

ACCEPTABLE WORSHIP

WHILE there are many ways of "classifying" people in respect to their attitudes toward religion and religious practices, to group them according to their feelings about the word "worship" should be as good as any. This word is like "God" in its psychological impact, for while both "worship" and "God" have a wide variety of meanings, they are almost always used to signify an "ultimate" meaning. God denotes the very highest in all religions which use the term, while worship represents the act of supreme devotion to God, however the deity may be conceived.

For some, then, the word "worship" has a kind of religious magic. It is a term with absolute value, rendering all else insignificant. But there are others who feel at least uncomfortable when the word is used, as though the act of worship is really an act of submission, of abdication from full individual responsibility, and there is seldom much flow of mutual understanding between the members of these two groups.

These reflections were prompted by the suggestion of a reader that MANAS "commission some competent thinker to discuss the idea of acceptable worship"—an assignment which, for those who are inclined to dislike the very idea of "worship," is unlikely to arouse any enthusiasm, much less a feeling of "competency." In fact, were it not for the encouragement provided by Webster's Unabridged Dictionary—which allows an unexpected latitude to discussion of worship—we would probably have left the subject severely alone.

Webster has nearly half a column on the term, starting out with the meaning immediately expressive of the roots from which "worship" is derived, thus: "I. Courtesy or reverence paid to merit or worth; hence, civil deference; honor; respect." Some obsolete usages follow, and the conventional religious meaning is not reached until

the fifth definition, which is: "Act of paying divine honors to a deity; religious reverence and homage; adoration, or reverence, paid to God, a being viewed as God, or something held as sacred from a reputed connection with God." Milton is cited: "God with idols in their worship joined"; and Tillotson: "The worship of God is an eminent part of religion, and prayer is a chief part of religious worship."

You would think, at the outset, that western religious philosophy ought to have developed a more appropriate term than "worship," to signify a prayerful attitude of mind, for its primary meaning, that of honoring or respecting merit, is hardly religious in content. Apparently, in contrast with certain other religious traditions, the Christian vocabulary is weak and filled with expedient adaptations, as is, also, much of Christian custom and belief. Webster speaks of worship as signifying "civil deference," indicating that the word has been borrowed from secular usage. A similar quality pervades the Book of Common Prayer. As T. B. Luard put it some years ago in the *Hibbert Journal* (April, 1937):

God in the Prayer Book is occasionally addressed as Our Heavenly Father or as the Creator, but more often He is ALMIGHTY GOD, KING OF KINGS and LORD OF LORDS, the personal ruler and judge who forgives sin and shows favour or grace at His pleasure, who not only liveth but REIGNETH world without end. Prayers are offered to his Divine MAJESTY by miserable sinners, in the spirit of fear, with constant appeals for mercy. I find it difficult to believe that this method of approach reflects the innermost convictions of many of the worshippers in church. . . .

In the Prayer Book more stress is laid on our inability to do without God than on our strength through God within. Of two prayers "that we may be defended against all adversity," one opens with the statement that "we have no power of ourselves to help

ourselves," and the other laments that "we put not our trust in anything that we do." Can this morbid and helpless attitude be pleasing to God? What do we say to our own children when they seek our aid in that spirit?

Thus it appears that "worship" represents a blatantly anti-philosophical attitude in traditional Christianity. It means allegiance to a powerful "ruler." What, then, are we to say on the subject of "an acceptable form of worship"? The question seems a fair one, even if the term provided introduces obvious difficulties.

The distinction made by Mr. Luard is the crucial one, here. That is, no form of "worship" could be acceptable, so far as we are concerned, if the object of worship is Jehovah, the Semitic ruler of Princes, or anyone or anything like him—a God who is separate from ourselves; indeed, a God whose very existence makes us helpless and reliant on "Him." *Acceptable* worship is rather communion with the God within, and with the God immanent in all Nature. What we need, then, is another word for this act or attitude of devotion. Quite possibly, the act ought not to be named at all, lest some over-simplifying and over-enthusiastic sect build a creed around it. There was possibly a wisdom which made the Athenians of Paul's time raise an altar to the *Unknown God*—a wisdom far greater than that in any of the endless "definitions" of deity declared to the world in the centuries since.

Conceivably, "worship" ought to be explained psychologically, instead of in terms of what is worshipped, and why. Since of all notions of which the human mind is capable, the God-idea is most vulnerable to distortion or corruption, true worship might better be regarded simply as an inquiry into the ultimate nature of things, without reference to any presumed "God." This quality of devotion is implicit in Lao Tse:

The Tao which can be expressed in words is not the eternal Tao; the name which can be uttered is not its eternal name. Without a name, it is the Beginning of Heaven and Earth; with a name, it is the Mother of all things. Only one who is eternally free from

earthly passions can apprehend its spiritual essence; he who is ever clogged by passions can see no more than its outer form. These two things, the spiritual and the material, though we call them by different names, in their origin are one and the same. This sameness is a mystery,—the mystery of mysteries. It is the gate of all spirituality.

