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THE LONG VIEW

THE twenty-second chapter of Genesis describes the ordeal of Abraham, who was ready, at the command of Jehovah, to sacrifice his son Isaac as evidence of his submission to the will of his God. The scene is morally revolting, at best. There may be a way of interpreting this episode which is more favorable to Old Testament religion, but it seems to us that the willingness of Abraham to commit this unnatural act, simply because "God" told him to, is typical of a religion which is inextricably mixed with history. Historical religion is anti-rational religion. The defenders of Christianity—Old Testament Christianity in particular—invariably find themselves hiding from their critics behind ramparts of irrationalism. Even literal believers in the New Testament suffer similar embarrassments. When a skeptic asks about the salvation of the millions who lived before Christ, the believer can do no more than make excuses or attempt to invent a plausible answer. Such religion is not founded upon principle, but upon an event alleged to have occurred in history. For this reason, the orthodox Christian is obliged to adopt a kind of partisanship which declares that event to be altogether unique—without actual or imaginable parallel. And having submitted to a partisan outlook to begin with, the habit often grows to a point where inner psychological conflict with the universal ethics found in the Sermon on the Mount becomes almost intolerable.

Another difficulty of the Christian religion lies in the psychology of conversion and salvation. Like the coming of Christ, these are inscrutable events enwrapped in mystery. Apologists may attempt to give them a philosophical setting, but in authentic Christian tradition they breathe an atmosphere of miracle, wonder, and crisis. The greatest symbol of Christianity is the figure of an agonized man—Christ on the cross. From this it follows quite naturally that Christian culture should be deeply affected by the psychology of crisis, that Christian hope should somehow be involved in the fulfillment of some last act of final desperation—like, for example, Abraham's projected execution of his son for the greater glory of Jehovah.

It seems a not unlikely hypothesis that this background of salvation through desperate, all-or-nothing remedies is responsible for the repeated self-betrayal by men of good will in Western lands. In every war, and especially in the wars of the twentieth century, the Abraham-Isaac situation is endlessly repeated. Fathers sacrifice their sons—one generation sends the next away to a war which is intended to cleanse the world of evil. The crisis, the oldsters argue, must be met—it is now or never. Quivering with emotion, passionately devoted to the good, violently opposing the evil, we send our young men to war as sacrifices on the altar of a better world of peace and cooperation. But, unlike the Bible story, no hand of God stays the bullets of the enemy—enemy now, ally in the previous war or in the next. The bullets strike home, and the young men die.

We see this, are aghast at the terrible contradictions in what we do, yet the sacrifice is repeated generation after generation. Finally, hope dies, and civilization begins to exhibit the reactions of a body whose central nervous system has gone into sclerotic decline, which reacts only by local reflexes, in a kind of life-in-death.

The analysis is perhaps extreme, yet it embodies a result which it is wholly logical to expect of a culture which has accepted for a thousand years or more the doctrine of eternal damnation. And while few essayists would put the matter so bluntly, the novelists, enjoying the

privilege of making their fictional characters declare what they would hesitate to say, themselves, often disclose their real feelings by this means. Take for example a passage found in Arthur Koestler's recent story, *The Age of Longing.* A young American girl, Hydie Anderson, is questioning a French intellectual, a former Communist Party member:

> Hydie [said] in a dry voice, "You were talking about why you can't write."
>
> "Oh—if you are really interested I can give you a whole catalogue of reasons. As far as poetry goes—that was finished the day I left the Party. Fallen angels don't write poems. There is lyric poetry, and sacred poetry, and a poetry of love and a poetry of rebellion; the poets of apostasy do not exist. It worried me for a while; then I accepted it and took to writing novels instead. The first one was quite a success—it was meant to be the beginning of a trilogy. Then came the war, the defeat, the Resistance and so on; and when all that was over, I knew I should never write the second volume, nor any other volume."
>
> "But why?"
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> He remained standing a few feet distant from her, between the desk and the window. The soft, grey light made the better half of his face with the clean, high forehead dominate the other one, it almost effaced the scar and the bitter curve of the lips. . . .
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> At last he said:
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> "Art is a contemplative business. It is also a ruthless business. One should either write ruthlessly what one believes the truth, or shut up. Now I happen to believe that Europe is doomed, a chapter in history which is drawing to its finish. This is so to speak my contemplative truth. Looking at the world with detachment, under the sign of eternity, I find it not even disturbing. But I also happen to believe in the ethical imperative of fighting evil, even if the fight is hopeless. . . . And on this plane my contemplative truth becomes defeatist propaganda and hence an immoral influence. You can't get out of the dilemma between contemplation and action. There were idyllic periods in history when the two went together. In times like ours, they are incompatible. And I am not an isolated case. European art is dying out, because it can't live without truth, and its truth has become arsenic. . . ."

