

## "WE ARE ALL VERY MUCH ALIKE"

WORLD politics is seldom a rewarding subject for discussion, mostly for the reason that alternatives of political decision are usually presented in terms of the goal of power. Occasionally, however, the question of basic attitudes arises. For example, some observations by Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, Vice President of India, in an address on United Nations Day, present what the New York *Times* correspondent in India takes to be the official Indian view of the problems created by Soviet Russia. Since there has been much criticism in the United States of Indian policies in relation to the "cold war," this statement of the Indian position by a spokesman in high office becomes of particular interest.

Essentially, India's Vice President proposed that, given time, and unaggressive policies on the part of other nations, the "communist system may democratize itself." It was plain from his address that he felt little sympathy for the oppressive methods of communism, but he pointed out that communist revolutions had nevertheless brought material relief to hopeless populations in various regions of the world. Speaking of the United Nations Organization itself, he noted, further, that little progress has been made by that body toward the liberation of subject peoples, and he reminded his hearers that Indians were counted among the colonial peoples until only six years ago. With such facts for background, he continued:

We needn't assume that other people who profess other ideas are quite different from or more wicked than ourselves. Fundamentally we are all very much alike. In Soviet Russia, the state is highly organized and opposition to it is suppressed. We may not agree with the materialist basis of communism or the missionary zeal with which it is enforced. But in countries where it is accepted, communism has meant education, opportunity and living conditions which if hard aren't harder than those which prevailed previously.

Dr. Radhakrishnan pointed out that people who have long suffered under tyranny, sometimes not having enough to eat, do not always recognize the importance of civil liberties. He suggested that as economic conditions in communist-dominated countries improve, the individual instinct for freedom would emerge and assert itself. In effect, he advocated a policy which would allow this change to proceed naturally, without distracting pressures from without. A New York *Times* account of the UN Day address continues:

Dr. Radhakrishnan said that "the democratic method appeals to the Indian mind with its long traditions of religious non-violence and individual freedom." But, he added:

We believe that it will be possible to work amicably with those from whom we may differ fundamentally in outlook and method. The UN is intended to enable us to live in harmony with nations whose religion, politics and ways of thought are quite different from our own."

This reflects a fundamental difference in point of view between the United States and India regarding the character of the United Nations. India insists that the global organization should be opened to all states, whereas the United States adds qualification that only countries that abide by United Nations ideals are admissible.

The *Times* dispatch from New Delhi concludes with the portion of Dr. Radhakrishnan's speech in which he defined the policy which Indian statesmen would like to be in a position to follow in relation to the communist movement:

We must meet abuse by courtesy, obstruction by reasonableness, suspicion and hatred by trust and goodwill. This is the only way to change the heart of our opponents. This attitude assures that there is an element of good, a spark of the divine in every man to which appeal may be made.

If our policy is to live and let live and not to exterminate this or that way of life, we must ourselves show the democratic spirit we expect from others.

The Soviet system isn't immune to the laws of change to which the rest of the world is subject. It isn't possible that the Communists will not realize that while there are certain material things with which we can't live, there are other moral values with which we don't care to live. When this happens the Communist system may democratize itself.

Two things are notable in the report of this address. First, there is the declaration in a document of State of the conviction that there is "a spark of the divine in every man to which an appeal may be made," and the formulation of a national policy avowedly founded upon this conviction. This, in the twentieth century, is somewhat historic. The second thing of interest is the way the American correspondent in New Delhi, who wrote the report, attempted to minimize the purpose and belittle the dignity of Dr. Radhakrishnan's communication. Commenting as he quotes India's Vice President, the reporter inserts a remark about the habit of the Indians to rely passively on the eventual triumph of good over evil, when repeating Radhakrishnan's view that the instinctive love of freedom may in time accomplish the democratization of the Communist system. Further, in reporting the speaker's words on the failure of the UN to abate the evils of colonialism, the correspondent speaks of this portion of the address as "the standard complaint of international neglect of the interest of colonial peoples." This is a way of claiming that Radhakrishnan's argument is "old stuff," but if it is, then the repetition of the complaint is hardly the fault of either the Indian spokesman or the colonial peoples themselves. To sneer at an appeal for justice for the victims of an old imperialism is hardly becoming in a man who condemns the Indians for not being sufficiently eager to suppress a new imperialism which now threatens the fortunes of the imperialist nations of the past.

Finally, the correspondent notes that immediate military action was taken by the Indian

government to control disorders in Hyderabad and Kashmir. These actions, however, while military and therefore "violent," were taken under the authority of Indian sovereignty. It is one thing to suppress a minor form of civil war by force of arms, and quite another to go to war with another sovereign power. This distinction is somewhat more than academic and ought to be noted by critics who cite Prime Minister Nehru's resort to arms to settle these disputes.

