

THE LIBERAL SPIRIT

WHETHER or not human beings are more or less intelligent than they were a few thousand—or a few hundred—years ago; whether or not there has been what may honestly be called "progress"; and whether or not present-day theories of knowledge and concepts of reality are an improvement over those of the past—these are riddles we should not like to be called upon to answer. Devising a yardstick of human progress would be an exceedingly difficult task, and applying it, still more difficult. There would probably be endless objections raised during both procedures—as, no doubt, there should be, for where in the world can one find enough of the kind of maturity that would be needed to "settle" such far-reaching and ultimate questions?

Of one thing, however, we are quite certain: there is a great fundamental difference between the wisdom of antiquity and the wisdom of the present, even though particular affirmations, both past and present, about the nature of things may say exactly the same thing. A wondering about the greatness of antique religion and philosophy led us to this somewhat dramatic conclusion which, after some reflection, seems so undeniably a fact.

What is this difference?

The ancient philosopher or religious teacher had the habit of declaring: The truth is thus and so. He told his listeners and disciples *how it is*. Not so the modern teacher, who approaches the problem of knowledge by a more circuitous path. "This," he says, "is what men have thought," and he goes on to show how many men, across the centuries, have thought many different things. Often the modern teacher never gets around to speaking for himself about "how it is." The review of "what men have thought" easily becomes so long and involved that the essence of

the inquiry is forgotten. It may be forgotten, or it may be deliberately set aside, as is the way of those who imagine that any kind of philosophical certainty represents an impossible goal.

This comparison seems a pertinent one to make for the reason that a new positive tendency may be discerned in modern thought. A reviving interest in "how things are" gives promise of achieving a balance with the historical relativism of "what men have thought," and, conceivably, this balance, if it can be reached, may mark the beginning of a great new epoch in human affairs.

The comparison itself is rich with suggestions for inquiry. First of all, the simple declaration, "This is true," may, depending upon what is affirmed, be completely silent on the important subject of how the revealer knows it to be true, and how the declaration ought to be regarded by the hearers. The question of "authority," in other words, was not in antiquity the burning issue it has become in modern times. Today, a man who proposes to "teach the truth" has a prior obligation to discuss both the question of "authority" and the question of what "knowing" means. He can not, that is, reasonably expect a hearing from serious people unless he supports his declaration with historical and psychological foundations. If he fails in this, he will be able to attract only those whose mentalities are, generally speaking, medieval or "childlike" in temper.

We know of no better way to get at the basis of this comparison than by quoting the definition of "Liberalism" from the *Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences*. The author of the article on this subject, Guido de Ruggiero, writes:

In its larger sense liberalism is a deepening mental attitude which attempts in the light of its presuppositions to analyze and integrate the varied intellectual, moral, religious, social, economic and political relationships of human society. Its primary

postulate, the spiritual freedom of mankind, not only repudiates naturalistic or deterministic interpretations of human action but posits a free individual conscious of his capacity for unfettered development and self-expression. It follows therefore as an obvious corollary in the grammar of liberalism that any attempt on the part of constituted authorities to exert artificial pressure or regulation on the individual, in his inner and outer adjustments, is an unjustifiable interference, a stultification of his personality and initiative. Against such coercive interference, whether in the moral, the religious, the intellectual, the social, the economic or the political sphere, liberalism has consistently arrayed its forces.

Quite evidently, from this definition, the meaning of "Liberalism" has been greatly affected by the striving for political self-determination. In pre-revolutionary times, the political authority, however benevolent, was commonly autocratic, almost the only limitation on power being the force of tradition and custom. (In a few cases, as for example, among the Hopi Indians, government has been by a plurality of groups, each with a different cultural function, with authority divided and balanced among a number of these groups and their leaders; but here, as among other so-called "primitive" societies, the traditional pattern of culture exercises an almost immeasurable influence, and such communities need to be clearly distinguished from theoretical anarchist communities in which a far wider choice of alternatives in behavior is supposed to be possible. This is not to suggest that social control by tradition is in any sense "bad," but simply to point out that it is *different* from the liberal concept of self-determination by free political decision—just as it is also different from, and, we think, far superior to, the forms of political absolutism which prevailed in Europe before the eighteenth century.) What we are trying to get at is the *increased individuality* of the human being since the rise of modern liberal principles. The man who thinks of himself as capable of conscious freedom is also a man who thinks of himself as capable of conscious or independent knowing. The idea of "authority" ceases to represent some outside source of certainty or psychological

security. Gradually, as the sense of freedom grows in a man, his sense of competence as a thinker and "knower" grows with it. And inevitably, as this takes place, he finds that he must subject his idea of "truth" to constant redefinition. As he grows free, and intellectually and morally self-reliant, what was once "the truth" to him becomes less and less true, *unless* he transforms it into personally verified conviction. This, in fact, is the rule of the pragmatist, and, to coin a phrase, there is a lot of "truth" in it.

