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THE NEW "ENEMY": SECULARISM

EVEN if Mr. J. Edgar Hoover had not declared, in one of his innumerable public appearances, that "Communism is Secularism on the march," the currently popular hue and cry against "Secularism" would be worth examining. But when the head of the FBI echoes the aggressive attack of the ecclesiastics on their various opponents, lumping them under the general heading of "Secularists," and rhetorically links the latter with Communism, this trend acquires an ominous coloring. The reasoning of Mr. Hoover, so far as we can see, runs something like this: All Communists are atheists. Therefore, all atheists are either Communists or potential Communists. And since some secularists are atheists, or oppose the ideas of some people who are not atheists, "Communism is Secularism on the march."

What, precisely, is "Secularism"? Much has been written on this question during recent weeks, so that answers are not hard to find. According to Georgia Harkness, author of *The Modern Rival of Christian Faith, An Analysis of Secularism,* it is "the organization of life as if God did not exist." This is a behavioral definition, for, as a *Christian Century* reviewer notes, many who would qualify as secularists under this definition might affirm their belief in God. Miss Harkness' point is that they don't act like it.

That is one definition, and it is not technically inaccurate. According to *Chambers' Encyclopaedia*, George Jacob Holyoake, an English reformer and leader of the cooperative movement (born 1817), was the founder of "Secularism, a system which bases duty on considerations purely human, relies on material means of improvement, and justifies its beliefs to the conscience, irrespective of atheism, theism, or revelation." Holyoake lived a long and constructive life, one of his achievements being the passage of a law which legalized "secular" affirmations in court. He acted as secretary of the British contingent which aided Garibaldi, and enjoyed the distinction of being the last person imprisoned in England on a charge of atheism (1841).

More recent notes on the subject appear in an article by Ruby D. Garrett in the *Humanist* for February of this year. Mr. Garrett gathers a diverse harvest of comments and definitions, ranging from J. Edgar Hoover's remarks, quoted above, to statements by Harry Emerson Fosdick and by Dr. Horace M. Kallen. A Brown University physicist observes:

> We must admit that the very idea that ultimate authority is to be found in ecclesiastical body or ancient manuscript is utterly foreign to the thinking of an increasing fraction of our people.... Incompatibles have developed between the results of secular scholarship and traditional ecclesiastical affirmations.

James Conant, President of Harvard University, is quoted as follows:

> Long ago this university together with most other colleges of Protestant origin chose the secular path. . . .There are those, of course, who believe that education divorced from formal religion is bad. Indeed, zealous proponents of religious schools miss no opportunity of attacking secular schools and colleges. Their right to do so is unquestioned. But so, too, I take it, is the right of the rest of us to defend our point of view. To equate secular with godless and then godless with immoral, or at least amoral, is surely a fallacious line of argument.

In passing, we may note that this seems to be Mr. Hoover's line of argument (if it can be termed an "argument"), for he is quoted as saying that Secularism is "the basic cause of crime, and crime is a manifestation of Secularism."

People who don't like Secularism obviously define it very differently from those who do.

Horace Kallen, for example, plainly a sympathizer, says:

> Secularism is religion. Religion is not the antithesis to Secularism, but the antithesis to clericalism. Secularism opposes "the priesthood of all believers" against the special interest of "the teaching church." It favors the betting of one's life on equal liberty for all men to believe, to inquire, to hear, and to teach, against the exclusive claims of a special occupational class.
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> . . . On the record, it is Secularism that guarantees freedom of religion and preserves its life at the source—in the act of faith and the private conscience. On the record, it is Secularism which endeavors to keep the ways of life open for any idea of God a believing heart may discover or devise, and bet his life on.

The critics of Secularism imply that secularists adopt a "materialistic" view of life, and charge that the breakdown of moral values in the West is largely due to the secularist distrust of revealed religion. The secularist, as a "type," we are invited to believe, finds his satisfactions in "worldly" pleasures, and in self-indulgence.