But even if "inconsistency" be admitted, there is still the fact that the design for international relations described by Dr. Radhakrishnan is a most desirable one, to be applied wherever possible. It is this which so few commentators in the United States seem willing to concede. The *New York Times*, for example, speaking editorially (Oct. 27, 1953), is very sure that the Indian Vice President's choice of nonviolent means of opposing communism is fallacious. Nonviolence, the *Times* writer says, may have worked against the British, but the barbarous Soviets are another sort of opponent:

That method worked against the British because, by and large and with all the lapses common to all of us, Britain is governed by a moral law and a moral conscience embedded in its own people which no longer permit the savage oppression and mass murder with which communism establishes and consolidates its rule. One can only hope that India will never have to test its philosophy against an opponent who deliberately and explicitly denies all the moral values on which it is based.

The *Times* claims a second fallacy in the idea that the precept of turning the other cheek, noble in an individual dealing with like individuals, must be expanded into a national policy of passive submission to an evil system which holds its own people in bondage. Dr. Radhakrishnan is right in holding that fundamentally we are all fundamentally very much alike, for which reason the indictment of whole nations has long been regarded as fallacious in the West. We do not, therefore, hate the people living under communism, but rather pity them. We even share Dr. Radhakrishnan's hope that in time communism will democratize itself. But we do not propose to submit passively to communist conquest, as so many nations had to submit after the war, owing

in part to our initial disarmament, nor do we propose to go through centuries of tyranny and darkness waiting for communism to turn democratic and give us back our freedom. . . .

These are brave words and we shall not quarrel with them, except to point out that this editorial sounds very much as though the communist armies were peering across our frontiers and the communist navies were crowding the mouths of our great rivers, when, as a matter of fact, the United States is farthest away from the threat of Soviet aggression, while other democratic countries, England for example, are almost within striking distance of the communists, yet sometimes seem more worried about American anti-communism as a threat to world peace than communism itself.

Nor is there anything in Dr. Radhakrishnan's speech to suggest that he invites the communists to walk all over the Indians. He seems to us to be opposing touchy animosity and saber-rattling rather than what many would regard as legitimate defense of one's native land.

Further, if, Radhakrishnan asserts, and the *New York Times* agrees, "we are all very much alike," by what process were the communists led to abandon "all the moral values" of traditional ethics? Perhaps the West owes the Soviets a considerable show of patience! And if hostility toward communism, as the *Times* editorial plainly states, is based upon fear, then, if we are "very much alike," shouldn't we assume that similar fears have played an important part in Communist hostility and aggression? Some such assumption seems in order, unless we are ready to fall back on the "foreign devils" hypothesis to justify exterminating those whom we fear.

A curious approval of at least some elements of the policy proposed by Dr. Radhakrishnan is implied in a recent *Wall Street Journal*—an editorial which the International Latex Corporation found sufficiently impressive to reprint as a paid advertisement in the *New York Times*. The editorial advocates a non-aggression

pact between the United States and Soviet Russia. Discussing American foreign policy, the editorial begins with some questions:

Is the objective to smash Soviet power, not only in the satellites and allies but in Moscow itself? If so, preventive war would be the most direct means, but has never been so much as momentarily entertained by American policy-makers.

Is the objective the accomplishment of the same end by diplomatic and other means short of war? If so, the U.S. should be trying to trick the Kremlin at every turn, it should be spending scores of billions organizing subversion everywhere behind the Iron Curtain, it should be spending further hundreds of billions amassing such overpowering military strength that Moscow would cower and crumble before its threat.

Or is the objective a way of living peacefully with the Soviets?

We hold that the legitimate objective for a nation cradled and matured in liberty, justice and tolerance is not to devastate its enemies but to settle with them on terms that will promote if not perfect peace, at least a more peaceful international climate.

The U.S. made the error of forgetting this principle in the last world war. It became so intent on destroying the enemy root and branch that it neglected to regard its own interests in the world that would follow the destruction. The price of forgetfulness was heavy. It was precisely the creation of the Soviet expansionist menace that now confronts us.

The principle, we remark, is good, despite the slightly *realpolitik* version here supplied. What the *Wall Street Journal* is after is "meaningful settlement," and a non-aggression pact seems to qualify as a means to get it. After some discussion of the proposal, the editorial concludes:

There are other questions, but the biggest question of all is perhaps whether the Soviets would agree to any sort of guaranteed pact, since they agreed to practically nothing the West has ever proposed. This is an unanswerable question until the Soviets are asked it, which is one reason for doing so. Moreover, it is possible that the Soviets are enough concerned about their security, or about domestic conditions, or would think they would be getting a good enough deal to make the idea attractive to them.

