

## THE PROMISE OF AMERICA

LET us begin by considering for a moment the matter of American cultural mediocrity, which is often criticized explicitly or implicitly both at home and abroad. Certainly it requires no great effort to make a devastating case against it. American society is vulgarian, and often anti-intellectual. "Egg-head" is the term of opprobrium with which American intellectuals are flayed. The mass media—radio, television, moving pictures—are characterized by Bob Hope, soap operas, singing commercials, Mickey Spillane, Dagmar, and Marilyn Monroe. One could go on amassing the evidence by the hour. Divorce rates, neuroses—individual and mass—juke boxes, comic books, and the popularity of Sen. McCarthy might all be thrown into the documentation. The only prognosis possible at the end of this gloomy recital would be that of social sickness, chaos, and ultimate destruction. All of these are real possibilities.

But another way of looking at the American scene permits of a somewhat more optimistic outlook. It promises more, because it allows one to work with the people and materials present. It is true that the American society is a vulgarian one—and there are reasons, perhaps, to be glad that it is. There are also reasons *why* it is. Among them are some that social dreamers and reformers spent their lives to achieve. What has happened in the United States has happened as much by historical happenstance and geographic good fortune as by any great degree of foresight and human wisdom. But even wisdom has not been entirely lacking. What has happened, I suggest, is this: the United States is the first country in the world in which the masses have successfully revolted. It is the most spontaneously and culturally collectivized mass society in the world. It is a society in which there is no ruling class, but where a whole variety of power groups bargain

and horse-trade according to a system of unwritten rules. It is a society which is so fluid and fast-changing that hardly an individual or group in it can stop to rest, to take the direction, or name the port toward which all are moving. This condition of being adrift—but on a fast-moving vessel—of being cut off from others, of atomization, alienation, and helplessness naturally frightens people and provides meat for prophets of doom and for soothers of the soul. But it is a concomitant of social transformation.

American intellectuals and social reformers who have watched the rapid changes of the past thirty-five to forty years often find themselves in a state of confusion or anger. The social revolution so many of them desired and worked for has taken place—without anybody being fully aware of it. In America the common man, the mass man, the little man, has come into his own. He is a member of the powerful groups. He has to be consulted; he can determine the outcome of elections; he can affect policy; he is the consumer, and as consumer is becoming more important in a sense than he was when he was only the producer. But now that it has come—the social revolution, that is—the intellectuals and reformers are disturbed: they find they don't entirely like it. The common man is now free, he has the vote, he has a job, he can even get a college education. What does he do with it all? He buys a shiny car, a shiny refrigerator, a television set, and indulges himself in the popular culture; that is, Bob Hope, soap operas, Mickey Spillane, Dagmar, and Marilyn Monroe. Furthermore, he votes as often as not for Joe McCarthy, supports loyalty oaths for university professors, and shows himself an easy victim of mass manipulation when subjected to the propaganda techniques of the Government, the various pressure groups, and the mass media.

The other side of this coin, however, is that class lines in America have not tightened but remain fluid. The general level of life has been lifted materially and intellectually. However, college professors tend to speak, not the King's English, but the vernacular of the masses. They are not remote and awesome figures, but "good guys" who can be seen in off hours puttering about in blue jeans or cheering the home team from the grand stands. This is a perilous situation, in some respects, for it can easily mean that the egalitarian pressures reduce the whole to a dead level of mediocrity. But it can also mean that the whole will be lifted slowly upward, although this requires a period of time during which mediocrity threatens the whole. But should this period successfully be passed, there could emerge a remarkably enlightened society, both quantitatively and qualitatively.

There seem to be two roads to freedom available to men. The one is the road of abstinence and asceticism. In our own time, Gandhi has perhaps best personified and exemplified this way. By reducing one's needs one becomes free, and able to resist the threat of tyranny.

The second way to freedom is at once quantitative and qualitative; it is the way of social abundance in a relatively peaceful and intellectual world. Whatever the virtues of the two ways, it seems a truism to say that most of the world's population seems bent upon trying the second way. There is little evidence in America or elsewhere in the world that any substantial group of men is going to give up the effort to gain worldly possessions sufficient to a certain minimum of physical comfort and well-being. At this moment America clearly has chosen the way of social abundance, and it is safe to say that it has produced the first such mass society in the history of the world. True, this abundance is not equally distributed, but in recent years it has reached such a pitch that more and more are enjoying its benefits, and we can see no economic reason why

all shouldn't enjoy them. That this condition of abundance may be only temporary is not evidence that it cannot become permanent. Heretofore abundance was not within the technological capacity of man; now it is. And almost all the world knows it. Hence the demand everywhere for a fairer share of the world's goods.