These definitions, are not much help in establishing a universally acceptable idea of the secularist outlook, but they all, friendly and unfriendly, do have in common the claim that secularists oppose ecclesiastical authority and reject dogmatic notions, particularly notions involving the supernatural. It follows that the definers who defend ecclesiasticism and supernaturalism see in the secularists a dark menace of mankind, while definers who reject ecclesiasticism and the supernatural tend to recognize the secularists as the saviors of civilization. The critical ideas of the secularists, therefore, relate to supernatural religion and its "official" interpreters.

It seems only fair to exclude from this discussion those who may be called "nominal" secularists, who are as casual in their unbelief as nominal Christians and supernaturalists are in their faith. This ought to eliminate the rabble-rousing attacks on Secularism, but, unfortunately, it does not, for the defenders of orthodoxy often seem to take the aggressive view that unbelievers, whatever their character, *cannot help but assist* the forces of evil. Christ Church of Philadelphia, for example, an ancient Protestant institution founded in 1695, designated by Congress as a "national shrine," has declared in literature describing its new "Program of Action" that "Millions of people, now indifferent to God, are thereby unconsciously giving aid and comfort to communism." This charges *all* secularists, regardless of social philosophy, with being in effect subversive of America's freedom, because they do not "believe in God." The implications of a claim of this sort are unpleasantly far-reaching, especially when a man of the caliber of Edwin G. Conklin, one of the country's leading biologists, a former president of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and a thoughtful spokesman for the scientific outlook, is found listed among the "sponsors" of the Christ Church Program.

The drive against Secularism is clearly an outgrowth of the political witch-hunt, in which well-established and conservative religious institutions are participating as a means to greater prestige and influence.

There is of course temperate analysis of the sins of the secularists to be found in current religious commentary. The *Christian Century* editorial on John Dewey, who died June 1 at the age of ninety-two, provides a good illustration. Dewey, the writer points out, was a philosopher of the Here and the Now, who counselled:

> Forget the eternal, the transcendental, the absolute. Master the natural and let supernaturalism take care of itself. Strive for right relations with your fellows. (Dewey did not add, but many of his followers did: Don't bother about your relations with God.) . . . Learn by doing. The child is the center of education. Encourage him to express himself. . . ."An activity which does not have worth enough to be carried on for its own sake cannot be very effective as a preparation for something else." "Not perfection is the final goal, but the ever-enduring process of perfecting, maturing, refining, is the aim of living."

These are not unfair notes on Dewey's thought. They are in fact so fair that it is difficult to find very much fault with them, except on the basis of omissions. The *CC* editorial writer pays tribute to Dewey's needed reforms in education, then turns to the theological issue:

> Religious education was the first area to feel the impact of his [Dewey's} experimentalism and pragmatism. Reliance on the Scriptures as the subject matter for teaching had already been weakened by the first effects of modern critical study of the Bible. Now it was further undermined by a shift in the center of teaching. The great affirmation of Christian theology came to be regarded as secondary, and the whole process of religious education centered in the child, who was invited to set forth on "an adventure" or "a quest." The quest had no object, except perhaps to teach the art (if any) of questioning.

This seems both just and unjust. Life, surely, is nothing if not a "quest." The religion which gives only nominal recognition to this profound truth is a dead-letter religion of blind belief. Terms like "conversion," "initiation," "salvation," "growth," "maturity," touch various facets of the psychological reality involved. A religion that takes no account at all of this reality will hardly last a generation. A religion which distorts it into a "reward" for faithfulness in irrational belief will raise up a generation of fanatics. A religion which gives the idea a purely "pragmatic" value is likely to become merely sentimental, as, indeed, much of Progressive education has become, so far as philosophy of purpose is concerned.