There may be other interpretations of the condition of modern Europe—less despairing interpretations—but the dilemma which made this French ex-Marxist voiceless is sure to haunt every intelligent man whose dream of salvation is involved in hope of a historical realization of the Promised Land, whether it be some sort of European "Zionism" which sees in the decline of Europe the final failure of human striving, or a brutal Marxist drive toward the ever-receding "Classless Society." We call the Marxist objective "materialistic," overlooking the numerous attempts to realize in history the theocratic regime of Old Testament religion—such as in Geneva under Calvin, or in New England under the Puritans—which have been every bit as much an expression of materialism. They are materialistic because they seek the goal of a "social order" instead of the goal of human excellence *per se*. And because the goal is an "order," the necessities of war, persecutions, purges, loyalty investigations, and liquidations all become sanctified by the need to attain that "order" as soon as possible. The Greeks understood this sort of compulsion, typifying it in the bed of Procrustes, but it remained for the Absolutists of historical utopianism to make Procrustes the prophet of their theory of progress.

The brilliance of Arthur Koestler's tired radical is again pertinent:

> ". . . The reason why Europe is going to the dogs is of course that it has accepted the finality of personal death. By this act of abdication we have severed our relations with the infinite, isolated ourselves from the universe, or if you like, from God. This loss of cosmic consciousness which you find expressed everywhere—in the cerebral character of modern poetry, painting, architecture and so on—has led to the adoration of the new Baal: Society. I don't mean the worship of the Totalitarian State, or even of the State as such: the real evil is the deification of society itself. Sociology, social science, social therapy, social integration, social what-have-you. Since we have accepted death as final, society has been replacing the cosmos. Man has no longer any direct transactions with the universe, the stars, the meaning of life; all his cosmic transactions are

monopolised and all his transcendental impulses absorbed by the fetish 'Society.' We do not talk any longer of *homo sapiens*, of man; we talk of 'the individual.' We do not aspire toward goodness and charity: we aspire toward 'social integration.' . . . .

"What I mean is this. As religious convictions have been replaced by social idolatry while man's instinctive horror of apostasy remained the same, we are all bound to perish as victims of our secular loyalties."

"Is that not the same thing as perishing in a religious war?"

"No. In a religious war you had at least the consolation of going to heaven while your opponent went to hell. But that isn't really the point. The point is that the deification of society entails a cult of logistics and expediency. Now take expediency as the sole guide of action; multiply this factor by the effective range of modern technology, and let the product loose in a conflict of boundless secular loyalties; the inevitable result is mutual extinction. The only, the one and only hope of preventing this is the emergence of a new transcendental faith which would deflect people's energies from the 'social field' to the cosmic field—which would reestablish direct transactions between man and the universe and would act as a brake on the motors of expediency. In other words: the emergence of a new religion, of a cosmic loyalty, with a doctrine acceptable to twentieth century man."

"Who is going to invent it?" asked Hydie.

"There's the rub. Religions are not invented; they materialise. It is a process like the condensation of a gas into liquid drops."

"And all we can do is wait for it to happen?"

"Oh, one can always go on fiddling with programmes and platforms. But it comes to the same thing.". . .

As a diagnosis, the offering of Koestler's Frenchman would, we think, be difficult to improve upon. And since it applies in some degree to the United States as well as to Europe—plus the addition of other complexities, both palliative and aggravating in effect—it is really a world diagnosis, definitive of the need of peoples everywhere.

What, then, is one to do, besides "fiddling with programmes and platforms"?

To attempt to invade or intrude upon the working out of this psychological denouement might amount to a species of metaphysical imperialism. One does not call the world to a new transaction with the Cosmos by starting up the band and announcing a parade. The first step is undoubtedly the gaining of self-consciousness, even as Koestler's Frenchman has gained it—and if the realization of the state of Europe made the Frenchman voiceless, Koestler himself has not lost the power of speech. Even if, in other ways, *The Age of Longing* leaves much to be desired, indulging a melodramatic materialism of its own, such fragmentary insights need to be recognized and appreciated.

Having gained self-consciousness, the next step might be to move in the direction of a modern Stoicism "acceptable to twentieth century man." It is reasonable to think that the despair which has overtaken Europe will find its antidote only in rediscovery of the nobility of man, and in the conviction that, should the dream of a Promised Land be withheld from Europe, or Europe and America both, there will nevertheless be a future for all these millions—the millions whose eyes have closed in death without ever seeing even the faint foreshadowing of the Promised Land.