My argument here is that the combination of economic and social organization achieved in the United States—for whatever reason or by whatever means—carries with it a hope for this country and all the world that can be of far greater importance than some of the consequences feared as arising from an artificial prosperity due to war crises, and beyond ordinary control. The real job for Americans in the world at this time could very well be that of making explicit to themselves and others the new situation in which they find themselves. Americans need to be aware of the changes that have caught them up; they need a new vocabulary to describe and analyze the new situation. They need to know how their power can be and is misused, but also that whoever has power will never be fully trusted, and certainly will not always be liked. The best way to maintain and enlarge the freedom and equality we cherish will be to find ways, not to clasp this power to ourselves, but to share it and transfer it to all other peoples.

What I have said could easily lend itself to the interpretation that I have blinded myself to the dangerous trends in much of contemporary American life. I do not suggest that this is the best of all possible worlds. I believe I am as aware as most laymen of the disastrous consequences which can flow from the present American social structure, given certain minor turns of events, or certain major errors of judgment. The dilemmas and paradoxes in our country stagger the imagination. The fundamental problem of the changes being wrought in the social structure through the gigantic growth of military power and of military requirements combine in themselves both dilemma and paradox.

I hope in the near future to devote some time to a consideration of the impact upon American society of the Pentagon and what flows from it.

But, despite these constructions and growths which seem to belie what I have said, my thesis is that there may still remain the time and the ingenuity to re-channel the creativity that presently goes into them, so that other tendencies and structures of a more hopeful sort can be vastly strengthened. It is instructive that Gandhi, who sought freedom for himself through abstinence, actually worked for the freedom of Indian society through an increase (relative to that society) of material goods, of education, and through the development of peaceful social methods of solving problems and of resisting oppression. This suggests to me that any mass society seeking freedom through abundance and peace needs to contain, and to value, men who, as individuals, gain freedom through their willingness to give up worldly gain, or at least, who do not seek it. We have all seen in the past few years how desperately America needs men of personal conviction, who can stand against the unreasonable demands of the mass mind, who will say "No" when the unthinking or fearful say "Yes," and who do not panic at the prospect that by saying "No" they may lose their job or some of their prestige. Sometimes it has been nip and tuck, and has seemed that such men had disappeared from American life. Nevertheless a few have emerged, and with them there has grown a public opinion which at least has held some of the strongholds of freedom. American vulgarian culture is then a reality—but in a strangely democratic sense; if a Frenchman, for example, defends culture, he defends the work of an élite. If he criticizes American culture, he attacks the whole American scene, for the majority is involved in culture in the United States. American intellectuals may be in a tenuous position, but there is a sense in which they are much more a part of their society than is the case with intellectuals in many other parts of the world. They are not an elite; they are not a class apart.

They mix and work with middlebrows and lowbrows, and they are not allowed to feel superior or separate. Even their relative lack of prestige gives them a certain sense of inferiority which may not be altogether regrettable.

Given this situation, then, I am advocating that we should not despair, but work positively to strengthen those aspects of our common life which hold great human and social promise. Further, that we should not hesitate to work negatively to weaken and oppose tendencies which might make some of the predictions of foreign observers come true. It seems to me the part of wisdom to work for the conditions of a free and peaceful society through the encouragement and support of hopeful elements which are already present, rather than to move from deprecation to despair because of tendencies which are not hopeful, and which cannot be eradicated except over a long period of time.

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## *Letter from* **CENTRAL EUROPE**

INNSBRUCK.—The de-Nazification laws in Austria are rather severe, certainly more severe than in Germany itself. The tendency of the German ordinances was to assume that everybody had to be "de-Nazified" as an individual. This ended in a classification and in the penalty of a fine, but in most cases, the person in question was—after that—no longer treated as a second-class citizen. The Austrian laws, however, provided for the establishment of special "Peoples' Courts" and registration of everyone who had been in contact with the Nazi organizations.

Many articles have been written already about the failure of de-Nazification. Many people who were only ordinary party members or did not belong to any organization at all, but were guilty of countless injustices, often went free, while others—who held some local office yet did nothing wrong—were attacked by personal foes and heavily punished. The fact that the de-Nazification laws declared illegal a system which had been in power for years created hate, and the indifference of the great majority of the population to politics—deplored by so many statesmen of Central Europe today—is often the result of the unfair methods which were employed in the de-Nazification program.