But these are not the main reasons. The main reason is that the U.S. objective is a meaningful settlement, and that objective must be pursued even in the face of Soviet intransigence. If the Soviets have no intention of reducing tensions the U.S. must seek ways to make such reduction appear in their interest as well as ours. And if the Soviets reject any consideration of a non-aggression pact, then other ways must be sought, and the search must never cease.

To stop searching is to abandon hope that the world can ever move so much as an inch out of the shadow of the hydrogen bomb.

It may be wishful thinking, but we think we perceive enough "meaningful" parallels between what Dr. Radhakrishnan says and what the *Wall Street Journal* says to argue that in places they are saying the same thing, even if in a different mood with different words. And if a follower of Gandhi and the smart money boys in Wall Street can find anything at all to agree upon, it is probably something which desperately needs doing.

We have one more note on international affairs—a note on China, although it has to do not with contemporary China, but with China of some years ago. The following passage appears in *China in the Sixteenth Century*, a book made up of the diaries of one Matthew Ricci:

Though they have a well-equipped army and navy that could easily conquer the neighboring nations, neither the King nor his people ever think of waging a war of aggression. They are quite content with what they have and are not ambitious of conquest. In this respect they are much different from the people of Europe, who are frequently discontented with their own governments and covetous of what others enjoy.

Well, for what it may be worth, we still think "we are all very much alike"!

## THE ARTS OF PEACE

THE dreary truth is that it is much easier to write about arts which are not devoted to peace than about those which are. The conservationists, for example, can always gain a wide audience by telling us about the many things we ought not to be doing. Fairfield Osborn's popular *Our Plundered Planet* is one illustration, William Vogt's *Road to Survival* another, both being books which attracted considerable attention to agricultural follies. Now comes Samuel Ordway's *Resources and the American Dream*, which examines some of the implications of America's "dynamic economy" and the machines and products in which we take so great a pride. These machines, according to Ordway—

are designed to create and then to occupy increased leisure time; things which in fact do not provide relaxation or spiritual peace. They are the most restless and consuming products imaginable: faster automobiles, radio and television sets blaring imprecations to buy more machine products, ninety-page newspapers, pulp magazines and Mickey Spillanes by the millions.

Fortunately, as Mr. Ordway makes clear, there will be an end to all this. We are going to run out of materials. Already some thirty-three minerals are on the critical list. Some day, he says, "basic resources will come into such short supply that rising costs will make their use in additional production unprofitable, industrial production will cease and we shall have reached the limit of growth." And then, it is logical to ask, what will happen to our "dynamic economy" which is so dependent upon expansion?

These may be gloomy thoughts, but it is surely a modest practice of one of the arts of peace to think them. We suspect, however, that the conservationists are going at the problem wrong end to. They hope to frighten people into a more reasonable use of the resources of our planet; yet the experience of other fields—penology, for example—is that fear is an extremely unproductive means of controlling human behavior. It works poorly in the home and

poorly in the community, and there is little evidence that it works at all in international affairs, even though the leaders of the modern nations still seem to place their greatest confidence in it.

Are there ways in which embattled minorities, however tiny, might begin to evolve another pattern of existence, and *prove* how enjoyable it is? Ralph Borsodi must have had something like this in mind when he wrote *This Ugly Civilization* and *Flight from the City*. The French Communities of Work add a chapter to the story of independent social regeneration, and the Bruderhof communities in Paraguay and elsewhere are setting still another example in the practice of the peaceful arts.

We may be, as H. G. Wells claimed, in the middle of a race between education and catastrophe and the time may be short, but the urgency of our need for a change can hardly transform fear into a positive force for reconstruction. The re-creation of culture must be sought for its own sake. You can frighten men into a willingness to fight and destroy, but you can't frighten them into devotion to the arts of peace. As someone, somewhere, has said, the longest way round may be the shortest way home.

## *REVIEW*

### TOWARD UNDERSTANDING

GOING back over the contents of *Partisan Review* during 1953, two articles by Hannah Arendt seem to us to stand out as especially noteworthy contributions. The first, in the July-August number, was entitled "Understanding and Politics." The second, a review of Waldemar Gurian's *Bolshevism* called "Understanding Communism," appeared in September-October.