We need to believe that we have Time on our side—that the world's great age will begin anew, as Shelley affirmed; that no historical crisis is truly a final and irrevocable disaster; that the peace we long for can never mock us from an unattainable height—unless we insist that the height is unattainable, and continue to implore the skies for a miracle by sacrificing our sons, once, and sometimes twice, in every generation.

Letter from **FRANCE**

PARIS.—No one after a brief acquaintance with the communities of work would conclude that France is a decadent country. Yet their movement is such a tiny part of French society, and such a recent development, that it is impossible to forecast how effective an influence it can be. The annual conference, at Lyons in October, brought together about 400 persons, representing perhaps 50 communities of work, or "precommunities" or groups interested in learning about the movement. [See MANAS for Dec. 3, 1952.] I got an impression of vigor, devotion, pride in the discovery of social devices that bring results in organization, management, education.

This is an important achievement—the perfecting of a democratic economic structure which gives support to altruistic motives, and greater opportunity for their expression. in the industrial communities especially there is a feeling of relief at having left behind the deep-rooted injustices of the employer-worker relationship in France. They feel free to grow into a unity that still keeps a proper place for individuality.

There was also, throughout the discussions at Lyons and in the communities visited, the only partly understood pleasure in the rediscovery of community, overcoming of traditional French individualism, experiencing the growing power of a group that has achieved a character and integrity of its own. The determination to hold the ground gained, both in the area of community and in the economic field, was the more significant in view of the serious differences of outlook that became clearer as individual communities were visited.

For the variety of forms and philosophies and purposes existing among the communities of work is so great as to raise the question whether they can collectively be called a "movement" at all. So long as these often startlingly diverse "communities" can hold to a clear concept of the few guiding principles on which they are agreed, their movement will continue vigorous. If any one social or religious philosophy should seek to become accepted by all, disintegration will begin.

The existence of a movement exemplifying mutual respect and freedom among varying ideologies becomes the more important as civil liberties continue to suffer attack in France. In the struggle for freedom the communities of work will doubtless bring support quite out of proportion to their numerical insignificance.

Following is the statement of the guiding principles adopted at the annual conference:

1 Social, indivisible ownership of the means of production, so that ownership may never become individual possession, nor give rights to control over remuneration and management.

2. A sound economic foundation.

3. Full power to be held by the General Assembly of workers, which can delegate powers, wholly or in part, to officers or to an elected Council which will also assist and control the Chief of Community.

4. Election of officers *"a la double confiance."* (Approval must be from two directions—the group to be governed and the next higher officer or council. Claire Bishop states this: "Double Trust Appointments: The candidacy is proposed by one of the Community strata and accepted by the other.")

5. Rules and regulations arrived at by unanimous agreement.

6. Organs of information sufficient to keep each member abreast of the actions and problems of the Community.

7. Pursuit of an educational purpose which aims soundly at the full human development of Community members.

8. No exclusion from membership on grounds of political, religious or philosophical beliefs; no discrimination because of race, sex or nationality.

9. Manifestation of solidarity with the outside world, especially with the working class.

10. Remuneration based not on professional value alone, but without any relation to capital contributions of members.

11. Diffusion of responsibilities so that management, even though directed by the Chief or Council, may be the result of the work of each and of all.

12. No non-member salaried workers, except during the initial period of adaptation.

—AMERICAN IN PARIS

REVIEW
MATHEMATICAL REASONING

A THOUGHT which apparently seldom occurs to "metaphysicians" is that *pure* science may afford glimpses of a possible synthesis between the warring fields of experimental science and creedal religion. This is a perspective which organized religion cannot open up, for one of the fundamental assumptions behind all religious argument is that reality can be apprehended only by supra-rational means. Pure science, on the other hand, based by definition upon deductive reasoning, proceeds on the implicit assumption that any phenomenon, or any question devised by the mind of man, *does* have a rational explanation, even if not subject to immediate verification by experiment. And a synthesis, if it is to be achieved, must be achieved by the intellect. The religionist may be convinced that he is correct and that the mechanists are wrong, but because his belief prohibits full confidence in reason, he can never adequately determine *in what way* his opponents are "wrong"—and he cannot even lay serious claim to recognizing what factors are involved in the debate.

It is really the philosopher who is supposed to be an expert at synthesis. But what kind of philosopher? The impartial philosopher—no other kind is a philosopher—seeks to unravel paradoxes and reconcile conflicting partial truths by the exercise of pure reason. Philosophy, however, has seldom remained "pure." By far the majority of philosophical works have been written from a desire to support a religiously oriented scheme of things, and, in such instances, while we may observe many intricate and even astute maneuverings of the intellect, these no longer belong strictly to the field of philosophy. The philosopher and the mathematician, though, in the "pure" sense, are blood brothers. Their dedication and methodology are identical, with the exception that the philosopher sets for himself the much more risky task of reasoning about psychological and moral phenomena.