It is quite conceivable that the liberal and pragmatic approach to human experience has permitted a number of potentially important truths to die out almost entirely, through neglect. Historically, the liberal outlook has been closely associated with the skeptical credo of modern science, both having grown rapidly as militant reactions to the rule of dogmatic religion. Only within the past ten or fifteen years has there been anything like serious scientific attention given to the content of religion, and this has come, not through the formal evolution of science, but as a result of the clinical experience of psychoanalysts and psychiatrists. The tyrannical power of religious ideas in distorted form was first discovered by men like Freud and Havelock Ellis, while today the importance of other religious ideas as sources of human serenity is being discovered by later psychological investigators. The "truth," then, in ancient religion—or religion which has lived through the ages from an antique past—is being known and acknowledged in the modern sense. Not only is it present in the declarative form, *This is how it is*; today, such students of the human situation are saying, *This is what men have thought*, *and*, it seems likely that they thought correctly.

Let us return to Ruggiero's definition of Liberalism. It starts by affirming "the spiritual freedom of mankind," and speaks of the individual's capacity for "unfettered development and self-expression." Then, after these briefly stated postulates, the definition goes on to point

out the enemies of the liberal spirit. The definition, obviously, was more made by history than by the cloistered metaphysician. The body of modern liberal thought grew out of a struggle to maintain the principle of freedom against the oppressions of "constituted authorities," and not from a reflective development of its first principles. We ought now, perhaps, to have another look at those principles.

Liberalism, as we know it, is a temper of the mind, a method for men in dealing with one another. When a liberal speaks, he speaks in behalf of the human qualities in all men. He accepts no proposition which proceeds from some other motive than the will to do justice. He recognizes the right of every man to think and to choose for himself, and, knowing that men often think and choose differently, he will endorse no social theory which bases its program upon uniformity of either religious or political beliefs. The liberal's own religion, in consequence, becomes extremely difficult to define, especially in a civilization which usually identifies religion in terms of dogmas, creeds, or cardinal beliefs. How can the conviction that freedom of mind is paramount be given the substance of a religious belief? It seems impossible. Many or most liberals, perhaps, are persuaded that they have no "religion," or nothing that would qualify as such among the authorities in that field—the theologians.

Again, many men who think of themselves as liberals, and whose record is certainly one of opposition to injustice, incline to "naturalistic or deterministic interpretations of human action." The classic example of such men is Clarence Darrow, who practically revelled in the conviction that men are wholly and solely products of their environment. "Freedom" was a philosophically meaningless word, so far as Darrow was concerned, but it was a fact of enormous importance in his life. Darrow labored throughout his career for freedom as a concrete reality, while explaining it away to nothing in his writings.

Strange as it may sound, it seems to us that Darrow thought that he was serving the practical cause of freedom by denying its theoretical existence. Darrow defended men who were hounded by the law. In Anglo-Saxon jurisprudence, the man accused of a crime is held to be responsible for what he does. If convicted, then, he is punished *because* he is responsible. But Darrow felt that the processes of the law worked constant injustice. So, we may argue, he denied the responsibility of the offender in order to destroy the logic of legal punishment. Was Darrow a liberal? Who can deny it? Liberalism is a practice as well as a credo, and in Darrow's case, intellectual inconsistency was the purchase-price of compassion. We say "in Darrow's case," for often intellectual inconsistency works in the opposite direction, and Darrow's record cannot make inconsistency a desirable quality. Darrow's life and thinking, on the other hand, instruct us in the importance of understanding what men have thought, and why they thought it, as well as what they declared to be "true."

Liberalism, then, as we have said, is a temper, a spirit, an attitude a way of looking at life and experience. It is a method of dealing with facts and presumed or doubted facts which float in a sea of the known, the half-known, the unknown—a sea of honesty, half-truths, and outright treachery and deceit. The liberal's method is like a filter which avoids prejudice and preconception and seeks to determine the actual and the true.