Can we not say that Dewey understood the *function* of religion in human life, but neglected, for what seemed to him excellent historical reasons, the *substance* of religion? Thus the discipline of the Progressive often became aimless in the hands of persons less consecrated to human good than men like Dewey. As the *CC* writer notes, the "questing" was at first exhilarating, "but before long the main emphasis came to rest on 'technique'." The editorial proceeds with its critique:

> The spiritual life of America has suffered because the net effect of Dewey's influence was to strengthen secularism and to weaken real Christianity. One can still be grateful to him for freeing education by shattering ancient dogmas and setting the child in the center and for emphasizing the social mission of education and of citizenship. But there can be little doubt that he strengthened the already strong tendency of a prosperous country to make temporal welfare the standard of success for both the individual and society. The result was the secularization of church as well as society, a loss of certainty and a sense of mission, a creeping paralysis of hope, a decay of faith.

This is the Christian appraisal, offered without animus, and devoid of a contentious spirit. Granting this much, it still may be asked if Dewey did not, perhaps, fill a "moral vacuum" with his "exhilarating" philosophy of endless quest? Is Dewey to be blamed for the inadequacies of Christian theology as well as his own?

Some ancient philosopher has said, "Live the life and you will know the doctrine." Dewey concluded that the available "doctrine" wasn't really worth knowing, and insisted simply upon "living the life." The result was a dynamic theory of progress, educational and social, based upon nothing more than the undeveloped ethical instincts of human beings. Dewey, as a thoughtful student of his works once observed, had no serious theory of Evil. The ancient Eastern idea that man must be "twice-born" as well as "once-born" seems not to have made any impression on him. The tendencies of his age, both affirmative and critical, were all in the other direction.

Yet Dewey, we may say, represented Secularism at its best. He was the natural inheritor of the ideals of the Enlightenment, which he brought to their final flowering in practice. A critic of the Enlightenment has given this period of history an accurate description:

> The real watershed in European history is . . . not the Renaissance and the Reformation, but the Enlightenment. It is the latter which has created the intellectual climate in which we now live. Known as the Illumination in France and the *Aufklärung* in Germany, this movement consciously repudiated the

> theological basis of historic Christendom. All things were now to be subjected to reason, but no longer the broad reason of the scholastics but the very narrow reason of logic and analysis. This was the period of boundless optimism and confidence in the power of the human reason to master every problem of social life and organization, whether political or economic. There now begins to emerge in Europe a self-confident humanism, a robust confidence in human ability and capacity, which no longer feels itself dependent in any way upon the main affirmations of the Christian tradition, whether Roman Catholic or Reformed. (R. F. Aldwinckle, in the *Crozer Quarterly* for April, 1951.)

After noting that aggressive atheism was not present in the thought of the early figures of the Enlightenment (Voltaire, and other admirers of Newtonian cosmology), this writer shows how the Encyclopedists made the great French skeptic appear as a "timid conservative."

> D'Holbach, who may be taken as one of the typical, if somewhat extreme, representatives of the *Encyclopédie*, demonstrates to his satisfaction the fallacies of the arguments stated by Voltaire for the existence of God and contends that everything has its origin in matter. Thus there gained strength in Europe that philosophical materialism which later emerged in full strength as Marxism.

Here, perhaps, we have sufficient illustration of the historical reasoning of the critics of Secularism. In the hands of demagogues, it becomes the argument: "Atheism, when it turns to politics, turns Communist; therefore, Secularism breeds Communism, and our only defense against Communism is to identify Democracy and Christianity." Thus Secularism, as the Christ Church Program implies, is "objectively" treason.

It is impossible to take this argument seriously. A long line of political liberators, in both North and South America, who were both skeptical and anti-clerical—the acknowledged qualifications of secularists—rises up to refute the argument and rebuke its protagonists. Thomas Jefferson, Thomas Paine, San Martin, Cardenas—these are men whose lives were or are entirely devoted to freedom, yet all dissenters from conventional religion. And there are hundreds of others to justify Horace Kallen's claim that "it is Secularism that guarantees freedom of religion and preserves its life at the source—in the act of faith and private conscience."