We may be able to deduce from such reflections that the *full* maturation of the "pure-science" concept should produce in its devotees an impartial, dispassionate attitude toward all the subjects presently regarded from partisan viewpoints. Were such a millennium to arrive, there could no longer be creeds or sects, no longer any clamoring advocates of rival theories. Such an eventuality may be possible. After all, if we go back far enough in the history of man's ponderings on his own nature, we may arrive at the startling persuasion that, in essence, the religion of the ancients will have to be the religion of the future. Pythagoras was a mathematician, and so, we discover, was Gautama Buddha, said to be renowned for his grasp of that field. Both Buddha and Pythagoras, whose philosophies have many elements in common, strove to inculcate a *universalist, non-factional* approach to the discovery of truth. Mahayana Buddhism, for instance, has never set itself up as the "repository" of Truth, but rather as a repository of those methods by which truth may be attained; and the same may be said for the Pythagorean system.

The second virtue of the view of "the ancients" on philosophy and religion was the conviction that the intellect must be trained to question its own limitations, and this seems a point of incalculable importance. The gentle tolerance of Buddhism for *all* theories and versions of "truth" is also connected with the persuasion that truth is not to be discovered by someone else's "proof," that experiment and demonstration are properly the work of the individual, and that only the individual can produce acceptable verification of the general propositions which a philosophy or religion may offer as postulates.

An article in *Philosophy East and West* (April, 1952), contains a passage on precisely this point:

> Logic as used by living man is the theory of inquiry, not of proof. . . . What of Eastern philosophy? Why not draw on the systems proffered by the six orthodox Hindu systems, Jainism, the many

> Buddhist sects, Confucianism, Taoism, Yin Yang, and so on? The reason is that these are primarily, though by no means wholly, experimental. They do not, like the Western schools, resort to intellect as giving *final* proof of what is real. *Tao, Nirvana, Brahman,* these are for the Easterner the goals of the mystical experiment, even though intellect counsels and directs much of the making of the experiment. Indeed, there is almost as much of such reasoning argument as in the Western metaphysic. But the point is that this is not the final arbiter, the single umpire which decides in the end.

This article, "What is Intellect?", by Wilmon H. Sheldon, proposes that the mating of philosophy and religion in the West has been productive of many delusions. When we of the West think that we have "proved" a certain contention, that we "own" the final proof, and that all save the unworthy should be able to recognize our demonstration, we are ready to denounce men of differing faith, to suspect their motives, and are thus emotionally prepared to wage either psychological or physical war against them.

However, if we then examine the contribution of mathematical science to the cause of impartiality we may be heartened. Not only is the impartial or impersonal view universally recognized by mathematicians as a prerequisite to the practice of their science, but a constant demonstration of willingness to revise earlier, incomplete theories has prevailed. Readers who are in any way interested in the brain-tugging mysteries of "pure mathematics" or "pure philosophy" should be able to enjoy a tussle with *The Main Stream of Mathematics,* by Edna E. Kramer, issued this year by the Oxford University Press. Apparently one of the few women who has excelled in the field of mathematics, Dr. Kramer, like Dr. Sheldon, begins her discourse with reference to the philosophies of the East. What Miss Kramer calls the "main stream" of mathematical thought she traces back to pre-Buddhistic times:

> Mathematics was functioning in India even before the time (600 B.C.), when Buddha preached his spiritual message, and by his own arithmetic work initiated a mathematical tradition. At an early period the Hindus were skilful calculators even where large numbers were involved. Thus, one of the Buddhist sacred books, *the Lalitavistera,* relates that when Buddha was of the age to marry, the father of Gopa, his intended bride, demanded tnat an examination be given the five hundred suitors, the subjects to include writing, arithmetic, music, and archery. Having vanquished his rivals in all else, Buddha was matched against Arjuna, a great mathematician of the day, and asked to demonstrate his scientific knowledge.