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Perfect virtue acquires nothing; therefore it obtains everything. Perfect virtue does nothing, yet there is nothing which it does not effect. Perfect charity operates without the need of anything to evoke it. Perfect duty to one's neighbor operates, but always needs to be evoked. Perfect ceremony operates, and calls for no outward response; nevertheless it induces respect.

One may also consider the injunctions of Marcus Aurelius to himself as an act of worship:

When thou art troubled about anything, thou hast forgotten this, that all things happen according to the universal nature; and forgotten this, that a man's wrongful act is nothing to thee; and further thou hast forgotten this, that everything which happens, always happened so and will happen so, and now happens so everywhere; forgotten this, too, how close is the kinship between a man and the whole human race, for it is a community, not of a little blood or seed, but of intelligence. And thou hast forgotten this too, that every man's intelligence is a god, and is an efflux of the deity; and forgotten this, that nothing is a man's own, but that his child and his body and his very soul came from the deity. . . .

He who acts unjustly acts impiously. For since the universal nature has made rational animals for the sake of one another to help one another according to their deserts, but in no way to injure one another, he who transgresses her will, is dearly guilty of impiety toward the highest divinity. And he too who lies is guilty of impiety to the same divinity; for the universal nature is the nature of things that are; and things that are have a relation to all things that come into existence. And further, this universal nature is named truth, and is the prime cause of all things that are true. He then who lies intentionally is guilty of impiety as he acts unjustly by deceiving; and he also who lies unintentionally, inasmuch as he disturbs the order by fighting against the nature of the world; for he fights against it, who is moved of himself to that which is contrary to truth, for he had received powers

from nature through the neglect of which he is not now able to distinguish falsehood from truth.

Is this "worship"? Could there, we ask in return, be a worship more profound? Let any man sit himself down to imitate the wisdom of Marcus Aurelius, and he will soon discover that such expression indeed belongs to the gods. The worship is not in the words, but in the reflection which made them possible. We of the West have the habit of thinking of worship as a somewhat passive act of adoration, but for Marcus it was in the intensity of his study of the meaning of experience. He who would worship in earnest must face the fact that reaching to the essences of things is a matter of inner discovery, in which no formula is of any assistance, but is, rather, an obstacle, substituting the pattern of some other discoverer, or pseudo-discoverer, for the alchemical process of *self*-discovery.

We are obliged to conclude that there is no particular *form* of worship, since worship itself is formless and free—somehow a contact between spirit and spirit, between the One and the Many, between Man and the Universe. Can we imagine that any "form" is able to capture the secret of this?

There is a worship in work, a worship in love, a worship in art, and a worship in song. There is also a worship in repose, which is peculiar to itself, yet worthless without the worship implicit in all other forms of human action. We might borrow from Indian thought the term *dharana* to indicate this hungering after the Unknown. If a man faithfully performs his devotions to what Lao Tse terms the "outer form" of the Tao, then, conceivably, he may presume to seek its spiritual essence—a quest involving that most difficult of all undertakings, the discipline of the mind.

There are moments when all of life seems to sing together in one vast harmony—when the world, forever with us, drops away its garb of illusion and declares in unmistakable accents that it is *one*; that one heart throbs in every living thing, with all the beings in the world united as

players in the vast pageant of existence, moving toward some far-off goal whose grandeur we sense, but could not describe save with the orchestration of all heavenly and earthly sounds. Poets tell of such moments, prophets and sages, and simple lovers of their fellows.

The secret of all this, finally, must be that each man must learn to design his own form of worship, just as each man must work out his own salvation. Too long have we trusted to others for both our worship and our salvation. Too long have we been self-reliant and proud in everything but matters of our inner destiny. But the heart of man is an independency—a much greater independency than the sovereign nations of which we are so proud, and the free enterprise whose slogans we cherish. Men talk of the true church: there is not, and cannot be, in the nature of things, a "true church." Jesus must have understood this, for in matters of worship, he told his followers to retire into their closets to pray. There can be associations of men who band together to work for good, but an organization, a *collective* enterprise, can never penetrate beyond the outer form of things, where lies the work of collective undertakings. Worship belongs to the secret places of the heart. It is, as the ancient Kabalists said, *Ain Soph* talking to *Ain Soph*, and belongs to those silences which come, not from departure from the haunts of men, but from acts of the will, of the soul itself.