At present, and particularly in Austria, the "punishment" for the former Nazis has boiled down to a tax which most of them have to pay, or which is subtracted directly from their income. Many of them are not permitted to engage in certain professions and if they do something that someone else doesn't like, they are likely to be reminded of their Nazi past.

Feeling that no real progress can be gained by these means, the Austrian Parliament, some time ago, resolved to end the whole thing with a general amnesty. However, since Austria is not yet empowered to regulate and settle her own affairs, this decision had to be submitted to the Allied Council (the High Commissioners of the U.S.A., Great Britain, France, and Soviet Russia), who promptly rejected the plan. The Parliament then asked the Allied Council to exempt from de-Nazification proceedings the Austrian soldiers who had been taken prisoner by the Russians and suffered hard conditions in Siberian POW camps,

and returned to their homes in Austria—most of them physically worn out—during last year, or are still held in detention. It was perhaps to be expected that the Soviet High Commissioner would reject even this proposal, but not that the US High Commissioner would declare his attitude to be identical with that of the Bolshevik—which he did.

Nearly another year has passed since this decision, and nothing has changed. While in Germany the Nazi problem is regarded as "solved," the Austrian Government must still observe the regulations which, just after the war, were accepted by the Austrian legislature on the promise that Austria would receive its State Treaty if it showed no mercy to members of Nazi organizations. But the State Treaty has never been signed and the unanimous demand of the Austrian Parliament for permission to put—after so many years—a final stop to the persecution of former Nazis has received no attention.

A few weeks ago, however, the Austrian Minister of the Interior recommended to all Austrian District Commissioners to receive with kindness those soldiers who have been prisoners in Eastern concentration camps, and only now are returning to their families, and to leave them alone, no matter what their political creed was, before or during the war. This attitude is not only philanthropic, but also intelligent, as there can be no doubt that a man who stood for certain political convictions, worked for them, saw them vanish, recognized that he was deceived by his leaders, suffered in gruesome camps, lost his health and was for many years separated from wife and children, would very likely become an altogether useless citizen or a fanatic, if, upon returning home at last, he met with new persecutions.

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## *REVIEW*

### BACKGROUND ON KOREA

YEARS ago the American naval authority, Admiral Mahan, much studied by students of military theory, laid down this principle: "The province of force in human affairs is to give moral ideas time to take root." It seems evident that this statement provides the only conceivable justification for any sort of aggressive military undertaking. The wars of the twentieth century have all been more or less ideological in background and inspiration—claiming a background of "moral ideas." Not for fifty or a hundred years have the leaders of any civilized nation dared to propose a war for either expansionist or imperialist purposes. Whatever their actual motives, military measures are always made to seem a necessity in either humanitarian or libertarian terms. This was true so long ago as the reign of Louis Napoleon, who declared, when defending a policy which was to end in the Crimean War: "Europe well knows that France has no thought of aggrandizement. . . . The day of conquests by force is past, never to return. Not in extending the limits of its territory may a nation henceforward be honored and powerful. It must take the lead in behalf of noble ideals and bring the dominion of justice and righteousness everywhere to prevail."

In saying this, Napoleon III became the keynoter for all subsequent propaganda for war. Even if wars are fought for quite other ends, the men who fight them will respond wholeheartedly to no other appeal.

The case of the Korean war, now brought to an uneasy and dubious finish, illustrates the power of Mahan's principle over even avowed ideologists such as the Communists. This is to be expected, for Communism claims to be a system of moral ideas with the intention of making "the dominion of justice and righteousness everywhere to prevail." A particularly interesting editorial in the *Christian Century* for Nov. 4 points out that the

cessation of hostilities in Korea was delayed for at least a year over the question of what would happen to the prisoners of war taken by the UN forces. The communists insisted that these former communist troops be forcibly repatriated, while the UN command, committed by its own propaganda, was equally determined to allow the prisoners to choose for themselves whether or not they would rejoin their communist comrades. The deadlock was broken when the communists agreed that the POW's could make their own choice about coming home, provided an opportunity was afforded to influence their decision. As the *Christian Century* puts it:

It was agreed that prisoners who refused repatriation would be handed over to a commission of "neutrals" under whose vigilant eye "persuaders" might try to convert their former countrymen. Then President Rhee endangered the whole arrangement by ordering his men to free ex-communists whom they were guarding. Thousands escaped. It was only when the communists were persuaded that the treachery was Rhee's, and not that of the United Nations command, that the truce was finally signed. Now the welkin rings with the frenzied protests of the prisoners against having to listen to persuader and the loud wails of the Czech and Polish delegates because the Swiss, Swedish and Indian delegates on the prisoner commission refuse to permit the use of force to compel the prisoners to listen.