It is impossible for a reviewer without technical background in mathematics to summarize a work such as Dr. Kramer's, but for all the difficulty involved in evaluating such a work, and although not many readers are presently inclined to spend their energy thus, we include some passages from a later chapter for their bearing upon both physics and metaphysics. Pure science, Dr. Kramer tells us, is of necessity deductive, for experimental calculations are bound to contain error. Experiments do *not* give us the *truth*, though they are valuable in supplying evidence to support our axioms or postulates. Mathematical philosophy, in other words, is more scientific than laboratory experiment; not only must it be prior to experiment, in order to provide something to do our experimenting about, but it is precise, both in discovering truth and in revealing error. In other words, as the ancients quoted by Drs. Sheldon and Kramer apparently realized, the core of genuine science and the core of genuine philosophy are the same as the core of genuine religion—*reliable methodology.* Dr. Kramer writes as follows:

> Let us point out that the method of the physicist and astronomer illustrates the great advantage to science of the logical processes of the mathematical sciences, which furnish the pattern for the applied. The process of deduction furnishes the scientist with facts that might be difficult or even impossible to discover by experimental methods. Even where experiment is possible, the process of deduction tells him what experiments to try in order to test his theories. For example, application of the Copernican theory led to the discovery of Neptune and Pluto, whose existence had not been previously suspected.

> Even if the use of instruments should not involve a logical mix-up, a precise thinker could hardly be entirely satisfied with the results. In trying to establish the fact that the sum of the angles of a triangle is 180°, the experimenter might easily obtain 170° or 181° with a crude instrument. Or again, even if the sum of the angles were 180° in the triangles that were measured, would this sum be 180° in all triangles?
>
> Such are the difficulties connected with the experimental method and the procedure of *inductive* reasoning that follows it. When we reason, we draw inferences from certain propositions or statements. When these propositions are the result of experiment or observation, the reasoning is termed *inductive*, and we have seen how probability theory aids in pronouncing judgment on hypotheses that grow out of induction.
>
> Experimental methods are not always entirely satisfactory in mathematical situations. To the Greeks must go the initial credit for realizing this.

Dr. Kramer's book, if one has the time and the patience to read it carefully, has much to suggest by way of inference in respect to political opinions. There is no room for guilt by association, nor proof by emotional association, in the mind of the mathematical philosopher. He resists propaganda based upon repetition as well:

> In addition to consistency, which is an essential property of a set of axioms, we usually ask for another quality merely on aesthetic grounds. While oratory demands that a man be described as honest, upright, reliable, and so on, such redundancy does not appeal to the mathematician. Even concealed repetition seems to the mathematician a blemish which destroys the perfect beauty of a set of axioms. He asks for *independence* in a set of postulates, that is, that no one of the axioms be deducible from the remaining ones.

COMMENTARY
PLATO OR MARCUS AURELIUS?

IN some ages, philosophers are pre-eminently "social" in their approach to human problems, while at other times they seem to concern themselves almost exclusively with personal morality. Take for example the contrast between Plato and the Stoics. While there is no radical difference between the values of the Greek thinker and the later Romans, Plato obviously gave extended consideration to questions involved in social organization, while the writings of the Stoics strike the reader as made up mostly of dialogues between a man and his conscience.

Plato by no means ignored the problems of individual conduct, but he dealt with them in connection with social issues. Actually, Plato scholars have maintained that he used social problems as a background for investigation of the nature of man, this being his primary interest. Nevertheless, a large part of the influence of Plato has been in the direction of social and political philosophy, as contrasted with the essentially private reflections of the Stoics.

Why did the Stoics neglect questions of social organization? There are two or three possible answers. They may have felt that the most vital moral issues are little affected by political arrangements. Or, on the other hand, they may have thought that the Roman Empire was a virtually unchangeable framework for human life, and not to be considered as a mutable institution. Finally, they may have regarded the creation or reform of social systems as a project belonging to the *beginnings* of historical epochs—to periods when cultures are plastic and capable of being moulded according to the heart's desire. We might argue that the Stoic was concerned with preserving human integrity in a world of institutional corruption and decline, while the Platonist inquires after the principles upon which a better world may be founded.

What sort of philosophizing, then, do we need today? There are certainly processes of decay and disintegration now in operation which had their first direct parallel in the decline of the Roman Empire. It seems plain, also, that any attempt at social reconstruction will have to be preceded by the renewal of human integrity, regardless of either politics or theories of social morality. Perhaps what we really need is a new Platonic philosophy in reverse—a study of the human being himself, as the major mystery of our time, from which, through reflection and imaginative projection, we may eventually be able to formulate social principles which implement instead of frustrate the aims and ends of the moral individual.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves

NOTES IN PASSING

THE January 1953 issue of *Report to Writers* contains a debate between practitioners of rival methods of writing juvenile fiction. Robert Sidney Bowen maintains that "children are different," meaning that he writes to and for this presumed difference, while John Richard Young asserts that "juvenile does not mean childish." Bowen repeats the logic of those who emphasize the specialized tastes of a particular audience, while Young claims that the modern child is less and less respectful of stories devised especially for his "age group," and that the author who is unable to write a valuable and interesting story for adults will also be unable to benefit or please children.