Letter from **JORDAN**

RAMALLAH.—With some 193 other Americans, I recently attended the formal opening of the U.S. Information Center in Amman, located, amusingly enough, next door to the Moslem Brotherhood. Here, in immediate juxtaposition, we have the outward representatives of what in the popular mind are two of the three really fanatical influences in the modern Middle East. The third is of course Russia. (Another major potency, the British, presents so gentlemanly an exterior that it cannot quite make the select "fanatical" company.)

The Moslem Brotherhood, considered a radical spokesman for Islam, has convincingly made itself heard in Egypt, Iraq, and Iran. It is not obtrusive in Amman, although some view its presence with the rolled eyes of simulated alarm. There is undoubted pressure on the Moslem Amman government to eliminate Christian job-holders, but whether the Brotherhood has anything to do with this, as is sometimes alleged, I do not know.

If the Communists have a headquarters here (which I doubt), no mention has ever been heard of it. From time to time there are reports of "Communists" being imprisoned without trial, in Amman or in camps in the southern desert. I have information on only two such persons, neither of whom, in my opinion, was a Communist, though both were political dissidents and probably offered the Government some actual or potential trouble. One was imprisoned for less than a week, the other for several months.

The United States is publicly represented by the U.S. Information Center, technically part of the U.S. Embassy rather than of our larger publicity agency, the U.S. Information *Service*. Its second-floor quarters consist of one large room surrounded, in Arab style, by six smaller ones. All are tastefully decorated in local materials, chosen, purchased, and even sewn by Embassy and Point-IV wives. Only the reading

room has an American touch, with curtains printed with scenes showing Paul Bunyan, Sitting Bull, and others.

There is a happy absence of swank in the Information Center. The place is meant for use. The staff consists of an American director and four Jordanians: secretary, general clerk, film projectionist, and driver. Its book library is small but of wide range in coverage of the U.S. Its educational film library is very large indeed, most items being in duplicate with sound tracks in Arabic and in English. This is propaganda—in the *best* sense. In the first month of operation, daily attendance has ranged up to 260 persons, which is mildly sensational. There is every indication that—for a change sensitive Americans may be totally proud of one of our overseas efforts. This may be due to the Directors. I use the plural because, except for payroll purposes, we have here the services of a man-and-wife team of exceptional qualities. They have served in a similar role for five years in India and three in Colombia.

But the opening itself was really "American night." A more formal function, with invited celebrities on hand to hear words of welcome from the Acting Prime Minister and the American Ambassador, had been held the week before. Plans for this earlier function, incidentally, had raised somewhat of an intra-Embassy storm over the question of liquor, but our friend, the Director of the Center, won out, and only tea and home-made cookies, baked by those same wives, were served. There was no liquor on American night, either. We met at 7:30, chattered as if at a church social while the ladies assembled their covered dishes, and ate a pot-luck supper that was no less than superb. After a short talk by the Director, we saw three short films from the library, and then rolled up the rugs and square-danced until midnight.

It was a typically noisy, undignified, friendly, sport-shirted crowd of Americans. The Arab staff was pop-eyed with wonder, but by the time the

dancing was well launched they were enjoying events as much as any of us. The affiliations of this family crowd may be estimated as about like this: sixty Point-IV people; forty from the Embassy; twenty-five assorted private business and professional people; six United Nations employees; four missionaries, and five unclassified (including your correspondent). Perhaps, of the total, forty were wives, twenty-five older teenagers.

Why is all this worth reporting? Mainly because these are the people who are now showing the face of the U.S. colossus to an eager world. It is quite different from what it might have appeared, say, twenty years ago. This night we had the Director-and-wife-team and about thirty Point-IV and UN technicians. We had one Embassy pair of striped pants, and at least ten flagrant sport shirts. We had seven or eight Point-IV wives, of whom at least six work hard, one or two days each week, in a local voluntary refugee social center, and organize its financial support besides. We had four missionaries, two of whom are practicing medical doctors, and one a working nurse. At least twenty of our Point-IV people are a part of Jordan Government Ministries, with both the obvious problems and, potentially, great rewards in mutual understanding and participation. Our American business people included managers of a local American-owned airline, and representatives of an international engineering firm carrying out contracts in the Arab world.

Only once during the evening did I notice one of those painful situations created by cultural barriers. It happened during the square-dancing, which was under the care of a pleasant and capable businessman who conducts a dance each week for Americans in one of the local hotels. "The only trouble we have," he said, "is the local Arab men. We don't mind their coming, if they would like to dance. But they just stand around and ogle our girls. Why don't they bring some girls of their own, and learn to dance? They're

just dirty-minded, that's all!" . . . We still have a way to go.

CORRESPONDENT IN JORDAN

REVIEW

THE SUPERFLUOUS SOCIETY

WHILE the phrase, "novels of social criticism," occurs fairly frequently in reviews, the word "social" is so broad in meaning that it sometimes covers politics, economics, international affairs, and group immaturities of the psyche. Thus it has little specific meaning. And while we have need for designating the interrelatedness of the various factors mentioned, no adequate word remains for characterizing purely "social," leisure-time behavior.