Hannah Arendt is not easy reading. Her thought is complicated, and even if she were to write in a single idiom, say, political theory, or philosophy, to follow her subtleties of thought would take effort and penetration. But she creates a special vocabulary and special approaches as she goes along, being philosopher and political theorist and *belle-lettrist* rolled into one, with the result that what she says is fresh and stimulating if you can figure out what she means. There is, for example, the following:

In our context, the peculiar and ingenious replacement of common sense with stringent logicality which is characteristic of totalitarian thinking is particularly noteworthy. Logicality is not identical with ideological reasoning, but indicates the totalitarian transformation of the respective ideologies. If it was the peculiarity of the ideologies to treat a scientific hypothesis, like the survival of the fittest in biology or the survival of the most progressive class in history, as an "idea" which could be applied to the whole course of events, then it is the peculiarity of their totalitarian transformation to pervert the "idea" into a premise in the logical sense, that is into some self-evident statement from which everything else can be deduced in stringent logical consistency. (Here truth becomes indeed what some logicians pretend it is, namely consistency, except that this equation actually implies the negation of the existence of truth insofar as truth is always supposed to reveal something, whereas consistency is only a mode of fitting statements together, and as such lacks the power of revelation.) The new logical movement in philosophy, which grew out of pragmatism, has a frightening affinity with the totalitarian transformation of the pragmatic elements, inherent in all ideologies, into logicality, which severs its ties to

reality and experience altogether. Of course, totalitarianism proceeds in a cruder fashion, which unfortunately, by the same token, is also more effective.

The "frightening affinity" of which Miss Arendt speaks is, obviously, discernible only in psychological terms. She does not mean that disciples of John Dewey and Auguste Comte are gravitating towards Marxism or Communism, but rather that it is very easy for some pragmatists, and most logical positivists, as well as totalitarians, to think in terms of exclusive categories. The rigid category of the positivist is constructed through his denial, let us say, of the value of metaphysical inquiry. For him there are terms, concepts, or ideas which are literally "beyond the pale." The political totalitarian has simply materialized *his* "categories" into secret police, who keep the boundaries of the "pale" unmistakably clear. (A "pale" is a fence, and fences may be used to keep either people or ideas from fraternizing.)

Neither we nor Miss Arendt, of course, can say that all logical positivists are authoritarian in this sense, but we can ponder the thought that the most humane and lovable of thinkers have been those who are far too aware of the jagged irregularities of experience to submit their thoughts to a single ideological mold. Macneile Dixon was very suspicious of the "system builders," the "hot gospellers," the "stern moralists," and this was perhaps the reason. Another way of putting the argument would be to say that, just as the totalitarians may be shown to have close psychological affinity with those who dive head-first into Roman Catholicism (as demonstrated by Paul Blanshard in his *Communism, Catholicism and Democracy*), so may the Positivist, with his frightening certainty as to the one proper methodology, also be likened to those unfortunately unperplexed religionists who never doubt themselves.

Anyway, men who are admittedly confused never feel themselves infallible, and it is the men who think themselves infallible who give us all the

trouble. The man who relies upon "common sense" at least finds that one of the first things common sense tells him is that he, like everyone else, can be confused over and over again even about the same things. Yet everyone else is in the same predicament, and so one can feel a humanitarian bond between himself and others similarly perplexed. Miss Arendt continues:

The chief political distinction between common sense and logic is that common sense presupposes a common world into which we all fit and where we can live together because we possess one sense which controls and adjusts all strictly particular sense data to those of all others, whereas logic and all self-evidence from which logical reasoning proceeds can claim a reliability altogether independent of the world and the existence of other people. It has often been observed that the validity of the statement  $2+2=4$  is independent of the human condition, that it is equally valid for God and man. In other words, wherever common sense, the political sense par excellence, fails us in our need for understanding, we are all too likely to accept logicity as its substitute, because the capacity for logical reasoning itself is also common to us all. But this common human capacity which functions even under conditions of complete separation from world and experience and which is strictly "within" us, without any bond to something "given," is unable to understand anything and, left to itself, utterly sterile. Only under conditions where the common realm *between* men is destroyed and the only reliability left consists in the meaningless tautologies of the self-evident, can this capacity become "productive," develop its own lines of thought whose chief political characteristic is that they always carry with them a compulsory power of persuasion. To equate thought and understanding with these logical operations means to level down the capacity for thought, which for thousands of years has been deemed to be the highest capacity of man, to its lowest common denominator where no differences in actual existence count any longer.

And now a comment on the jeremiads of our many prophets of doom—the essayists, novelists and theologians who apply the error already discussed to the prospect of the future:

Just as in our personal lives our worst fears and best hopes will never adequately prepare us for what actually happens, because the moment even a foreseen event takes place, everything changes, and

we can never be prepared for the inexhaustible literalness of this "everything," so each event in human history reveals an unexpected landscape of human deeds, sufferings and new possibilities which together transcend the sum total of all willed intentions and the significance of all origins. It is the task of the historian to detect this unexpected *new* with all its implications in any given period and to bring out the full power of its significance. He must know that though his story has a beginning and an end, it occurs within a larger frame, history itself. And History is a story which has many beginnings but no end. The end in any strict and final sense of the word, could only be the disappearance of man from the earth. For whatever the historian calls an end, the end of a period or a tradition or a whole civilization, is a new beginning for those who are alive. The fallacy of all prophecies of doom lies in the disregard of this simple but fundamental fact.