We mention this discussion simply to contend that debates of this nature are apt to neglect the issue of greatest importance. In either writing or choosing reading material for the young, it seems to us, we may well reflect that any story worth reading, whether offered in simple or complicated language, gives the reader an understanding of *why* the characters behave as they do. Fiction writing is worth-while to the extent that it increases psychological understanding, and even the most primitive plot structure may be enlivened by a desire to supply this need. When they first learn to read, children will read anything. But it is not difficult for an interested parent to establish the difference between mere description of action and the much more intriguing dimension of just what leads each person to perform his appointed deeds.

Our previous recommendation of the monthly, *Highlights for Children*, was based primarily upon its practical demonstration that motivation-behind-action may be made more interesting than anything else. Further, the examination of motives helps in the development of a broad sympathy for human beings in all imaginable predicaments. Even animal stories which embody human personality traits in the world of lesser creatures may serve this end, despite the fact that "personality transfers" are not strictly permissible from a psychological point of view.

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Stretching the requirements of relatedness a bit at this point, we might here express appreciation of a Walt Disney animated cartoon, "Lambert, the Sheepish Lion," inimitably narrated by Sterling Holloway. This particular animation is a further proof that the best entertainment for the young often makes the best entertainment for adults as well. Here is a moral delivered with a light touch—in which the lightness derives from delicacy and subtlety rather than from farce. The story of Lambert may be used as a springboard to almost any sort of discussion with children. There are even implications in regard to "heredity versus environment" controversies, while at the same time the truism that bravery must be acquired is conveyed by the tale.

We wonder if anyone will ever experiment with some really fine selections for a family evening at the theater, say, once a month. While agreeing with David Reisman that a surprising number of admirable motion pictures are produced during the course of a year, we are nevertheless appalled by the difficulty of picking good movies without catching something else on the double bill which may destroy the mood and the effectiveness of the picture we would like children to see.

A letter from a reader offers some valuable and, we think, original additions to discussions of juvenile delinquency previously attempted here. Clearly, the first concern of importance on this subject is the hope that one may awaken a feeling of sympathetic understanding for youngsters who become delinquents. Our correspondent proposes that most delinquency is stimulated by "mob" or "mass" emotions, and that very few delinquents would exist if youngsters did not so often seek to submerge their personal identity in an admired

group. (Adult responsibility for this situation is considerable, both in respect to the many families who provide no constructive relationship between adults and children, and in respect to the propensity, in the adult world, for falling victim to mass psychological feelings about politics and religion.) With these considerations in mind, our correspondent suggests a definite program for decentralization:

> Prevention is far better than cure, and if "mobism" is one of the causes of juvenile disorders, here are a few suggestions aimed at prevention, beginning in the lower grades of school.
>
> 1. Reduce the mob spirit, starting at the kindergarten age. For example, hundreds of small children loose in the theatres for hours at a time contribute to mob patterns of behavior. Movies should not be used as baby-sitters. We understand that the P.T.A. in the Bronx was responsible for a law forbidding the attendance at movies by children under a certain age unless accompanied by an adult.
>
> 2. Reduce the mob-spirit on our playgrounds at school. Large crowds should be broken up into small, organized, play groups. The fields themselves should not be large, but broken into small areas by trees and benches. The front lawn of a school should be used for eating lunch, just as much as the back areas. Benches should be provided in sunny spots.
>
> For proper supervision, the teachers' lunch hours should be staggered and many teachers mingle, in their own groups, with the children. No single teacher should serve as a policeman. The noon hour should not, ideally, be used as an escape from the children (however much escape may seem desirable), for something is lost if teachers wall themselves off from the young. Neither should wash-room facilities be different for children and adults.
>
> The situation in school cafeterias would never get so noisy and out-of-hand if the teachers ate in groups of two or three scattered throughout the cafeterias and on the school grounds. There would be much more rapport between children and teachers if the children saw their favorite teachers eating with teacher friends, laughing and relaxed, approachable as human beings on a non-appointment basis. Teachers would lose their "exclusion-from-the-classroom-mob" feeling; they would probably find more children voluntarily coming to talk with them.
>
> 3. Reduce the mob-spirit in the lower grades by discouraging interest in team competition beyond the child's own grade level. Free attendance at college football games, offered to the grade school and junior high level, is another baby-sitting "out" for the parent. It may or may not be more elevating than an afternoon of peanut-throwing at the local movie. Here, again, the company of an adult is important in counteracting the artificial excitement of a large crowd. The same situation exists in the stadium as in the movie, or on the playground at noon. Hordes of undirected children go wild and usually at such an early age that it is no wonder the habit is well formed when the local high school football teams compete. (More and more stimuli are sought, as the years pass, by youngsters used to mob frenzy, to convince themselves that they are really having a whale of a time.)