Two recent novels, however, *The Second Happiest Day* by John Phillips (Harper), and Louis Bromfield's *Mr. Smith* (Signet), offer penetrating observations on the patterns of daily activity and attitude which characterize the more privileged members of America's leisure classes. The two books seem entirely unlike in other respects, John Phillips' Book-of-the-Month selection being singularly well-written and outmatching, in our opinion, the talents of his father, John Marquand. Louis Bromfield, on the other hand, misses the boat entirely so far as giving a sense of reality to his characters is concerned; perhaps he has been living a life of enviable solitude too long to give him the feel of the post-war world, or even adequate knowledge of its vocabulary. (Believe it or not, a supposedly typical sergeant, stuck with guard detail in the South Pacific, is made to exclaim, "Tell that—to the Marines.") But while Phillips is brilliant, and Bromfield verbose and often inept, both books may help to disclose how "superfluous" are most patterns of thought and behavior in fashionable society.

Phillips portrays the life of the wealthy prep-school, Harvard-Yale set just before, during and after World War II. In Mr. Phillips' version, this generation, unlike the characters who moved with wild abandon through F. Scott Fitzgerald's novels of the early '20's, has sufficient objectivity to suspect, more definitely than its forebears, the

emptiness of "normal" human existence in the higher income brackets. This is particularly well illustrated by Phillips' "Old Grad." Discussing the present generation, Phillips gives insight into how its members regard the weird world of their elders, their greater objectivity creating a curious psychological rift between fathers and sons. Here is a description of the "Old Man," who had outlived the Fitzgerald era in which he had once revelled:

The war [1914-18] was something of which the Old Man and his contemporaries were very proud indeed. The war they had in mind, like so many of the other things that had happened to them, was clearly something we would never understand, though not through their failure to speak of it.

Then abruptly the war had been over and they had a wonderful time. And while they were about it, they had met and married the women who became our aunts and mothers and stepmothers and had begotten us and our brothers and sisters and half-brothers and sisters and stepbrothers and sisters at a furious though birth-controlled pace. Often these marriages had not worked the way the Old Man and his contemporaries had hoped that they would work, for they had been young people then and very impressionable. But they had been crazy about one another at the time.

To think back on it now, after all the interim of mistakes and good and bad times, made him uncomfortable and a little sad. It sometimes left him wishing that he could go through those days again. Perhaps if he could he would get more out of them and he might behave differently, a little more grownup.

To think of living them over again was obviously ridiculous. A man only lived once, unless he was a Hindu. None of the people the Old Man knew were Hindus. They had been young just that once and had made the most of it, stretching the years as long and as thin as possible. They had been told, though they hadn't really believed it themselves, that those years would not last forever. They had worked hard at being gay, because, as the Old Man might say, gaiety had been a serious business in those days. And since the old man was a romanticist at heart—and who on earth was not?—and since he was not averse to quoting poetry, he quoted from Edna St. Vincent Millay.

My candle burns at both ends
 It will not last the night,
 But, ah, my foes, and, oh, my friends—
 It gives a lovely light.

Here was a philosophy that did not apply to Hindus.

The Old Man worried about our opinion. Somehow he felt it mattered more than God's. Somewhere out of everything we had heard, out of the recollections of pleasures denied us, out of all his justifications and explanations, we had got the idea that the Old Man expected us to judge him. He held to this with a quiet desperation, which was all the more sad, since we had no wish to judge.

Phillips' protagonist in *The Second Happiest Day* is a young man who enters the country-club set by virtue of associations rather than through inherited wealth. Gradually he begins to sift out the meaningless phases of this existence and discard them, discovering in himself an essential honesty and purposefulness which finally leads him to a complete break with "the crowd." In this sense, incidentally, we much prefer Phillips to Fitzgerald. Phillips gives no indication of a summary disgust with the confused behavior of his characters, nor is he fascinated by the patterns of thought he is criticizing. There is something "affirmative" about *The Second Happiest Day*—mostly its temper and tone—and we recommend it especially to those who went to any kind of prep-school or college about 1940.

Bromfield's story concerns a prosperous, handsome, middle-aged executive who during the war found himself isolated on a South Sea island, commanding a detail charged with guarding a warehouse of slowly rotting supplies. Here, for the first time in his life, "Smith" could not only think, free from distraction, but, indeed, could hardly avoid it. Bromfield has him speak of "those flashes of light which sometimes come to me here when I find my mind working, really for the first time, when I see people and things clearly—even myself—and I understand that somehow I have missed the boat all along the line and this in spite of my having had what you might call every advantage and every opportunity." He continues:

These flashes of light are as painful as they are illuminating, and the odd thing is that they are followed by a spirit of the blackest depression when I find myself hoping that the war will go badly for both sides and that there will be enough destruction so that we may go back to the beginning and start to build a wholly new world. All this serves to convince me that a man like myself should never really *think*.