Another paragraph footnotes the "Intellect versus Imagination" discussion of a recent *Frontiers* article (MANAS, Dec. 30):

Imagination alone enables us to see things in their proper perspective, to put that which is too close at a certain distance so that we can see and understand it without bias and prejudice, to bridge abysses of remoteness until we can see and understand everything that is too far away from us as though it were our own affair. This "distancing" of some things and bridging the abysses to others is part of the dialogue of understanding for whose purposes direct experience establishes too close a contact and mere knowledge erects artificial barriers.

In her review of Gurian's book, Miss Arendt brings some of these considerations down to earth and to our time by pointing out that "the great temptation of the historical view of Bolshevism lies in the fact that Communism, as against racism, contains elements intrinsic to the great tradition of political thought." "Finally," she continues, "it is a matter of record that Lenin, like Marx and all the more educated Marxists, took pride in being the true heir of secularized Western thought. The point, obviously, is not that Marxist thought is still firmly embedded in the Western tradition, as it is to a larger degree than Marx himself realized, but that the secular world is unavoidably adopting Marxist habits of thought."

## *COMMENTARY*

### A QUESTION OF "DISCIPLINE"

FRONTIERS for this week takes note of the abyss which separates the so-called "intellectual" from the "common man." This is not the only abyss which needs attention. There is also the gap between the political managers of modern society and ordinary folk.

No less a person than President Eisenhower recently gave vent to strong feelings concerning the failure of American youth to understand why they are obliged to go to war. The occasion was a news conference in which a correspondent asked the President to "say something about the problem of juvenile delinquency." He responded by remarking that he thought this expression ought to be translated into "parental failure." A New York *Times* dispatch continues:

Then General Eisenhower said that every single leader responsible for employing America's youth in war had been "appalled" frequently at the lack of understanding on the part of America's youth as to what America is, what are the conditions that make her fight, and therefore, what are the underlying reasons that could lead that boy finally on the battlefield to risk his life not just for property, not just for even what you might call national rights, but for some "fundamental values in life."

The President also said that it was "pretty discouraging" for a commander trying to get a division ready for battle to discover that he had to begin in elementary terms to explain to a boy why it was necessary for him to be in uniform.

It probably has never occurred to General Eisenhower, or to many others who share his obviously sincere and well-expressed convictions, that there may be even greater cause for discouragement in the fact that the leaders of nations can find no way of settling their differences except through wars which bewilder not only the young men who must fight them, but by far the great majority of all mankind.

Doubtless a "lack of discipline," as one military man explained, is one reason for the

reluctance of youth to fight in wars, but there are doubtless other and more important reasons as well. And what about some "discipline" for the people who stir up the war spirit?

Conceivably, the unwillingness of men to fight for causes that they do not understand is our last best hope of peace in the world. Let us cherish it, meanwhile giving support to those who are at least trying to put into use ways of dealing with conflicts and differences which promise to reduce the likelihood of war—Dr. Radhakrishnan, for example, who is quoted in this week's leading article.

## CHILDREN ... and Ourselves

IF any of your children are presently delighting themselves with "Western" fiction, they should not miss three novels written by Jack Schaefer—*Shane*, *First Blood*, and *The Canyon*. Having ourselves read the three books without making any particular note of the author, it has taken us a while to realize that Mr. Schaefer, a former editorial writer for the Baltimore *Sun*, has an unusual slant to present in each of these books, and that his perspective is always an admirable one for youngsters to encounter.

In the first place, though Mr. Schaefer supplies his readers with a great plenty of action, the action is always incidental to an absorbing theme concerned with a struggle between contrasting values. In *Shane*, for example, we meet elements of Greek tragedy; the gunman hero tries to escape the "Karma-Nemesis" of his past, and shows a sensitivity which would have made the escape possible save for the fact that his destiny had been too deeply etched in his earlier years. He finally wears his guns again, not because he wants to, but because his special abilities as a fighter are called upon at a time when he cannot refuse. Thus a sense of responsibility compels him to conduct himself against his mature preference. Since there is indeed "a Karma" of violence, an enjoyable book with this background should be a good one for all youngsters to read. Moreover, in *Shane* the lines are clearly drawn between remedial action and brutality—a distinction which few western writers make adequately. Usually one is gratified in a wish that the most terrible things will happen to the villain, while nothing but the best come to the hero. Schaefer banishes such over-simplification from his narrative.

In *First Blood*, the process of becoming a man is seen to involve an exchange of the callow independence of caprice for the deeper independence determined by integrity.