Such arguments are not intended, we are sure, to claim ultimate value for individualism. Group influence upon human behavior can afford a discipline which is both natural and strict. We are reminded of Farley Mowat's report on the Ihalmint Eskimos, the "People of the Deer," who have no need for laws, simply because a kind of "group psyche" regulates behavior. But here, we think, it is important to remember that each Ihalmint comes to know himself in calm and quiet, and in calm and quiet thinks of his relationship to his fellows. Any uncontrolled emotion is taboo, for it may lead to sudden death in the northern barrens—which is quite a different situation from that which obtains in a football stadium or a Saturday matinee. The Hopis are another remarkable example of beneficent "crowd rule." Like the Ihalmiut, the Hopis are a quiet people.

FRONTIERS

A Reluctant Patience

THE present indignation of the democratic West at what seems the brazen injustice and advocacy of racist doctrines by the Boer-dominated government of the Union of South Africa recalls an informal scene of many years ago. It was in a small, metropolitan café where, by some odd mischance, a young and unsophisticated Southerner was surrounded by several bright-eyed Bohemians who were plying him with questions. As the Southerner writhed under the attack of aggressive "liberalism," one of the group drew aside the most articulate of the questioners, saying of the youth from the South: "He really can't help it; he spent his whole life in the South and he is emotionally unable to accept the idea of racial equality. I know him well; he is gentle, always kind in a personal way—but when you argue the race question with him on principle his mind retires altogether and he submits to the overpowering conditionings of a South which 'knows' what no 'Yankee' can ever understand about the relationships between the races. Please don't bait him—it will do no good."

The occasion was casual and the baiting did not last. Perhaps the appeal of the Southerner's friend slowed down the interrogation. At any rate, his analysis seemed just, and the man from the South endured actual pain from the pressure exerted on him. And it seemed possible, too, that a few years in another environment, with a more patient sort of persuasion, would extend his admirable personal qualities to include the broader relationships of race with race.

Acknowledging this, there is the obvious question: Why should such tenderness be shown to a member of a race which has been guilty of almost immeasurable injustice? If the question is obvious, the answer is not, so far as we are concerned. We, at least, choose not to answer it, for morally, so far as we can see, only the Negroes themselves have the right to urge patience in situations of this sort; and the right, also, to deny it without fear of criticism from anyone except, possibly, themselves. It would be ridiculous of a white man to urge Christlike behavior upon the Negroes, after the centuries of their betrayal by men with white skins. A white man who moralizes at Negroes about anything at all has, at best, a joint talent for stupidity and hypocrisy.

Does the situation in South Africa—or anywhere in Africa—differ in any essential way from that of the southern American states? Perhaps we should answer by saying that the complexities are in some measure different, while the essential problem remains the same. In some ways, the sufferings of the South African Negroes seem worse than those of the American Negroes. If you read Mrs. Paul Robeson's *African Journey*, and S. L. Sachs' *The Choice Before South Africa*, you are likely to think so. Each of the racial components of the South African population, however, has a story of its own, and the reflective individual has need of knowing these stories before he forms any sort of judgment. And finally, knowing them, he will probably develop a great and unyielding hatred for human ignorance, instead of venting his indignation upon any group or class of human beings.

Take, for example, the Boers, those hardy people of Dutch and German origin who settled on the southernmost tip of the continent of Africa centuries ago. They were a strong breed of men and women. "Breed" seems the appropriate word, for their lives were close to the earth, which they loved, and their labors were as tillers, hewers of wood, and drawers of water. The romance of the Boers is well portrayed in the books of Stuart Cloete, best known of which is *The Turning Wheels*, story of the great migration of the Boers northward, a quest for land and for freedom from English control.

The Boers were people of daring, strength, and piety. The blood of their lives flooded through their bodies, enclosed their wide and fertile lands, their beasts, the horses, sheep, and

cattle. When they set out, in 1836, on the long trek northward to lands bounded by the Limpopo river, their leader, Piet Retief, solemnly declared: "We are now leaving the fruitful land of our birth in which we have suffered grievous losses and continual vexations, and are about to enter strange and desperate territory. But we go with a firm reliance on an all-seeing, just, and merciful God, Whom we shall always fear, and humbly endeavor to obey."