The real issue behind this question, apart from the views and claims of the contestants, and apart from whoever is metaphysically "right," is the issue of the relationship between philosophy and conduct. "Believe in God, the Christian God, and you will love freedom and do aright"—say the enemies of Secularism. On the other hand, the Secularists say, in effect, "This belief seems to me to be irrational, or rather anti-rational, and what is anti-rational is opposed in principle to freedom among men, for the discipline of rationalism is the common ground of free relationships."

The anti-secularists try to win their argument from history—often a bombastic argument oversimplifying the origins of the Communist movement—by ignoring other quite as menacing totalitarianisms which threaten a subtler imperialism over the minds of men. Actually, the historical argument in political terms against Secularism very nearly falls of its own weight.

But does this mean that Secularism is invulnerable to criticism? We do not think so. While respecting the basic honesty of the "unorganized" secularists (note that the most unfair and illegitimate attacks on Secularism come from religious orthodoxies strongly entrenched in organization), it seems necessary to admit a certain cogency in portions of the *Christian Century* editorial. Although it is a good, rather than an evil, that Dr. Dewey helped to draw the attention of his generation to other sources of moral ideas than traditional Christian theology, those other sources, we think, have not proved as potent for good as the educational reformer hoped. To reject theology for its anti-human tendency, to brush aside academic idealism for its practical sterility, and to condemn both for their pretentious rhetoric in substitution for actual work for humanitarian ends—this may be understood and approved. But to decide, for these reasons,

that no profound verity hides under the distortions of organized religion, that no vision of the heart is faintly realized in the speculations of philosophers—this, we think, in plain language, is to submit to the determinism of partisanship in battle.

It is a continuous irony of modern times that the men who struggle most bravely for freedom are often those who affirm as their personal credos doctrines which deny the philosophical idea of freedom any substantial reality. The "philosophical materialists," in short, have usually proved better warriors for the human spirit than the orthodox and conservative protectors of "spiritual traditions."

How, then, can we argue that philosophy determines conduct? We cannot, unless we endow "philosophy" with a larger and more complicated meaning than the term usually suggests. It is necessary to recognize that these ideological symbols such as "Materialism" and "Idealism," "Religion" and "Atheism," have changing functional meanings which are much more significant than their formal, etymological significance. "Materialism" for La Mettrie and D'Holbach, for Diderot and others among the Encyclopedists, stood for the independence of the mind from dogmatic authority. This was their first principle, and it became the governing principle in the philosophies they built around it. For them, it did not mean lolling in the fleshpots and "contentment with money and pleasure." Lesser men might *use* the idea of materialism to justify all manner of indulgences, hoping that the greatness of their predecessors in the "faith" would shield them from criticism. Lesser men might exploit the symbols adopted by their betters just as, for centuries, very much lesser men manipulated and exploited for the most ignominious purposes the symbols given extraordinary authority by Jesus Christ.

Obviously, we cannot come to any decision about the effect of philosophy or religion on human conduct until we have evaluated the use of the great symbols and abstract ideas that are the currency of both philosophy and religion. What is counterfeit usage and what is real?

Then, when we have been successful in this difficult undertaking, we have still to decide *why* some ideas seem to make men better, and others seem to make them worse.

Finally, with these considerations before us, the ideological war against the "secularists" appears in its proper light as a dishonest and anti-democratic campaign to destroy the very "way of life" which it sets out to defend.