What we are interested in, here, is the fact that the method of Liberalism itself has implications about the nature of things. A man may become a liberal by instinct, but he can remain one only by becoming a philosopher. Liberalism does have the "presuppositions" described by Mr. de Ruggiero. It "posits a free individual." The liberals who are drawn into any form of totalitarian faith deny this postulate. The liberals who accept any plank of complete determinism, whether of individual environment or of social milieu, deny this postulate. There are

many embarrassed ex-communists, today, who sheepishly acknowledge this fact. And there are many more angry ex-fellow travelers who join in the hue and cry against "the communists"—and against even radical non-communists—who once called themselves "liberals" without ever having known the meaning of the term.

Why is it so difficult to stay "liberal"? Because, we think, modern liberalism has been nourished on a diet of political struggle, and too easily forgets its philosophical foundations. It is very hard on a man to have no greater faith than a "method" for dealing with life. The temptation comes again and again to accept some portentous dream of progress, to embrace a master-theory of social organization, to lose oneself in a hospitable and protecting faith. Only the exceedingly rare and consecrated individual can support his life of feeling with reliance on the abstraction of "method." The intuition of justice may be strong, the devotion to the ideal of human equality may be constant, but justice seems tragically remote in a world where institutions are so often but bastions for special privilege, where equality seems so far from the immediate facts of human nature—the grubby, unpleasant facts in which our noses are rubbed every day of our lives.

The only hope for Liberalism, it seems, is to strengthen the feeling of reality that may be gained from its first principles. What, after all, is meant by "the spiritual freedom of mankind"? What is "spiritual"? Is there a concept of "spirit" of "spirituality," which cannot be made into the tool of psychological tyranny? Which cannot be bent to the power-hungry purposes of institutionalized religion? In a society of serious people, words like "spiritual" ought not to be waved like flags, nor used for their poetic overtones alone. What is the genesis of "free individuality"? What sort of individuals are really "free"? Here, again, the obligation of the liberal is to formulate an answer which can never be pre-empted by the sleeping totalitarian in every one of us.

Definitions of this sort are the most difficult things in the world. To try to make one is like going out into the forest with a butterfly net to catch some of Bergson's *élan vital*. Or it is like trying to fathom what Socrates meant by the soul, when, in the *Phaedo*, he told his friends and disciples that he had no fear of death, that nothing evil could overtake the intelligence that is the soul. Perhaps such things cannot and ought not to be defined, but only mused upon and intimated by men to one another.

In any event, the day of simple pragmatism, of liberalism as a method, and only a method, is drawing to a close. While it seems inevitable that, unless we are liberal, we cannot avoid being deceived, nor avoid deceiving others, it seems equally inevitable that if we are *only* liberal, we shall slowly lose the meaning of our liberal faith. It is time, as liberals, for us to inquire into the substance and content of great thought and religion. It is time to consider making some serious commitments as to what and how things really are, in the world we live in, although without foregoing the impartiality and critical genius of the liberal spirit. The seeds of great conviction are already present in the liberal credo. They need only to sprout and grow.

Letter from **GERMANY**

BERLIN.—Despite the difference in freedom of expression, intellectuals on both sides of the "iron curtain" have much in common, if they are of the humanist persuasion. The experience of both is that of being steadily overrun by historical and political events and processes which can do little more than develop feelings of revolt. Given the position of ineffectual influence to which the representatives of intellect are condemned in times of heavy material and technical struggle, the influence on each mind, while differing with the actual structure of personality and social position, is, unfortunately, usually in the direction of cheap pessimism—inactivity, misanthropy, and even suicide.

Consciousness and intellect, however, are able to do more than to guide human activity in normal times to normal purposes. When the familiar channels of intellectual activity are blocked, vigorous minds often begin to search into the presuppositions of their age and of themselves. The positive results may be the development of historic foresight and the strength of a critical attitude, both becoming effective tools to change an actually uncomfortable world into a pleasanter and more "reasonable" one.