The terrible thing is that in our modern world there is so little place for thought or for its effects, for the mindless multiply far more rapidly than the intelligent and all the forces which surround us seek to destroy thought, to reduce everything to the level of codes and brevity, radio and movies, condensations and predigested pills of information.

Smith concludes that, in social living, "the less the mind, the less it matters," and while such suggestions are common enough elsewhere, we are here simply making a case for their periodical re-presentation. Bromfield, by the way, is particularly insistent upon laying bare the hypocrisy, pretentiousness, and artificiality of conventional home-and-marriage patterns. Smith's wife spent her entire existence attempting to act out the role of the American woman as defined by slick-magazine fiction, advertisements, the radio, motion pictures and "fashionable set" opinions. She wasn't a good wife, but she was forever playing the part of one. She did not love her husband, since she had no conception nor appreciation of what love could mean, but she was endlessly talking about the "sharing" she and her mate had accomplished. She resisted all his efforts to find time for quiet reading and thought—any behavior on his part that could not be found in the conventional pattern.

Smith's business acquaintances were also whirling in emptiness. As an increasing clarity of vision dawns for him, he retraces his experiences with his cronies, and emerges with these saddening reflections:

If any of us lived into old age, which seemed unlikely considering the strains and the premature weariness from which all of us suffered, we should simply be cantankerous and idle and unsatisfied old men

What had wearied us? That is the thing I am trying to get at as I write all of this but fail continually to discover. We were wearied of many things—of taxes and financial anxieties, of rushing about always at top speed, of being persecuted by the telephone and the automobile, of being unable to spend even a single evening at home doing nothing but sitting with our families and reading and talking. We were wearied by the politicians and wearied of constant regulations and of filling in forms for this and for that, of an almost total remoteness, even in the case of Ernest, from those enjoyments which derive from one's natural environment, . . . of that refreshment which comes of smelling the fresh still air of the early morning and noticing the aroma of freshly turned earth or sitting still to watch a sunset or the water of a stream flowing swiftly along its willow-bordered course. We were wearied of listening to radios interrupted by vulgar clamorous commercials, bored by the monotonous dull-witted movies in which we occasionally tried to lose ourselves. We were tired of keeping up with the next-door neighbor, of raising the money to send our children to the right schools, to pay for fur coats and the new bathroom, tired of seeing each other, of talking back and forth perpetually over the same ground. I think, very possibly, we were sick of middle-class American life which at the age of all of us had become merely a treadmill on which we ran endlessly day after day without ever arriving anywhere.

We have, in these columns, almost done to death our objections to "purely negative criticism," but Phillips' volume seems significant to us, partly because it is obviously written by a man who feels that all is not lost, who believes that there is still hope in a world where even a few individuals are able to transcend the aimlessness of the routine attitudes and lives. Bromfield is by far the more pessimistic of the two, but then, of course, he is a full generation removed from Mr. Phillips.

COMMENTARY

GROUNDS FOR OPTIMISM

BOTH the Letter from Jordan and this week's Review indicate that considerable changes have taken place in the outlook of Americans since the post-war generation of World War I. It is no longer a pious speculation to say that some sort of awakening is occurring in the United States—widespread enough to be reflected in popular literature, and, quite by chance, to bring a noticeable concentration of the new spirit to a far-off spot like Amman, in Jordan.

We have a natural disinclination to attribute favorable developments to war, but at least a part of this "progress" stems from the general cultural reshuffling that is always a by-product of a great war. The first World War placed the United States in the position of a major world power, and while Americans may have begun to play their new role with a brash immodesty which did little to make them liked, some feelings of international responsibility were nevertheless a result. Then, with the high moral commitments of World War II, endlessly repeated throughout the United States, something of these resolves was bound to remain, despite the ugly disillusionments of "peace."

So much for political affairs. Accompanying the changes introduced by war have been a number of other influences, such as, first, a radically liberalizing movement in religion, of which "social action" has been the keynote for at least one generation. Another important leaven in religious thought has been the recognition of the greatness of some of the "heathen" religious traditions, such as that revealed by the life and work of M. K. Gandhi. In psychology, the exhaustion of materialistic lines of analysis seemed to coincide with revolutionary discoveries in psychotherapy, and the general enlightenment identified with what we now call psychosomatic medicine.

The world, in short, may be in exceedingly bad condition, but from the disheartening experiences of our time we have been able to extract certain lessons, the point of which we otherwise might not have seen, while practical idealism has been sharpened by its contrast with sociopolitical failures all over the world.