The issue, here, is one of relativities. It is a matter of where you stop using force and let the moral ideas stand alone. The communist view, expressed by the Czech and Polish delegates, was that more force was needed in order to get a hearing for the communist ideology. (Let us note, here, that India, so often accused of supporting the communist line, stood firm on this point with the UN position, refusing any sort of compulsion to the communist "persuaders.")

The *CC* editorial continues with a detailed account of Allied treatment of the 140,000 North Korean and Chinese prisoners, prior to the making of the truce. This is of special interest, since about half of the North Koreans and three quarters of the Chinese POW's said that they

would never return to live under communist control. According to the *CC*:

When the communists surrendered they were taken to Koje island, south of Korea, for detention in what was for a time the largest prisoner-of-war camp in history. Why did so many prisoners defect from communism at Koje and come over to our side? There were several reasons. First, the prisoners received decent treatment, contrary to what their communist officers had told them. Copies of the Geneva convention on treatment of prisoners of war were posted everywhere in the camp. Second, they learned the truth about what was going on in their countries and in the world through a well planned educational program. Every man had an opportunity to take part in educational activities designed to meet his needs. Third, Korean and Chinese pastors and Protestant, Catholic and even Buddhist missionaries were encouraged to conduct religious services and classes. These were largely attended.

This program was, of course, part of a deliberate attempt to wean the communist troops away from their political faith, but participation, the editorial states, was entirely voluntary. Whether or not the same treatment would have been accorded to men who gave no evidence at all of inclination to change their views is a question which ought to be raised, perhaps, even though we have no way of answering it. But what is of further additional interest here is that the riots on Koje occurred at the instigation of a small minority of officers who saw what was happening. These communist leaders among the POW's hoped to destroy any possible world sympathy that might exist for the way the prisoners were being treated, and in this, the editorial notes, they succeeded:

Even the American correspondents fell into the trap and our papers were full of demands that our command be punished because it allowed a state of affairs out of which such an uprising could come. To this day it has not dawned on the American public that the humane treatment given the prisoners of Koje had anything to do with the great ideological victory that was won there.

The *Christian Century* founds great hopes on this conclusion, proposing that the UN policy on Koje may mark the beginning of a receding tide of

Communist influence throughout Asia. This seems a bit optimistic, but the principle, certainly, is sound. If sides must be chosen in conflicts of this sort, it is natural to choose the side which is most willing to trust to the power of moral ideas, or even just the power of ideas, as distinguished from any sort of coercion.

We turn, now, to an article in the *Progressive* for November, in which Philip Deane, a British war correspondent who spent most of the Korean war in a communist POW camp, describes how an American "GI Joe" was converted to Communism. It was in July, 1950, that "Joe" was captured, after his ammunition ran out. His first introduction to his captors was five days without food and water, during which he was beaten repeatedly. After three months, Deane had a chance to speak to Joe for a couple of minutes. Joe said he was going to spend the rest of his life "fighting these Red bastards." Then, a while later, Deane heard that Joe had joined a "Red Star Club" in order to get better food. Along with the food, however, went the obligation of undergoing sessions with Communist indoctrinators. Mr. Deane continues:

The theme of the Communist teaching was simple. It went like this:

"The capitalist, eager for more gain, exploits you and you and you. He could not work his factories or his machines without you, yet he pays you only just enough for you to survive. He will keep you miserable and retard progress to safeguard his benefits. He will suppress useful inventions to continue making excess profits. Whatever progress has been made was made in spite of the capitalist, by you, when you took power in your own hands or frightened the boss into concessions."

All this was illustrated by examples from history. The examples, unfortunately, were often true, and Joe knew them to be true. The fact that they were quoted out of context, that they were presented as independent bodies in a vacuum, did not cross his mind. The indoctrinator was telling Joe of happenings which Joe had heard from his father, his schoolteacher, and in church. The indoctrinator was connecting all these things which Joe had always regarded as independent accidents. The indoctrinator

was explaining why these things had happened. And—this is very important—he was telling Joe why such things would happen again.

At this point, there is need to go back and tell something about Joe during the first days after he, Deane, and the others were captured by the Communist troops. Deane relates:

Ill with sunstroke and concussion, he [Joe] still found the courage and character to look after the wounded of our party. He kept my leg from going gangrenous by sucking the rotten humors out of my wounds at every opportunity. I couldn't do anything for myself because my hands were tied behind my back.