In the present, it is possible to derive two important conclusions from the experience of our generation by comparing this period with former epochs. What strikes us most is the utter weakness of human intellect with social aims when subjected to the pressure of a world of "things" (technical apparatus, industrial needs, armament, production plans, etc.). The contradiction between deep insight into physical, technical, social, psychic, and mental qualities and processes and, on the other hand, the impotence of this social intelligence as concerns the actual solution of the social problems of this society is already too great to be borne for long. The turn will be complete, and it will, it must, bring human

intellect to a leading role again, after it has passed through this ugly period of widespread and deep dissatisfaction—which is itself the strongest motor for social change. The social intellect has been mistreated so badly and for so long that its complete absence as a ruling force in the world brings the course of things to a *reductio ad absurdum*. The pendulum swings back with irresistible power, with eruptive force, after moral and spiritual values have been trampled down too long, and after this world of "things" breaks into a turmoil of destruction, paralysis, the clogging of goods, and suffocation from a superabundance of machinery.

Yet this period of the impotence of intellect—a period in which even the most prominent and "leading" men act more as mouthpieces for urgent production needs than as self-respecting individuals led by impulses of their own free will—cannot be regarded as the only result of Western history. We can see, perhaps, a line of development, beginning with Copernicus and ending, provisionally, with Freud, bringing a measure of justifiable self-esteem to man with regard to his position in this world and his spiritual and mental capacities. It would be a great advance for our civilization if Western man could overcome the *hubris* arising from his industrial and technical successes, and admit the limitations and failures of this development. Then the more recent researches of science—subatomic, sociological, and psychological—together with recent historical experience, might lead to a new kind of sociability which excludes all "domination" over either nature or man as senseless and impossible, substituting voluntary adaptation and cooperation.

GERMAN CORRESPONDENT

REVIEW

RELIGIOUS PSYCHOLOGY

AMONG recent volumes on the relationship between modern psychology and traditional religion, *The Individual and His Religion* (Macmillan, 1950) by Gordon W. Allport of Harvard affords a basis for comparative study and discussion. This book has only 142 pages, yet it deals provocatively with many facets of the problem, although no match, in our opinion, for Erich Fromm's brilliant *Psychoanalysis and Religion*, nor is it successful in the synthesis which its author would obviously like to achieve.

Dr. Allport deserves credit, however, for appealing neither to psychologists nor to religionists as special-interest groups, but rather and simply, to all those human beings who ask the perennial questions about man's subjective life. And since these may not be "scholars," his language and setting of the problem are pleasingly direct:

Ever so many people at the present time find themselves interested in both psychology and religion. Psychology is a solidly growing science: there is hope that it may emerge as the decisive science of the twentieth century. It is also currently fashionable—perhaps too much so for its own good. While popular interest in psychology mounts, religion remains as ever one of the prominent concerns of mankind. This concern has existed since the dawn of history—probably long before—and has not been diminished by the social and moral catastrophes of the past three decades. Those who are interested in both psychological science and religion are quite naturally asking what the two subjects have to do with each other.

The significance of Allport's work may, we think, be investigated under three headings. First, as implied above, he seeks a synthesis of the essential meanings of psychology and religion. As he sees it, this involves, first, the comprehension of the function of both outlooks; and because he has followed the usual scientific procedure of using chiefly functional definitions of everything, he conceives a "synthesis" of the two to be

possible simply in terms of their supposed practical "function":

It is my belief that before such a harmony of effort can arise the parties of both parts will need a greater flexibility of outlook than they customarily display. A narrowly conceived science can never do business with a narrowly conceived religion. Only when both parties broaden their perspective will the way to understanding and co-operation open.

At this point, we may recognize that Allport places himself in "the easy solution camp," as distinguished from psychologists like Erich Fromm and Karen Horney, who are adamant in maintaining that certain features of conventional Christianity are harmful, have always been harmful, and always will be. Horney, Fromm, and for that matter, Albert Einstein, whose rejection of the personal Creator idea is fairly well known, have insisted upon a *revolution*, whereas Allport is content to preach only a *reform* of religion. In consequence, he invites the criticism that the synthesis of religion with scientific method which he advocates will be rendered quite impossible. For example, most psychiatrists, as well as modern philosophers of the Dewey school, insist that both metaphysics and theology be dropped from serious thought, except as objects for criticism and for historical study. We must, they say, rid ourselves of the tendency to seek solutions for personal psychological problems by reference to some pre-established "system." The fact that Allport deserts the scientific camp sufficiently to ignore this uncompromising requirement may win for his book the approval of Catholics and other orthodox believers, and it has already been found "useful" for quotation by such apologists for orthodoxy as William Buckley (*God and Man at Yale*). If Allport had confined himself to the argument that one can never have done with the personal need for at least tentative metaphysical hypotheses, even though he has abandoned the conventional framework of religious belief in God and prayer, the psychologist would stand on firmer ground.