The present, it seems fair to say, is increasingly an age of moral discovery, and of the birth of the courage needed to put our moral discoveries to work. The prospects may seem dark enough at times, but when, in world history, have there been so many evidences of a new vision and a new hope in the hearts of men?

CHILDREN

. . . and Ourselves

NOTES IN PASSING

AT a recent meeting in Los Angeles of the National Association of Secondary-school Principals (Los Angeles *Times*, Feb. 24), subjects of probable interest to readers of this column were discussed. Several of the administrators, for instance, proposed revising conventional rigidities of grading and classroom procedure. A San Francisco principal suggested that senior classes in high school be held three times a week instead of five. "The intervening periods could be so arranged," he said, "that retarded, average and bright students could receive the kind of help they need and that without attaching any name to them at all. They would just be students pursuing an educational objective."

This radical proposal is reminiscent of Robert Hutchins' attempts to break traditional molds of university procedure at Chicago. For one thing, Dr. Hutchins was a perpetual advocate of "from each according to his capacity, to each according to his need" in the educational field, believing that both those who showed an inclination for the higher learning and those who showed none at all should be given separate help and attention. Hutchins also held that any administrator worth his salt should be forever coming up with revolutionary proposals—and be willing to risk whatever unpopularity might result.

A principal from Blue Island, Illinois, reported on a system adopted by his school for the awarding of "P" (provisional) grades and diplomas to students not able to qualify for the "norm" of passing marks, "although working to the limit of their ability." "It is impressive talk," he said, "to say that we educate for leadership, but what of the 99% of our students who won't be leaders? . . . This P grade and diploma has also been our contribution to education for 'followship.' I am certain our P grade has given borderline students

that sense of accomplishment so necessary in fitting them for society."

Both these proposals would lessen the competitive spirit in our secondary institutions, and one might favor them without opposing "competition" in other fields, as in arguing for replacement of "free enterprise" by some form of "socialism." We are reminded of the Hopi Indians, whose traditions suggest that it is unfitting to compete in either learning or matters of tribal decision. White teachers in the Indian schools have been astonished to discover that no Hopi child wishes to appear to outshine his fellows, while, on the frank level of physical prowess, long-distance running has an almost religious significance among the Hopis, and the youthful winner of the annual ceremonial race is given, and willingly accepts, admiration and distinction. Perhaps the Hopis understand something we have never been able to grasp as a culture—that physical competition can teach useful habits of self-discipline, whereas *ideative* or *political* competition usually leads to a bitter, deceitful struggle for power.

A high-school administrator from Delaware, Ohio, joined with a principal from Ventura, California, in advocating that controversial issues should definitely be taught in the public school. Carl Hopkins of Delaware said, "No taboo can be laid down on what subject matter or ideas the teacher is to consider if he is to teach well," and Norman B. Scharer of Ventura added, "Studying a philosophy does not mean endorsing it, much less proclaiming it. We study cancer in order to learn how to defeat it. The same must be done in regard to controversial issues."

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We are particularly interested in those who, despite strong opposition, are presently advocating the teaching of controversial issues—and so are some of our correspondents. One writes to say:

I wish I had the time to work up this idea myself. Perhaps it can be used as a point of departure in your "Children . . . and Ourselves" column. It seems to me that the combination of bigotry and gullibility which produces McCarthyism, McCarranism and their perennial equivalents in America must be attributed in part to shortcomings, short sights, short circuits in the schools of preceding decades. The question is, how do you teach *perspective*? Are there any teaching methods which will lead to straight thinking in the primary grades? Not logic with highbrow terminology and abstractions, of course, but perhaps a simple way of illustrating common fallacies of thinking. The results of semantic and logical fallacies are bloody and ghastly. And semantic and logical errors can be revealed in everyday school life.

Carry-over to social studies and current events would perhaps follow. Later formal logic would be easier—and less needed—just as a student of physics grasps the theorems of mechanics more easily when as a child he has handled levers, wheels, inclined planes, or steered a boat or wagon. Patterns of error in thinking could be sensed, similarly, without use of a formidable terminology.

To say that ideally, the modern classroom should stand apart from any of the controversies of the modern world is perhaps a truism, yet a very impractical one. It seems to us that there is no way *out* of controversy save by developing a capacity to deal rationally and objectively with emotionally charged material. Many teachers will shrink from the confusions attending discussion of such issues as "communism" in the classroom because they are not, and know they are not, capable of dealing with them wisely. Yet this is a crucial time for the cause of freedom of expression, and for belief in "the rule of reason." We should therefore prefer to see inadequate teachers attempting judicial analysis, failing, and being thus stimulated to achieve a broader perspective and a better mastery of the art of reasoning, than to see them remain complacent about contemporary problems. Here is a situation needing "learning by doing," and without delay.

