioning our ancient traditions for service in the modern age.

In past issues we have often called attention to the strong sense of history shown by the leaders of the new Republics of the East. Prof. Supomo gives further evidence of this, and of the civilized

self-consciousness which is necessary to any real freedom of choice in periods of historical transition. The new Eastern nations now enjoy an hour of extraordinary opportunity, in which they are able to say that they are *looking* for the best cultural and political forms to embody their new civilizations in-the-making. The Western democracies, unhappily, are haunted by proud claims that their civilization is already made, and need only be preserved. How much better to be free to choose, to plan changes, than to be a "success"! The open-minded attitude of Indonesian statesmen is revealed by the following:

Thus the last ten years in retrospect present a picture of a struggle between old and new values, conflicts of ideologies, of vitality and impatience for the future. New conceptions have to be worked out, some people delving into the past to find them, while there are others who would emulate the West. But although we must achieve their living standards, we can never cast ourselves in the image of the West. The impact of the twentieth century on Indonesia has been sudden and swift. For us there can be no gradual process of evolution. We must face up to 1955 immediately with the inventions and knowledge of 1955; we cannot wait to arise slowly from our colonial coma for there is no time to lose.

This article reports great progress in the production of rice, oil, sugar, and rubber—Indonesia's principal products—but the most dramatic record of advance lies in the field of education, a fact of which Indonesians are justly proud. Prof. Supomo writes:

Illiteracy, the scourge of any country seeking to progress, was a legacy of the Dutch period; only about 4 per cent of the people were literate in 1942. By means of an extensive Government mass-education scheme and the spontaneous efforts of youth organizations throughout the country, the standard of literacy has been raised to 53 per cent.

.We doubt if this achievement has ever been equalled, anywhere, any time. Prof. Supomo continues:

The training of teachers is extremely important, for six times as many children now go to elementary schools as compared with the Dutch period and twenty times as many pupils are participating in

secondary education. To meet this need, the Government has initiated a nation-wide network of training colleges for 102,905 trainees, 92,087 of whom have Government scholarships, while three Faculties of Education have recently been inaugurated. It is notable that in the provision of sites and schools much is owed to the collective efforts of the people of the regions acting on their own initiative.

It is also necessary to induce a greater depth into studies which, together with a realization of ultimate values, is essential in character formation. Starting with only the six faculties of the colonial period, we have expanded the system of higher education so effectively that the opening of our third State university (in East Java) last year brought the total of faculties and academies to 142. Besides expansion there is the need to give a national character to our university system, a character that was rigidly excluded before 1945.

Readers interested in the cooperative movement will be impressed by-the following:

In order to strengthen the village economy, the co-operative movement has been greatly extended to meet the needs of the people, such collective action being merely a manifestation in modern guise of the old Indonesian principle of "*gotong rojong*," or mutual aid. During the period the number of co-operatives has risen from 574 with 52,216 members to 9,583 with 1,640,028 members.

Publication of this article in *Eastern World* is typical of the contents of this monthly journal, which preserves its own political independence while giving a hearing to various points of view, although it should be said that the *Eastern World* editors display obvious sympathies for the anti-colonial mood of new-born oriental nations. In an editorial defending Prime Minister Nehru of India against the attacks of the Beaverbrook press in England, *Eastern World* remarks (apropos of recent events in Goa):

Portugal, like the Netherlands, refuses to recognise the importance of what has taken place in Asia since the war. She must learn, as France has done at last, that apart from all other considerations, colonial pockets in the Far East are an affront to the dignity of the newly emancipated Asians. Their retention in the face of protest is indefensible and dangerous.

This August issue of *Eastern World* (copies available from the-publisher at 58 Paddington Street, London W1) has an article by U Nu, Prime Minister of Burma, entitled "What Is Buddhism?" and also affords some interesting notes on the revival of Buddhism throughout Asia. U Nu's contribution is especially welcome, since the Burmese leader himself played an important role in instigating the revival. The remarks of the *Eastern World* Washington correspondent on the favorable impression made by U Nu during his recent visit to the United States are also of interest. This correspondent, David C. Williams, writes:

People have first of all been impressed by his natural grace, dignity, and courtesy. . . . Everywhere he has gone, he has told an impressive story of the efforts of the government of Burma to achieve economic progress while maintaining democracy—and while coping with a variety of armed opponents ranging from the Communists to the remnants of the Kuomintang forces which have taken refuge in Burma. . . .

Unlike some leaders who have visited the United States he obviously speaks for the masses rather than for small privileged classes. Frankly describing his government as socialist, he does not maintain that there is no good outside socialist doctrine. When he advocates the admission of Communist China to the United Nations, it is in terms of something he "thinks" (he carefully insists he does not "know") that the American government is coming to recognise as inevitable. While advocating direct talks between the United States and Communist China to achieve peace in the Formosa Straits, he carefully abstains from suggesting any bases for a settlement, insisting that that is for the two nations themselves to determine. . . .

Mr. Williams has this to say on the bearing of U Nu's visit on American foreign policy:

The Prime Minister's visit comes at a crucial point in America's relations with Burma and, indeed, with all of free Asia. As is widely known, the Burmese Government two years ago terminated American aid to Burma in order to press more forthrightly in the United Nations against the presence of Kuomintang forces in Burma, and against the aid which agencies of the United States government were at that time giving to these forces.

This aid has now been admitted to have been unwise, and the problem of the Kuomintang refugees is on its way to solution. Nevertheless, Burma remains the only Asian nation outside the Bamboo Curtain which is not receiving American aid—although it has paid, at its own expense, for the continuation of engineering and economic advice by private American consultants, whose services were at one time paid for out of American aid to Burma.

Burma is another of those Eastern nations which, like India and Indonesia, are proving their independence, self-reliance, and dignity in record time.