A second point of emphasis in *The Individual and His Religion* involves the claim that religion is entirely an individual matter. It is natural to wonder, here, what possible "function" is left for the priest, if this is the case. Nevertheless, Dr. Allport manages to arrive at a hope that the psychiatrist and the priest may somehow "supplement" each other. He has this to say on the "individuality" of religion:

An interesting rite in the Hindu religion here comes to mind. Around the age of sixteen or eighteen, the Hindu youth receives from his teacher a name for God which all his life long shall serve this youth as a private instrument for prayer and for binding himself to the Deity. In this custom Hinduism recognized that the temperament, needs and capacities of the initiate himself must in large part determine his approach to religious verities. . . . In this practice we have a rare instance of an institutional religion recognizing the ultimate individuality of the religious sentiment. The fact that the teacher takes upon himself more responsibility than a psychodiagnostician in the West would like to assume is not here the issue.

In India it is not enough that each individual should have a name for the deity suited to his own personal needs; it is also strictly advised that this name be kept secret even from one's bosom friends and from one's spouse. In the last analysis each person confronts his deity in solitude, and it is thought well to symbolize this fact, especially in overcrowded households and communities, with the seal of secrecy.

Allport's survey of questionnaires circulated among college students supports this view, and raises, indirectly, the issue of whether or not institutional religion is or ever has been educationally constructive. The question is: Do any of the known methods of inculcating religion assist in the development of greater psychological maturity? Significantly, Allport finds no definite correlation between ethics and theology. His brief summary of the results of statistical analyses is of interest:

The relationship between personal religion and morality is admittedly complex. One study of contemporary college youth brings to light a striking degree of independence between the two. Many

students outstanding for their sense of decency and consideration for others report that they feel no need of religion in their lives. At the same time, some say that their standards of conduct, unsupported by their theological beliefs, would collapse. But on the whole, in dealing with individual cases, one is more impressed by the apparent separation of moral standards from religion than by their dependence upon it.

Despite all this—and despite the fact that the 60 per cent of college youths who come of religious backgrounds consider their own religion inadequate, while only 25 per cent speak in favor of traditional orthodoxy—Allport still seems inclined to bend over backward with concessions to the Church. In concluding the book, for instance, he reveals a willingness to say nice things about religion—things he makes no effort to reconcile with his previous definition of religion as a strictly *individual* phenomenon, insofar as it may be expected to lead to "maturity of personality." Thus:

A man's religion is the audacious bid he makes to bind himself to creation and to the Creator. It is his ultimate attempt to enlarge and to complete his own personality by finding the supreme context in which he rightly belongs.

Here, the use of the term "Creator" implies uncritical acceptance of a cardinal feature of institutional religion, whence, and whence alone, the term is derived. But how can the religious person rise to the full heights of *individual* inspiration unless he finally abandons all institutional channels and concepts? This Dr. Allport fails to make clear. Yet, despite the flattering sound (to the religious) of his passage about "the Creator," Allport elsewhere writes, "When it comes to a question of implementing this [ethical] insight, we are confronted by the age-long failure of religion to turn doctrine into practice." Perhaps the "Creator" concept which Allport uncritically adopts has something to do with personal irresponsibility, which in turn could easily weaken behavior depending upon individual integrity.

In general, however, Allport concludes that the religious approach has been psychologically most beneficial when offering simple solace to emotional distress. Indeed, he feels that "religion is superior to psychotherapy" in the release of tensions through such agencies as the confessional. In effect, Dr. Allport asks the religious devotee who would synthesize his religion with science to defend his religion on the pragmatic ground that it "works" in relieving emotional stress and "balancing" personalities. Yet no serious devotee of any religion would wish to rest his case here, nor, actually, would Dr. Allport be writing a book about religion and religions if matters of psychic therapy were alone involved. We submit, then, that when one regards religion, first, as one of the eternally "prominent concerns of mankind," he must perforce recognize either that the *metaphysical* aspects of religion involve matters of great import, or else reason that any "psychic therapy" based on metaphysics should be forthwith discarded as inadequate. As the psychiatrist, Milton Wexler, recently pointed out, the mere fact that a superstitious moralistic structure may bring temporary calm to a schizophrenic does not mean that the root of the trouble is being touched—self-reliance always remaining the final test of the healthy personality. Perhaps Allport, like some others, has moved too rapidly and too heedlessly toward the desired "synthesis," and has achieved only an unworkable "compromise."