Independence, the youth in this story learns, is not a matter of having a chip on one's shoulder whenever personal ambitions are crossed, but rather lies in the development of sufficient courage to stand on principle regardless of one's own advantage. When this boy thinks he is quite a man, he is far less than that, while when he thinks he has lost the good opinion of the townsfolk, he discovers he has won a respect never accorded him before. (A short story, "Jacob," printed at the end of *First Blood*, relating how an Indian Chief was transported to a reservation, is rather a classic.)

*The Canyon* has nothing to do with guns, with settlers, or cattlemen. It is an Indian story of a time before the clash of red and white began. "Little Bear" was not like other Indians. Strong and courageous in the hunt, he was also his tribe's first "pacifist." Never did his inner voice allow him to participate in the "coupe" by which other young braves gained the admiration of maidens and their elders; and so, set apart from his tribe by this peculiar difference, he learns to live alone in a hidden valley. His stature grows with every struggle against privation, with each development of a new ingenuity to preserve life and well-being against intruding animals and elements. Finally he seeks a wife and returns with her to his isolated world. Together they learn many things of great import, among them that there is a logic to interdependence with one's family and tribe, as well as a logic of non-violence.

*The Canyon* reveals Schaefer's interest in showing how much the resourceful Indian was able to accomplish with so little. Here, perhaps, we have the basis for the author's deep admiration of the red men. Historical research upon the ingenuity which characterized the Cheyennes in their full utilization of the buffalo is representative. This animal, Schaefer shows, was revered because its relationship to the Indian was fully appreciated—thus never killed casually. The Buffalo made possible a way of communal living, serving, in its various portions, to fill a balanced

diet, serving too as clothing for all occasions, meeting the requirements of summer and winter alike according to the preparation and selection of hides. Skins of the buffalo also served as shelter. But these are only the more obvious uses, for the buffalo was many other things besides:

The hair of the head and mane can be twisted into very strong rope. The great sinews lying either side of the dorsal spines, dried and split into strands, provide excellent threads for sewing. Water skins can be made from the bladder and heart sac. Cups and pots and kettles can be fashioned from the strong lining of the paunch. Knives and root diggers and hide scrapers and awls for punching holes in sewing and many other tools come from the many-shaped bones. Spoons and ladles come from the horns, steamed soft and bent into shape and dried. A single horn, hollowed and plugged with a tiny air hole, can carry fire from place to place and for many hours and even days in the form of smoldering punk. Straight pieces of horn, glued together and wrapped with sinew, form a stout bow. The big tendon found under the shoulder blade is a bowstring that the strongest arm cannot break. The shoulder blade itself has a natural hole that can be used in softening the freshly tanned hide. The hide is pulled through again and again and the hole edges break the stiffness and a smooth softness develops. Drums can be made of the sounding rawhide, best from the neck where it is thickest, and rattles of skin bags with stones in them, and flutes from the marrowbones.

It is all these things and many more. It is a basis for a way of life for a man, a tribe, a people.

One needs to recall his own childhood interests to appreciate the appeal and value of such passages. For most children instinctively realize the greatness of the man who can do the most with the least, who scorns waste of any kind, and who is both self-reliant and a conservator. Armstrong Sperry's incomparable *Call It Courage* treats of this same theme, and we have never seen Sperry's story fail to stir the young mightily. Mr. Schaefer's own imagination was stirred, at any rate, by the research he did for *The Canyon*, as he explains in a note at the end:

I wrote the story of Little Bear because I was interested in the Indians, particularly the plains Indians, and had been studying the Cheyennes and

had developed the kind of feeling Mathews in his *Wah' Kon-Tah* says the old traders who really knew the Indians had for them: a sort of respect and admiration that was almost inscrutable. You cannot try to understand them and their way of life before the impact of white civilization without appreciating that, in their own way, they were well worth respect and admiration. They had a dignity of spirit, a courtesy in their everyday relationships, a sincerity in even the simplest things of life that could be an enviable example for us all. They represented a part of the American heritage, at least a part of the history of this land, that has been too long neglected. Ten thousand years behind the invading whites in the techniques of civilization, there were yet many of them well beyond all but a few of the whites in some of the fundamentals of human decency. And to study them and ponder what was done to them is to lose some of the cocksureness that is the curse of modern Americans, to gain some humility in your own relationships with your fellows, and above all to learn more tolerance in a realization that the color of a man's skin is no index to his character.

A reader once asked, a little petulantly, if we couldn't leave the poor Indians alone. Why should we? They are symbols of more than one kind of freshness, "decency," and integrity, and we would rather overdo this means to reaching the idealism of childhood than see it neglected. After all, the conquerors are a poor race of people if they cannot absorb some of the better qualities from cultures their own has supplanted.

*The Canyon* is presently available in Houghton Mifflin and Ballantine (paper-bound) editions. The language and story are so simple that children can enjoy it before they are ten; and parents, we are quite sure, will like it, too.