There is an inevitable nobility about pioneers, and the Voortrekkers—those who travel first—were above all pioneers. In *Against These Three*, a volume of biography of Boer, African and English leaders, Cloete tells of the mood in which the Voortrekkers searched for new lands:

> . . . a Boer was a man . . . at sixteen . . . {he} rode for a specified time enclosing a rectangle of land. Each rode fast and tried to include the best water and land and to avoid the worst. His conception that an area is becoming overpopulated begins on the day that he can see another man's smoke from his house.
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> Nor, though they disliked the English, can it be said that the Boers liked the Dutch East India Company, who used to govern the Cape, any better; and these very backveldt Boers who moved from the northern parts of the Colony were the descendants of those who had, in previous generations, moved there, against the orders of the Dutch, from the vicinity of the Cape of Good Hope, and for the same reason—a dislike of government and restraint. They saw no need for paying taxes, no need of a police force or of schools. These things they preferred to manage for themselves. What right had anyone to make them pay taxes for land that they had wrested from the wilderness? What necessity was there for schools when parents could teach their children to read and write? And why administer the law or formulate codes when the law was clearly and simply stated in the Holy Bible?

Going northward, the Boers encountered another migrant people—the Bantus, among them the tribe of Zulus, terrible warriors, who for reasons unknown had come south three or four hundred years ago. They had pressed upon the Bushman and the Hottentots, the Africans of the plains. Then came the impact of struggle for dominance between Boers and the Bantus—"Kaffirs" is the deprecatory term applied by white men to the natives of South Africa—in which the white man's gun powder soon made him victor. So, one may say, the white man rules South Africa by right of conquest.

In the United States, the very presence of the Negro population is a reminder of the most despicable trade known to history—the trade in human beings. The white man in America thus created the "race problem," unaided, unabetted, entirely by himself and his ships and his guns. In South Africa, the relationship between the races grew at first from more "normal" causes—the simple and familiar fortunes of war. There, the enslavement of the Africans came after the latter had been conquered by the whites.

But for Boers, as for Southern American "gentlemen," the justification for their claim to white supremacy was the same they found it in their religion. As Cloete says:

> Part of the Boer resentment against the English was due to the fact that they encouraged the missionaries and demanded equal justice for Hottentots and Kaffirs and white men. As the Boers ruled by the Bible, they considered this attitude infamous and unchristian, since the Bible had cursed the descendants of Ham. "Cursed by Canaan. A servant of servants shall he be. . . ." Nothing could be clearer than the word of God, and this talk of equality was merely to cause trouble between black and white when there was already trouble enough without such outside interference.

Cloete seems to put his finger on the situation in South Africa when he says:

> Elsewhere struggles were obscured by the variety of interests concerned, by oblique influences, by hidden stresses and strains. Nowhere else did three cultures—the ancient barbaric, the religious pioneer, and the modern industrial coexist.
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> It is this fact which makes the modern history of South Africa stand out: its relative simplicity, its clarity, and the fact that not merely three nations, but three worlds warred.

Lest, however, the British appear in this chronicle as angels of light and of civil liberties, it must be realized that the British zest for "modern progress" and the exploitation of the "natural resources of a great continent" brought the witches' brew of South African tensions to an angry and malevolent boil. In 1870, gold and diamonds were discovered in the land. The Boers saw their country overrun by greedy, acquisitive men who cared nothing for the culture of the soil, who saw in a stupid ox naught but a stupid ox. It was a vicious, insistent rape, repeated with diabolic monotony, so far as the Boers were concerned. Again, Cloete has words for the change which came over South Africa:

> With the finding of gold and diamonds, peace went and the seeds of war were sown.
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> Paul Kruger knew this and did what he could to stave off the ruin of his people. Lobengula, King of the Matabele, knew it and tried to keep the prospectors away. Rhodes knew it and played the avarice of the City of London and the courage of his young adventurers against the resistance of the Boers and Matabele. Here were exploiters ready to be directed by his genius and the exploited doomed to fall beneath it. For Rhodes, if ahead of his time in his concept of money as power, was aware of the time factor which pressed upon him, both physically as an individual, and politically; he knew with Disraeli that the race for Africa was on, that it was to the swift, the rich, and the industrialized; and was determined, if he could make it so as a shaper of events, that it should be won by the Empire he served.

These were the forces which shaped the South Africa of today—the forces which made the several peoples of the land strong, brave, narrow, calculating, desperate, and, finally, bowed down, broken, and afraid. Who, in a generation, can erase these long memories, who can refurbish these shattered dreams?

One turns his eye to the present scene in that far-off land with a reluctant patience, and a wondering upon how the healing can take place.