This interest in religion was not apparent in Dr. Allport's earlier books on psychology. He now seems to feel that since no one can do away with religion completely, even if he wants to, it is necessary to think of clever ways of maneuvering religious techniques to make them serve sensible purposes. Yet since he also claims that there is no real religion apart from subjective realization, his argument would be more to the point if directed towards the need of each man to acquire disciplines of philosophic investigation. Such a transformation would outlaw "belief" in the rigid, orthodox sense, but allow faith and belief to

remain in the form of deeply-felt convictions concerning the nature and evolutionary possibilities of human beings. On such a ground, the question of immortality could still be explored, for it touches directly a *human* issue, while the question of the existence of God would become irrelevant—at least until each individual had evolved his own philosophical version of those creative or spiritual roots of human beinghood which "God" must be taken to represent.

COMMENTARY

THE LIBERAL'S DILEMMA

As editors of a journal largely concerned with ideas, we might be expected to share the optimism of our German correspondent, who proposes that the absence of social intelligence in the rule of the world will finally bring about a *reductio ad absurdum*, causing the pendulum to swing back "with irresistible power." This, logically, would mean the installation of men of responsible intellectuality in positions of authority.

But is there any "guarantee" that this will take place? The aftermath of exhausting war often moves in the opposite direction. Some years ago the New York *Times* military expert, Hanson Baldwin, reviewing Gen. J. F. C. Fuller's *Decisive Battles*, noted that

the world's decisive battles have served merely as the punctuation—the periods, let us say—to the end of epochs; many of the battles themselves have been a consequence, rather than a cause. Many of these thirty-seven Armageddons have marked the end, the inevitable end, of a long period of stagnation, softness, surfeit and decay, the end to an empire or a nation, once great, but since grown fat and slothful, greedy and meretricious and debauched by its own excesses.

The present involves more, of course, than a series of wars leading to extinction. While the "Armageddons" of the twentieth century may claim a monopolizing place in the foreground of our attention, the development of articulate Liberalism, insistent in its criticisms, is as typical of our time as the wars which frustrate the realization of liberal ideals.

But why is the liberal spirit so impotent—as impotent as our German correspondent declares it to be? Years ago, Alfred Vagts, noted historian of Militarism, pointed out that in the days of Liberalism's youth, its supporters refused to take note of the ominously growing power of military machines. They never faced this problem honestly—whether from fear, or from preoccupation with other things.

Today the liberal is made to look foolish by the incessant cry of "military necessity." His hopes and his principles are alike assailed by this horrible child of expanding technology, destructive offspring of the "progress" in which the liberal once took such great pride. The man of social intelligence, of the liberal spirit, it seems to us, can never again address his fellows with the commanding voice of moral authority, expecting to be *heard*, until he meets and deals in his own mind with the unspeakable immorality of modern war—all modern war.

CHILDREN ... and Ourselves

With the permission of the publishers (Little, Brown & Co., and the Atlantic Monthly Press), we here present two extracts from Farley Mowat's *People of the Deer*, which seem to us to be "invitations to learning" for parents and teachers.

People of the Deer, the record of a thoughtful Canadian's journeyings among the almost unknown Eskimos of the northern Barrens, offers what seems a unique opportunity for a study of the implicitly "anarchist" principles on which the communal life of this tribe, the Ihalmits, is based, making clear, also, how their views of life and nature affect their relationship with their children. The first passage describes the disgust with which the Ihalmiuts regard any sort of corporal punishment, and it also illuminates the "education-by-participation" which supplies many of the disciplines making possible balanced behavior among their young.

The second extract introduces the basic psychology of this Eskimo people, from which, of course, are derived the attitudes they maintain toward their children.

There have been many interesting anthropological accounts of the harmonious way in which primitive people are often able to help children to be happy and useful at the same time, but *People of the Deer* is exceptional in that the tribes visited by the author are probably less known to the white world than any remaining "primitives" elsewhere.

The presentation of this material is meant to serve the ends of education in general, and not intended as an endorsement of "anarchy," although the anarchist contention is capably espoused indirectly. We are well aware of the argument that primitive peoples, simply because of their lack of complexity in thought and social pattern, have no such problems as we in achieving harmonious living. But this argument, we think, is wide of the mark. Reminders of the intrinsic truth, goodness and beauty which can arise from simplicity in living are reminders which do none of us harm, and most of us, perhaps, more than a little good.