On the basis of this outlook, then, a recent decision of the Downers Grove, Illinois, school

board—"in support of education for living in a world community"—merits notice:

Resolved that it is the unequivocal policy of the Board of Education of School District No. 58 that there shall be no curtailment of the presentation of facts pertaining to, or giving rise to, controversial issues of state, national, or international importance, unless such presentation is otherwise curtailed by law, provided always, however, that the Superintendent and all teaching personnel shall exert their best and most sincere efforts to present such facts objectively and impartially.

To this forthright statement of principle may be appended the recent highly publicized comments of Senator Robert A. Taft. Relative to "loyalty investigations" in schools and universities, the Senator remarked that he saw no point "in examining the views of a few individual professors if they are not part of an organization promoting the spread of communism." As a member of the governing board of Yale University, he added his voice to current proclamations in favor of the "right to dissent":

I must say as a member of the board of trustees of a university, I would not favor firing anyone for being a communist unless I was certain that he was teaching communism and having some effect on the development of the thought of the students. . . . It seems to me doubtful whether anybody ought to be fired from a job in a college or elsewhere if he is not using that job to spread and teach doctrine intended to undermine and overthrow the government of this country in favor of a communist state.

At the time of writing, headlines are carrying the speculation that "Eisenhower May Put Brakes on McCarthy," or some equivalent thereof. Is it possible that the trend toward further thought-control in our institutions of learning has encountered so much strong and obviously principled opposition by distinguished men such as William O. Douglas and Stringfellow Barr that a reversal of opinion is about to take place? It is heartening for those who have protested inquisitorial probings into the personal views of teachers to be able to point to indications of this sort.

FRONTIERS

Public Affairs

WHEN, toward the end of 1951 (Oct. 27), *Collier's* printed a vivid "horror" story in the form of an article telling how the United States defeated Soviet Russia in a hypothetical "World War III," a great many people were horrified, not so much by the destructiveness of the then, and as yet, imaginary conflict, as by what seemed the extraordinary irresponsibility of the *Collier's* editors in printing the story at all. It was perhaps natural, after seeing *Collier's* make so wild a bid for sensationalism, to expect very little good of the magazine. But this apparently was a mistake, for *Collier's* for March 28 contains an article, "I Was Called a Subversive," by Mrs. Dorothy Frank, which is as good as the "World War III" nightmare was bad.

Mrs. Frank is a Los Angeles housewife who, early in 1952, joined the non-partisan and non-sectarian organization, Women for Legislative Action, and a little later became chairman of its committee on education. Before long, she found herself one of a small group of leaders in the defense of the Unesco education program in the Los Angeles city schools. Her story—the story of the almost legendary blindness and fanaticism involved in the attack on Unesco—needed to be placed before the American people, and *Collier's* has put it there. (Why did *Collier's* print it? Simply, we think, because it is an exciting story, well told, and sure to arouse comment. The World War III story, also, we feel sure, was printed for the same reason. We doubt that the *Collier's* editors have had a change of heart—they are rather a-political, and pro-story. But perhaps we should be glad that it is still possible for a mass-circulation magazine to be a-political, in these nervous days of ideological orthodoxy. It is a sign of an old-fashioned sort of health among publishers.)

Unesco is the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, participated

in by sixty-eight member nations of the UN. Its avowed goal is peace in a free world through the spread of knowledge, and its member nations are trying to lay the groundwork for international cooperation by combating ignorance, illiteracy, and prejudice. With these high aims, it is perhaps understandable that Unesco's budget totals only \$8,700,000 a year.

The controversy in which Mrs. Frank became embroiled began, so far as she was concerned, when she discovered that the Los Angeles public schools had dropped from the curriculum the study of the aims and policies of the Unesco program, pending an investigation of protests against such study. Doing a little investigating of her own, she found that the material objected to was a teachers' manual called *The "E" in UNESCO—"E" standing for education*. Looking into the work of Unesco, she also found that, as a result of its efforts—

The first public library had been set up in India. Scholars and scientists were being exchanged to collaborate in reducing illiteracy, spreading new agricultural techniques, developing desert regions, giving all humanity the benefit of modern scientific developments and technical skills.

The rest of Mrs. Frank's article is an almost incredible account of the highly organized misrepresentation and distortion which have accompanied the drive to keep simple instruction concerning the work of Unesco out of the city schools, and of the slander and insult which has been directed at Mrs. Frank because of her association with Unesco's defense. After making a public statement pleading for continuance of study of the Unesco program in the schools, Mrs. Frank found herself deluged with requests for information from bewildered citizens. As she says:

Over and over again I repeated the same answers to the same questions—often discouraged by how little individuals could do against the flood of flagrant misinformation pouring from the pressure groups. No, I would say, UNESCO does not abridge a single American right. It is specifically prohibited from intervening in any nation's domestic

jurisdiction. No, it is not a world government. It has no power except its appeal to the reason and conscience of man. No, it is not Communist. The Soviet Union has never been a member of UNESCO (more recently, two Soviet satellites, Poland and Hungary, also have withdrawn).