It was natural, therefore, for Deane to take a special interest in Joe, member of the "Red Star Club":

Joe, the brave, selfless, patriotic kid from a decent family of the United States, became a convinced Communist, and was an active member of the so-called "Peace Committee" organized by the Reds in North Korea to proselytize prisoners.

Why did Joe fall? There was another boy with whom I had more association, and who went through the same sort of crisis. I had a chance to help him fight back successfully. Watching him gave me some ideas about Joe.

I think Joe fell because we hadn't told him our version of the story—not completely, that is. If you like, he fell because we had not taught him a way of life. . . .

Deane goes on to argue that young men of GI-Joe age *are* interested in the problems which puzzled Joe, after the Communists had worked on him. Having no theory of explanation for the facts—those he recognized as facts—which the indoctrinator threw at him, he was converted.

Well, you may say, only twenty-three Americans decided to stay in North Korea or China and become Communists, while some 70,000 North Korean and Chinese soldiers decided not to go back home. But what you have to add to this comparison is the fact that the Americans chose a pretty Spartan existence, as against the relative prosperity enjoyed by nearly everybody in America.

It would be a great mistake to suppose that Deane is willfully sympathetic to the Communist outlook. His book, *I Was a Captive in Korea* (reviewed in the November *Progressive*), points out that the Communist attempts at "brainwashing" were on the whole ineffective because the subjects were "mature men with adequate intellectual backgrounds." The *Progressive* reviewer adds, however:

The indoctrination proved more successful with some of the less mature prisoners. The report on the content of the indoctrination and the conversations with Communist leaders gives the reader an insight into how the Reds look at our world.

We close this comparison—of the *Christian Century* analysis of the Koje POW camp with Deane's account of Communist indoctrination methods—with a note on the general excellence of the *Progressive* in relation to the larger problems of war and peace. No other independent publication we know of keeps hammering away so consistently at the issues which need consideration. In this, the November, issue, is a review by William Neumann, relating how the United States Government in effect rebuffed a Japanese peace offer made in the Spring of 1941, which included withdrawal of Japanese troops from the Chinese mainland and the restoration of China's political integrity. And Milton Mayer's notes on current events usually reflect something of the light shed by the Great Books on all human events and affairs. For those who wonder, sometimes, whether or not war can any longer serve as a preparation for the rooting of moral ideas, the *Progressive* should prove one of the more useful publications.

## *COMMENTARY*

### PROBLEMS OF SOCIAL CHANGE

THE thing we find impressive about Roy Kepler's article, "The Promise of America," is its freedom from "all-or-nothing" psychology. Mr. Kepler is amply critical of conditions and attitudes in the United States, yet he does not advocate a grand sweeping of American culture into the discard, after which we may begin to create some brave, new world out of the wreckage. Rather he accepts the difficult assignment of endeavoring to work with what is good in American life, without requiring any nihilist break with the past.

The idea of "general revolution" has been a popular one with most radicals. It is a vastly simple program, in terms of theory. You seize power, throw the old system back into the button-molder's pot, then issue decrees establishing a new freedom and justice and equality. You are thus relieved of having to weigh carefully the differing factors and ingredients in the existing organization of society. You do not have to learn to practice the virtue of patience. You can, moreover, claim that your impatience with the *status quo* is really the extreme daring needed to transform the world.

The simplicity of general revolutionary theory works something like this: First, you define the Ideal Society in terms acceptable to everyone, or almost everyone. Then you identify all the virtues with that ideal. Having come this far, it is easy to insist that there can be no virtue at all in any other sort of society. It follows that only "reactionaries" will bother to pick and choose in their criticism of the *status quo*. Away with it! It stands in the way of the perfect dream! What seem like virtues in the present are no more than sham, artifice, hypocrisy. Tolerance is weakness, patience a sickly timidity and failure to "face facts." The stern, ruthless way of total destruction before rebuilding is the way which recognizes the compassion hiding behind the surgeon's knife.

This credo of fanaticism is the pattern of escapism and irresponsibility in revolutionary

action. It hardens, when power is gained, into the fierce omnipotence of party domination, which turns out to be *necessary* to preserve order, since no inner discipline, no capacity for measured criticism and wise reconstruction has been developed.

People used to the forms of self-government are naturally horrified by political fanaticism. They suspect its nihilist origin. So far, so good. But a more important consideration is whether or not an article like Kepler's makes one feel a little suspicious or uncomfortable. If so, we may be in danger of falling into a reliance on the forms of self-government alone, to the neglect of its substance. There is no better way to invite the rule of fanaticism.