* * *

IT has been said by people who should know better that Eskimos treat their children well only so that the children will in turn treat their parents

well when old age is upon them and their time of usefulness is at an end. In point of fact, the People treat their children with great sympathy and forbearance because they know so much of humanity.

I remember one day when I was talking to Ootek about children; . . . I expressed surprise that no Ihalmiut child knows corporal punishment even when the provocation is great. I spoke casually, but Ootek replied with vehemence, for it seemed he was honestly puzzled that I should not know why a child is never beaten.

"Who but a madman would raise his hand against blood of his blood?" he asked me. "Who but a madman would, in his man's strength, stoop to strike against the weakness of a child? Be sure that I am not mad! . . ."

There was something that might have been contempt in his voice as he spoke, and I never again raised that question.

So the children live their lives free of all restraint except that which they themselves impose; and they are at least as well behaved as any child anywhere. For three years after birth a child is suckled and by the time it has been weaned it is already aware of the general pattern of its life. I told you of Kune who, at the age of five, was already an accomplished woman of the People, yet Kune had never been taught what she must do. She was simply observant and imitative as most children are, and she saw what others did and longed to do as well by herself.

The children's work is also their play. At night, when the adults are asleep or resting on the ledge, no voice is raised to chide the girl children, who remain active until the dawn, keeping the fire alive under the cooking pot and concocting broths and stews, not with toy things, but with the real equipment which will be theirs in maturity. No regimen or hard routine is laid upon them. When they are sleepy, they sleep. When they are hungry, they may always eat, if there is food. If they wish to play, no one will halt them and give

them petty tasks to do, for in their play they learn more of life than can be taught by tongues and by training.

Suppose a youth, a ten-year-old boy, decides he will become a great hunter overnight. He is not scolded and sent sulkily to bed for his foolish presumptions, nor do his parents condescend to his childish fantasy. Instead his father gravely spends the evening preparing a miniature bow which is not a toy, but an efficient weapon on a reduced scale. The bow is made with love and then it is given to the boy and he sets out for his distant hunting ground—a ridge, perhaps a hundred yards away—with the time-honored words of luck ringing in his ears, which are the same words spoken by the People to their mightiest hunter when he sets out on the two-month trip northward for musk ox. There is no distinction, and this lack of distinction is not a pretense, it is perfectly real. The boy will be a hunter? Very well then, he *shall* be a hunter—not a boy with a toy bow.

If the child is brave enough he may search the ridges and valleys through the hours of summer twilight which span the interval from dusk till dawn. When he returns at last with hunger gnawing at his stomach, he is greeted as gravely as if he were his father. The whole camp wishes to hear of his hunt, and he can expect the same ridicule at failure, or the same praise if he managed to kill a little bird, which would come upon a full-grown man. So he plays, and learns, under no shadow of parental disapproval, and under no restraint of fear.

* * *

There are certain things the Barrens people do not allow to co-exist with men, and foremost among these is anger. Anger in the heart of a man of the Ihalmiut is as potentially dangerous as homicidal madness, for anger can make him overleap the law and endanger not only himself but the rest of his community. It can lead him to ignore the perils which beset him, and so bring him to destruction. Anger is a luxury in which the

People dare not indulge, and, apart from these physical reasons for its exclusion, the Ihalmiut have always looked upon anger as a sign of savagery, of immaturity, or of inhuman nature.

Children alone are permitted brief outbursts of temper, for a child is not held responsible for its actions. But when a man gives way to anger it is something of the deepest shame to the beholders, for anger is the only really indecent thing in the land.

And so it is that a man who breaks the law is never punished in anger. The man who refuses meat to his fellow may visit the camp of the aggrieved one, if he wishes, and he will be well received. The resentment felt against him will not be allowed to appear naked, and so provoke an outburst of physical violence.

Farley Mowat, we are sure, is convinced that he learned a great deal more worth knowing from the Ihalmiut than from his University career, or from his association with fellow zoologists! (See the MANAS review of *People of the Deer*, April 16, for further comment.)