The confusion of my callers stemmed in large part from stories carried by some local newspapers. What were people to think when they read such headlines as "Huge Protest Halts UNESCO in L.A. Schools," and "Foes of 'One-World' Teaching Battle for Americanism"? Aside from their biased news reports, certain elements of the press also carried on an unrelenting attack in their editorial columns. They also played up the unfounded charges hurled by anti-UNESCO minority groups without giving comparable space for refutations. In one case, the papers gave great prominence to an attack on UNESCO by the Los Angeles Junior League; later, when the League retracted, not a paper printed the story. On another occasion one newspaper described UNESCO as "a program which would substitute the teaching of foreign isms for the teaching of patriotism and American history."

Such distortion of truth can almost make a savage out of a decent woman. The simple fact is that our children were not even taught about UNESCO until they had received a thorough grounding in basic American history and its great heroes.

I was sickened to realize that people of reason and intelligence had so little access to the truth—and so little backbone when they got the truth. Although two local papers, the Los Angeles Mirror and the Daily News, were encouragingly fair in their coverage of the issue, fear and intimidation were doing their deadly work. By innuendo, anyone who supported UNESCO became a Communist, a betrayer of his country. Of the people who phoned me for facts, most agreed that information about UNESCO should be taught, but many were afraid to support it publicly. Even friends and acquaintances, outspoken to *me* in praise of UNESCO, feared to bring up the subject among their friends or organizations. Among a few of my friends, a new coolness began to appear.

This is only the beginning of the story, which ought to be read entire in *Collier's*. While the defenders of Unesco and education about it won a moral victory or two, the Los Angeles Board of Education succumbed to pressure and finally abolished the Unesco program. (In the course of

the investigation, incidentally, a Board of Education committee completely cleared Unesco of the charges against it—such as being "communitistic"—and recommended that school children be taught about its work.) Mrs. Frank herself became the target of vindictive hate, receiving telephone invitations to "get out of the country," while one woman wrote her that she was "not fit for American citizenship."

What has happened in Los Angeles is only one more illustration of what former Attorney General Francis Biddle termed "The Fear of Freedom" in his book of this name. It is a symptom of anxiety and of the resentment felt by people who are unhappy over affairs at home and abroad, and who are looking for someone to blame for their uneasiness. Let loose a demagogue or two among such people, and the rest is easy.

What can be done about it? First, and most obviously, we can stand up and be counted, as Mrs. Frank has done. But what if we don't have enough Mrs. Franks, as seems to have been the case in respect to keeping the Unesco program in the city schools? What about all those people who "agreed" with Mrs. Frank, but kept quiet about it—and others who became "cool" toward her? To all these, the issue of to teach or not to teach about Unesco seemed not very important—at least, not important enough to go through any unpleasantness over it. Here, perhaps, is one key to our problem, which can be considered apart from the ugly reality Mrs. Frank described by saying:

There could be no common meeting ground with people who could insist that black is white and try to get away with it by name calling and besmirching. Many of these violent opponents of UNESCO had admitted that they had never even *seen The "E" in UNESCO*, and it was impossible to penetrate their bitterness with facts.

We are not concerned, here, with calling "spineless" or weak in character the intelligent people who fail to back efforts like Mrs. Frank's; their character, after all, is their own affair. The

question worth discussing is this: What is missing in our cultural outlook which makes it so easy for so many people to ignore such issues as unimportant? At what level do we need to go to work in order to *change* this situation? We can't afford to wait until we learn about such things in a *Collier's* article any more than we can afford to delay treatment of a disturbed individual until after his neurotic tendencies have become rigid. We need to get at causes long before either of these points is reached.

But what *are* the causes? Basically, we think, these causes are wrapped up in the success-loving, pleasure-seeking, extroverted attitudes which typify the American scene. The voice of reason is at a disadvantage in a room saturated with emotional tension, and people devoted to success don't like to operate at a disadvantage. It doesn't pay very well. Such people really believe that it is a bit foolish to get involved in such controversies.

The issue, then, is at root philosophical—or, if you will, religious. It has to do with the ends of human life. And the ends in life of people who are doing fairly well, thank you, are seldom exchanged for better ones simply because of a crisis in democratic intelligence, or the lack of it. That is why, in the last analysis, MANAS is more concerned with questions of psychology and philosophy than it is with politics—even that most excellent brand of politics, the striving for international accord through world government or some other species of legislative action. The decisive reality in human life is where the heart is set. "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also," is an unchangeably true saying, and while we may not be able to alter the hearts of men, we can at least weigh the things they treasure—weigh them, and try to discover what they are really worth.