## CHILDREN ... and Ourselves

WE propose, this week, to advance the cause of religion. The task is congenial enough, for the popular trend during recent years has been to encourage Church attendance. It is also popular to call for a uniting of all good Christians to oppose the "communistic" forces of irreligion. Again and again, it has been affirmed that we need more religion, that every child should have a religion.

We entirely agree. Every child should indeed have a religion. In fact, there should be so much religion that each child can be allowed to have his own. That is our platform: "A religion for every child." We refuse to be outdone by church publicists.

Each adult, of course, will have to develop a religion of his own first, before he will be willing to grant children a similar luxury, so perhaps we had best precede practical proposals with a survey of what must be done to provide adequate religion for adults. The first logical step would seem to be the conversion of all our churches into places of philosophical study. The habit of whole groups of people of sharing a single creed must be done away with, if we are seeking religion for everyone; and if the subject-matter of religion can be studied by each for himself, we should be on the right track.

The next step, perhaps, would be to relinquish the notion that a religion must have a name. Let's not force people to think up names for their religions, and especially not children; besides, if everyone's religion is different from everyone else's there wouldn't be much point in having names for them all, since the formal names simply serve to distinguish one group of people from another. If there are no groups, if everyone's religion is recognized as being different from everyone else's, then everyone is satisfactorily distinguished from everyone else to begin with. We don't need to be informed that B's ideas of

Truth, Goodness and Beauty may be different from A's. We take this for granted and save a lot of time. And if adults don't need to "belong" to some organization to assure themselves that they are religious, children won't be bothered any more by the tensions surrounding "released time" church programs in the schools. The children will know that it isn't just a matter of Jews, Protestants and Catholics being of different faiths: all would have different faiths and therefore all be the same by being equally different.

But it must be owned that having a religion is something more than having a personality. Having a religion means having views on morality—ideas about behavior to be put into practice. Having a religion also means placing faith in certain ethical principles which lead one to examine his own motivations in human interrelationships. Having a religion also means believing that a man should follow some other star than the caprice of desires, and that desires are to be evaluated and controlled when such control is indicated by the principles he holds. Above all, religion is something that serves to illumine the idea of a universal human brotherhood, which can bind men together by suggesting that, if all men and all children are different, all men and children are also the same.

Thus the establishment of religion could begin by focussing attention upon the question of what all men have in common. Social interdependence, in turn, may be regarded as evidence that, over and above the differences of personality and aptitude, beyond what psychologists call the "social self," there is an inner self, and that this inner self involves an essence which is no more one person than it is another. The inner self may, for want of a better term, be thought of as the Self of Spirit, as distinguished from the Self of Matter. From the standpoint of the Self of Matter, everyone is separate and distinct from everyone else; from the standpoint of the Self of Spirit everyone is united. It is the intuitional voice of the Self of Spirit which inspires us to note

cheerfully the obvious dissimilarities of values and ideals among our contemporaries—which encourages the attempt to learn something from them, and thus to press beyond such differences to the important similarities between our beliefs and theirs. For if the Self of Spirit is within each man and child, everything for which any person strives contains some elements of truth, goodness or beauty which we can appreciate. Truth is diffused everywhere, not localized in a family tradition, a religious creed, or a political ideology. We expand our horizons and increase our appreciation of the existence of the Spiritual Self of all men, as we learn to look with attentive expectancy at every idea and belief, no matter how apparently outlandish it may appear to be.

At this point we are enabled to see how important a part the intellect may play in the development of a worthy religion. In children we often note a curious disequilibrium; their intuitive sympathies are broad, while their intellectual understanding may be narrower even than those of their parents. The reason first enlists, it appears, in partisan causes, and is employed, not to discover a larger truth than that presently seen, but to defend the supposed absolute rightness of a personal contention. Thus children are at once the natural enemies of partisan thinking and its easy converts. In terms of partisanship, the fanatics of every age are extremely childlike, though the child is a much more enjoyable companion than the adult partisan because the child forgets his partisanship periodically, while adults manage this very seldom.

This recalls the theme developed so admirably in Arthur Jersild's *In Search of Self*: We need to learn the values of self-criticism, and we need to learn them through practicing rational techniques of self-criticism. The capacity for self-criticism has endless scope, once awakened. Looking inward with the help of this power, we are able to see ourselves dispassionately, note the immaturities, the fears, the hostilities which make us so much less than we could be. Looking

outward, we may see how little is gained by recognizing the faults so apparent in other nations, other political and economic beliefs, and in people remote from us in time. Since the shortcomings of others will not give us the broader view we need, they are apt only to encourage a deceptive self-satisfaction.