## *FRONTIERS*

### The Captive Culturists

IN the *Humanist* for November-December (1953), Kermit Eby, for years director of education for the CIO, writes of the failure of the teacher and the intellectual to make places for themselves in our society, and of society's attempt to rob them both of any "meaningful role." This article is no pale, academic analysis. Writing especially of adult education, Eby urges that the function of the teacher is to destroy myths. As he puts it:

It is my contention that a good teacher is not a claims adjuster for any system. A good teacher is a questioner, an agitator, a man of both passion and thought, and on the highest level of all he may even become a disturbing prophet. Jesus of Nazareth spoke quite clearly on the subject: "I come not for ye who are whole; the whole do not need a physician." He stated that there is no virtue in putting new wine in old wineskins. It is difficult not to regard Jesus as a grass-roots radical when we remember the promise to bring not peace but a sword, and when we remember the whole context of the abortive or defeated slave revolts in which the prophet grew up.

When Eby says that the teacher and the intellectual have made no place for themselves in our society, he means that the place they occupy is unworthy of their pretensions:

American adult education, about which a great deal has been written and more than enough preached, is a fraud. It is a fraud because it resembles that process by which 18<sup>th</sup>-century Catholic missionaries in China, in a wild attempt to convert as many natives as possible, suppressed the original story of the crucifixion. We have come to think of the adult educator as an apologist for society as it is, foreman in an ideological factory concerned with the adjustment of the bright, questioning student to the status quo. . . . Unlike the Dominicans, we have no need to suppress the story of our national crucifixion—our original revolution—because we have already taken the reality out of it. We would be almost as ashamed as the Daughters of the American Revolution if we were to meet the ragged, foul-mouthed, and shirtless ones whose fight we would pretend to celebrate.

So much for the flavor of Mr. Eby's indictment of adult education. Actually, his conception of the function of education seems considerably over-simplified, almost to the point where one suspects that the Eby version of champion educators would closely resemble the heroes of Howard Fast's novels—although these are, after all, not such bad ideals, even if stereotyped from the proletarian mold. But after we have admitted that Eby's complaint is a just one—that the genuine educator is a perpetual iconoclast as well as a perpetual builder of bridges to better things—what then?

This is the point at which so many of the indictments of our "society" leave off. Mr. Eby's moral seems to be that the effective teacher must at some time "get his hands dirty" so that he can fire his students with vital insights into the circumstantial realities of our society. He tells the story of Myles Horton, founder of an adult labor-education school in the mountains of Tennessee. During a strike against a textile mill, Horton functioned as both strike leader and teacher:

When the newspapers began to barrage the strikers with the usual unfavorable publicity, Horton brought the newspapers to the picket line and read them to the people there, and as he read them he pointed out the obvious lies that had been written about the strike, things that the people knew were false because they had been there. And from that point Horton explained to the pickets how it came to be that newspapers could so blithely print fallacies, and how it was that so many people who worked for many newspapers in America were paid to write trash. This is what Horton called his practical course in journalism.

Let us concede one thing: that essential education in journalism, as in any form of communication, is education in the importance of speaking the truth. But this, quite obviously, must start long before you get to courses in journalism. Eby's example of vital education is last-ditch education in disillusionment, and for revolt. When it is too late to do much else, you expose the lies people tell to one another, and hope that something constructive can be made to come out

of it all. Admitting its necessity for a society which has reached the last ditch, there is still the further necessity for recognizing that there is more to education than a career in stirring up indignation against the falsities of institutionalized religion, institutionalized education, and institutionalized capitalism. Education, as Plato and Robert Hutchins have amply pointed out, also has to do with the foundations of the good society.

The first question we should like to ask, then, has to do with the puzzling question of people like teachers and intellectuals. What is their *ideal* role, and why are they not playing it? Further, what explanation can be offered, if any, of the fact that some people exhibit almost from childhood a natural interest in abstract ideas, in broad, impersonal questions? Why do some people, like Mr. Eby, for example, turn up working in the labor movement, or writing articles on the problems of education, or working with the pacifists or the world federalists or with some other humanitarian movement? Why are some men irresistibly drawn to think about people and human relationships, while others are mainly attracted by "things" and impersonal "processes"?

It seems worth while to note that modern learning has very little to say on such questions. Further, there is no generally accepted theory—ethical theory, that is—on how a teacher or intellectual should employ his talents. Mr. Eby has a theory—the theory that the teacher should be a destroyer of myths. Mr. Hutchins has a theory—the theory that the teacher should nurture the questioning spirit, and that he should submit to students the works of the mind accumulated by questioning spirits of the past.