FRONTIERS

The War on the Professors

ADDRESSING his enormous audience via a King Feature syndicated column appearing in many newspapers, Fulton Lewis Jr. recently took up the question, "Why Is a Communist?" With his usual righteous fervor, Mr. Lewis hews a path of scorn through current history, berating those who have been dubious about the hunt for Communists in the Department of State, asserting that \$2500-a-week Hollywood writers still have all their "civil liberties," yet are able "to work their political and economic ideas into motion pictures"—which writer? what picture?—and ending triumphantly with a quotation from the report of J. B. Matthews, "first director of research for the House Committee on Un-American Activities," to the effect that college and university professors "have been the largest single professional unit supporting Communists and Communist fronts." If there is any finding out to be done on why a man becomes a Communist, the colleges and universities, Mr. Lewis thinks, have plenty of material to study near at hand.

Well, suppose it's true. Suppose that university professors and other teachers, as a class, and as the best educated members of our society, have shown greater hospitality to the ideas of Karl Marx than any other professional group: what does this indicate?

There is a sense, we think, in which the charge *is* true. It is certainly a fact that scholarship in the social sciences has been vastly influenced by the Marxist interpretation of history. And as a result of the general disgust caused by the great economic debacle of 1929, with its ensuing years of want, insecurity, and chilling fear, there were here and there men in universities and colleges who resolved to become "doers" instead of "thinkers," and who felt they solved the problem by joining the Communist Party. In any event, it is difficult to believe that *any* intelligent professor, especially among social scientists, could

fail to look around for theories to take the place of the dog-eat-dog, devil-take-the-hindmost theory of acquisitive capitalism. As a choice between evils, perhaps, capitalism may be preferred to the State absolutism which communist rule has very plainly become, but a professor, we may hope and believe, is a man who is not obliged to think always in terms of a choice between two evils. We expect this of politicians and demagogues, but not from the teachers of our young.

There is a certain hazard in believing in freedom of thought. But there is even greater hazard in pretending to believe in it, while attacking the principle on which it rests. The one attack which freedom of thought cannot survive is hypocrisy in its defense.

It is fair to say that the Marxist outlook seemed attractive in the 1930's for at least two important reasons. First, Marx called attention to the terrible social injustice which had marked the rise of modern capitalism. No other historian, no other economist, had ever before joined a moralist's zeal with the scientist's attention to accuracy and fact in the study of social change. Second, the impact of the communist movement came at a period of intense disillusionment in American history. The United States had been through a great war and a veritable debauch of "prosperity," and if the war and the subsequent revelations by scholars as to its provocation and "management" heaped shame upon the consciences of honest men, the "prosperity" and the following plunge into depression were hardly experiences to stir the man of learning to boundless admiration for the American way of life.

Let us admit that the professors beguiled into communism were "naïve," that they were "romantic" and "unrealistic." Let us also admit that they were wrong, woefully wrong. But were they any more wrong than some others who were content to wait out the economic storm in secure little niches of academic tenure, shutting their eyes and their hearts to the anguish all about? We are not attempting to suggest that to have turned

communist after 1929 is a badge of virtue for the college professor. It does seem clear, however, that in a society such as the people of the United States like to think they have developed—a society which continually dreams of a better life for everyone, of educational advance and improved public service it would have been remarkable indeed if some of the more enthusiastic spirits on the campuses had *not* turned communist. Perhaps the extremes to which some professors were led were directly related to the apathy of the average citizen, the reluctance of the average businessman to entertain new thoughts about the organization of society.

But professors, we shall be told, have access to the receptive and uncritical minds of the young. True. Well, what would you do? Muzzle the professors? Fire them? Hire only "safe" thinkers who can pass an examination given by Fulton Lewis Jr.?

The hope of immunizing the minds of the young to the insinuations of "radical" ideas is a vain and futile expectation. If we spread the idea that "communist" ideas are so persuasive that they can never be listened to without danger of infection, our youth are likely to think that communism is quite irresistible to reason. When Italian schoolboys of the early nineteenth century were denied access to the "revolutionary" propaganda of the time, they found material in the Latin classics which taught them of the unmistakable virtues of republics. Mazzini was one of those schoolboys, and the Italian Revolution was born of such inspiration. Why give "Communism" a dignity it has never had? Why suppress it as though it were filled with the profound argument of great literature? Our youth will not praise us for estimating their intelligence at so low a level.

Immunity to Communism is possible only to a people who love freedom for itself, and not because of the economic advantages which are said to accompany it. The evils of communism will, we think, whatever called, overtake every

people who choose their political system because of the economic advantages it promises—for communism is no more than a system devised to give economic advantages to everyone. That it does not work out this way is a thing people always discover, but sometimes they must discover it for themselves.