Thus we should welcome those who disagree with us, for those who disagree with us may reveal some fault, some inadequacy of our own thinking, which we otherwise might never know existed. Did not a revered religious teacher once say "Love shine enemies," and is this not sound psychological counsel, even from the standpoint of self-interest? The theist should welcome the atheist, for the latter, by the insistence of his contentions, compels the believer to redefine deity, and we suspect that the noblest religions require that deity be redefined almost daily.

Poetry and all the arts can certainly contribute to the broadening vision of a worthy religion. They represent the spirit of man in flight to better things, while conventional religion and politics usually express childish defense of the *status quo*. Adults may help children to see that the sort of religion worth discovering comes from upward flights of the mind, during which we may endlessly experience the deep pleasure afforded by new horizons. Our religion, as that of the child, should be regarded simply as a summation of the farthest we can see at any given time. Therefore one's religion is never perfect, nor even fully true, and certainly not beautiful enough to last for the ages. Always there is need for the glimpse of larger truths which make old ones diminish in the new light.

## *FRONTIERS* Seeds of "Counter Revolution"

FOR those who feel that the world of George Orwell's *1984* is just around the corner, as we are bombarded by ever increasing demands for conformity of political opinion, the scanning of three recent periodicals may provide omens of good cheer. The Fall *Antioch Review*, for instance, contains about the most impressive discussion of political freedom we have yet encountered, in the form of a symposium on "Liberty, Civil and Academic." The leading article, "The Demagogue and the Intellectual," by Aaron Levenstein, reveals some often unsuspected battle lines between the demagogue and the intellectual:

The Intellectual on the witness stand faces as his first challenge the need to protect himself against being forced to speak half-truths. This is much more difficult for the Intellectual than for other people. His effort to see things whole involves him in a thousand subtleties of qualification and differentiation. The closer you come to his specialty, the more aware he is of shadings of value, of significant differences, where the layman can see only uniformity or identity. Speaking of the early years of Christianity, the man-in-the-street thinks only of one sect; to the historian there are Arians, Monophysites, Nicaeans, Donatists, Manichaeans, and so on. In the eyes of the Demagogue of that day, they were all Christians, hence atheists because they denied the Gods worshipped by the state.

The capacity to make distinctions is the factor that distinguishes the Intellectual from the Demagogue, as the capacity to think distinguishes man from the beast. In fact, the controversy between the Intellectual and the Demagogue originates partially in this difference between them. And this is why the Intellectual and the Demagogue have never really been able to live together at any time in history. Their difference in method, for example, makes it impossible for the two to cooperate even in fighting a common foe.

Mr. Levenstein has evolved a credo for college professors and writers who find themselves called to the witness stand by the apostles of McCarthy, although, for reasons given above, he recognizes that such a statement of attitude is much easier to get across in an essay than before hostile witnesses. However, it is Mr.

Levenstein's point that *only* the fine distinctions which most of the McCarthyites are not even able to grasp can bring the battle to a happy conclusion.

It must still be possible somewhere in the world—in our own country at least—for a man to stand up and say: "In my youth I asked many questions and I pursued many phantoms in my search for truth. I have wandered in many pathways where I thought the truth could be found. Often I have been compelled to retrace my steps and pick up the chase afresh. I regret hours lost, but I am not ashamed of them. I am proud that I had the courage to seek and find the philosophy I now hold. I know what I think today, and I believe it firmly enough to die for it, though not so firmly but what I would abandon it if persuasive evidence were introduced against it. I am not ashamed of my past. I would not think as I do today if I had not thought as I did yesterday. And I would not have the answers I have today if I had not voiced the questions I asked yesterday."

Another passage worth repeating:

The fact is that the indecent weapons now being wielded by the Demagogue with mad abandon in Washington are offenses against the most sacred values of the Intellectual. Above all stands the Demagogue's assault on logic. If he triumphs, then the textbooks—all the way back to Aristotle—will have to be rewritten, as Soviet philology was rewritten by a man who spoke Russian with a Georgian accent, and as Soviet genetics was rewritten by an ingenious and very well educated peasant named Trofim Lysenko. Until now there has been an assumption that this cancer of Illogic can be isolated in the social body—in the lungs of politics, to choose the first figure that comes to mind so soon after an election campaign. Unfortunately, the isolation of social evil is not possible. The history of nations in which totalitarianism has triumphed demonstrates that the monolith, once raised, continues to throw its shadow across ever larger areas of thought.