But whatever your theory, there still remains the great problem which Mr. Eby describes as "the terrible gap between the educated and the uneducated, the 'intellectual' and the 'people'." . . . He gives this account of the gap:

It is very hard to tell the bright-eyed students in the industrial seminars that the only way you can

understand the working stiff is to feel like a working stiff—in plainer terminology, like a poor slob—yourself. You don't even have to get a job in a factory. All you have to do is take a routine position among the great host of forgotten men and women (mostly women) who constitute the white collar class in the United States. To do this you get up at a certain set time every morning five or six days a week, and if you are in a large city (where most of the forgotten people are), you ride on a public means of transportation (very few of the forgotten own cars). Since almost all such transportation is uniformly crowded at this time in the morning, an interesting kind of mental anesthesia overtakes people who spend their first hour of the day hanging to a strap, pressed immobile against fellow straphangers. Add to the first hour some eight subsequent hours of petty detail, usually petty detail which, like the job of the average factory worker, is only a specialized specialization of some huge organizational function. Add to these things the ordinary daily irritations, the innumerable jealousies, superstitions, fears, slanders, hostilities, and hatreds generated in any group of people who are paid too little and who are generally made to feel unworthy of the little they are paid. Add further the need of junior executives to pass down authoritative and authoritarian directives, the never-ending restrictions and rules, the exhortations to smile, to be neat, to fill out the old forms in a new way, to spend less time for lunch, to talk less in rest rooms. Perhaps the sum total of these experiences was best described by Kafka, whose Mr. K's, fouled as if in a rat maze, never reach the castle for which they strive and never discover the crime for which they are being tried.

At the end of hundreds of mornings of strap-hanging, when one day with a terrible clinging sense of claustrophobia you begin to curse all the other passive, patient strap-hangers around you, when you begin to feel like a driven, nerveless thing being daily stepped on—then you are a poor slob. And I would defy any individual who has once been a poor slob ever again to look at things with an open mind, dispassionately.

For how else can the evident paranoia of some old-time labor leaders be understood? This feeling which they communicate of being hemmed in, closed round, forced to fight through, stepped on? And how else can the teacher of—let's say, industrial relations—communicate such feelings to his students unless he has experienced, at least in part, the things which formed such feelings?

Mr. Eby's picture seems accurate, authentic. Omitting the quibble of whether or not a teacher or intellectual must learn to be, first, a poor slob, then a paranoiac, in order to communicate the hideous monotony in the life of the worker at routine tasks, we have still to ask, "Well, whom shall we get mad at?" And, "Is this really what separates the intellectual from the working stiff—the former's failure to be kneed in the back by a subway guard, or to crouch over a desk eight hours a day, or to turn nut A on bolt B for twenty years of his life?" There are doubtless many reasons for the intellectual's alienation from the mass-man—for the mass-man is what Mr. Eby is describing—but we doubt if a simple immunity from the drab side of life is important among them.

We should say, rather, that the primary cause for the alienation of the intellectual is his own lack of a sense of historic role or calling. Unusual men create their own feeling of what they must do with their lives. Edward Bellamy found his vocation, so did Henry George, and so have a few others often discussed in these pages, including, we think, Mr. Eby—but they had no help from their time and culture. What they did, they did *against the grain* of their friends, relations, teachers, and employers. To be brief, we are arguing, here, for a new sense of the dignity of mind and its labors. We are arguing for what amounts to a "doctrine" about the mind and its place in human affairs. Religion, it is freely admitted, ought not to be a business. We would go further and say that the use of the mind, as such, should never be a commercial pursuit. We should like to see the development of a culture in which it was generally agreed that the intellect should not concern itself with "making a profit."

This is doubtless a revolutionary idea, but it is the only way in which it seems wholly practicable for the intellectuals to rejoin the human race. And the only way, again, in which the mass-man can be persuaded to overcome his suspicion, when not his contempt, for the intellectual. It would make

an end to the cults and coteries. It would sap and eventually destroy academic parasitism. It would make men respect knowledge as a thing without price, and encourage them to pursue it for its own sake.

You could not, of course, enforce such a rule. Nothing worth doing can ever be constrained. But the idea has its own fascinations. Who has not experienced the thrill of talking to a working man who thinks, or a thinking man who works? And if we are told that such arrangements are impossible without a revolution, we should only reply that a genuine revolution is impossible without such arrangements. For, if there is anything to be learned from the past, it is that you cannot have a successful revolution by getting mad at anybody. The madder you get, the deeper the bog of distrust and hate into which the revolution falls.

The fact of the matter is that Mr. Eby's strap-hangers do not become better than his conforming intellectuals because they are miserable and the victims of the System. The intellectuals are the victims of the System, too. Their miseries may be less obvious, their drabness more a hidden thing of their hearts, but they are not a happy lot, as any psychiatrist can tell you. And the gross Demagogues who are slowly rising to the top in the System—is it possible to envy *them*? The next revolution, we think, will have to be a new style revolt of individuals.