In the same number of *Antioch Review*, Walter Metzger provides some interesting historical notes on the struggle for academic freedom. The real menace to free expression, it is clear, is something a lot more complicated than either Communism or McCarthy. The fact is that our intellectual tradition, as it operates at the university level, has itself demanded increasing

conformity, along with the growth of the universities. The scholars escaped from the priests only to be taken under surveillance by "businessmen." Dr. Metzger indicates why "lay government" may eventually enable the demagogue to dominate the intellectual—and to an extreme we usually associate with the Middle Ages:

We have lay government and are likely to keep it, and the effect of this on the whole drift of academic freedom cannot be overestimated. One effect is particularly worthy of mention, and that is the way lay control may be analogized with other kinds of institutions to the detriment of academic independence. While ministers were trustees in large numbers they tended to conceive of the colleges as pastorates and to make close surveillance their duty. Later, when the new elite of business men entered, they read into this ink-blot of lay government the analogy of the business corporation. The university has had to fight for the elementary right to be what it is, a center of independent thought—not a church, not a business. I do not lay the blame for this harmful confusion on the hereditary defects of trustees. Far from it, since for every gain in faculty independence and faculty autonomy there has had to be a board of trustees somewhere to give its blessings. But there is the inescapable reality of power which mis-educates us all, even the best of us, and it was neatly summed up by Robert M. Hutchins when he said that, under our system, when a trustee and a professor find themselves in conflict, it never occurs to the trustee that *he* should be the one to resign.

It is impossible to select the "best" portions of this symposium, since each essay seems almost uniformly excellent throughout, yet we cannot turn to review of another periodical without including one remark of Heinz Eulau, who writes: "It is one of the ironies of the present situation that the Communists and the McCarthyites need each other, that they complement each other. They are brothers under the skin. Without McCarthy, the Communists could not quite play the role of being defenders of civil liberties and democratic processes. Without the Communists, McCarthy would hardly find fertile ground for the application of his talents."

Meanwhile, the October *Progressive* contains two articles of correlative significance, Michael Amrine's "Faith, Fear and Fusion" and Elmer Davis' "The Fear of Americanism." Mr. Davis begins:

The present attack on the freedom of the mind is the worst America has had to face since the days of the Alien and Sedition Acts of 1798. Then as now, the pretext was fear that some of our citizens were loyal to a dangerous foreign power rather than to their own country; then as now, many honest but thickheaded men were convinced that any disagreement with their own opinions was disloyalty; then as now, this sentiment was skillfully used by reactionary politicians to try to break down men and opinions which they didn't like, though there was no taint of disloyalty about them. That is the real target now.

Then, in the *Humanist* for July-August, there is a temperate but revealing account of a government employee's interminable persecution as a supposed "security risk"—without the slightest shred of evidence against him. As the writer, Roger Hurst, puts it, if you are accused by anyone of subversive thoughts or affiliations, you *cannot subsequently win reclamation of your reputation*:

You will lose emotionally, professionally, and financially. You will win only on principle, but there are thousands who believe that to be significant. Each employee endangered by injustice will have to decide for himself whether the game is worth the candle. It was for me, because I am mulish, but I can understand why so many resign when the faceless charges are made.

Finally, we call attention to Archibald MacLeish's article, "Loyalty and Freedom," in the Autumn *American Scholar*, in which the poet says:

Those who now attack personal freedom at its roots in the universities, and who threaten to attack it in the churches and the press, are themselves obliged to use the vocabulary of freedom to justify their activities. What would seem to us to have changed, I think, is not our belief in freedom but our *faith* in freedom—our faith that freedom will really work—that it can, itself, and by its own means, survive the attacks of enemies as gigantic, as closely integrated,

as disciplined, as controlled as the enemy it faces now.

But to say this is to say, at the same time, something more. Faith in freedom rests necessarily upon faith in man. The American belief in man was the condition precedent to the existence of the American Republic.

What has befallen us as a people? Have we truly changed, or have we only forgotten for a time the history out of which we come?

The point that impresses us the most is that, in picking up at random four magazines, we were able to discover so many articles of this quality, not only containing a fire of inspiration, but also without a spark of "counter hate" against the McCarthyites. Men like the writers of these essays *cannot lose* their battle, because they are not afraid of losing it—because they are not afraid. We have some hope that the recent swing toward persecution of unorthodox opinion, which has threatened to destroy the foundations of intelligent self-government, may eventually prove to have been only the prelude to a vigorous movement to wean the majority *away* from the demagogues.