LETTER TO AMERICA

CASABLANCA.—From one end of the world to the other, there is the constantly-occurring fact that our attitude toward people we are just learning to know is unsatisfactory. "Unsatisfactory" is an understatement, but a letter dealing with a subject of this scope will have to be written in understatement, as anything else is impossible for Americans to understand about their behavior and about why they aren't loved and respected in the manner in which the movies (American) have led them to anticipate. The May Day riots in Tokyo show conclusively enough that the occupation of Japan didn't win us a crowd of admirers, and the shocking scandal of the occupation of Berlin is too painful to be dwelt upon, but a better cross-section of Americans open to criticism are those who live and work and raise their families *in* a foreign country, without the accompanying stigma of official warriors.

We possess the only thing that makes people "buckle under," and that is money, but the use of this money to combat a powerful enemy is not exactly an altruistic gesture which automatically wins support and loyalty. The qualities of the heart are not bought and sold, and no human being ever worked under a harsh master and ended up loving him, unless Master supplied other endearing qualities which overbalanced his garrulity and lack of sensitivity to the desires and aims of another human.

Brutality and gangsterism bring obedience so long as the climate of fear exists, but climate changes and even the humble rebel eventually toward high-handedness of any nature. The stern master loses his following when the tenure of office expires, as it always does.

The recent "Go Home Americans" campaign in Paris is another example of the annoyance and discouragement of the French with the exasperating foreigners on their soil—and the French are not poor. Through thick and thin they have been saving their money and their economy has not been shattered as violently as those who continued to fight World War II.

Recent articles have been appearing in papers all over that Americans are the worst ambassadors of their own country of any people in the world. Most Americans agree with this, but none of them plan doing anything about it. The distasteful task of learning a foreign language is frowned upon, and the prevailing attitude is one of "let them learn ours." Why?

People without culture and background will seek antiquity for its own sake, but what understanding do they bring to what they seek? The average travelling American cannot fathom a world without television, frigidaires and tin cans. The patronizing contempt with which they greet history which hasn't been hermetically sealed is offensive and alienating. In order to enjoy travelling, much tolerance and sympathy is necessary. The smug attitude that everything American is correct is tiresome and untrue.

Americans have to get in and try—try to understand what isn't "good old Stateside" isn't necessarily false; try to make friends with the rest of the world with all the sacrifices and understanding necessary in friendship; and try to fathom why such a great part of the world is turning its back on us. Let's be frank. China's gone and South and South East Asia are going, and we aren't doing so well in Europe, which pretty well promises to be fatal. We simply have to come around. Being haughty might be fun; but unfortunately, pride is just one of the few things that go before a fall. How can anyone grasp our humanness, generosity, and simple kindness when so many of our emissaries are playing the pompous ass? Our diplomatic negotiations are a farce with assorted clowns suffering from languor and/or violence. The few dignified men we possess are being overclouded by the vulgar and the brawling. We'll have to learn other international words besides gin.

We must show we're adult enough to shoulder our responsibility, human enough to help the downtrodden without postures and big enough to cope with a foreign country on its own terms. If Americans could reach the hearts of foreigners, we might have something to be proud of, and to combat the forces against us, which are many and perilous. Loyalty and approbation are earned, not bought.

ROVING CORRESPONDENT

REVIEW
THE OTHER KINGDOM

A CURRENT Book-of-the-Month selection, Howard Spring's *The Houses in Between* (Harper, 1951), furnishes excuse for calling attention to some of this author's earlier works. Also, we are presented with another opportunity to advance the thesis that novelists sometimes make better philosophers, psychologists and sociologists than the professionals, partly because they work without the inhibitions of formal method. Sir Howard, for instance, has a genius for integrative survey, which is something creative writers always have the opportunity, if not always the ability, to accomplish; they are not forced to limit their scope to any single department of human experience, but usually are encouraged to embrace as many perspectives as possible. This is another way of saying something fairly obvious—that no "survey" is profoundly important unless conducted by someone who is innately a philosopher-psychologist, someone who looks above and beyond the literal course of events to interdependent, non-material causes and effects. The chronicles of history are, after all, simply inscriptions of prevailing human attitudes upon events.

The Houses in Between is a history of attitudes of mind in transition, as viewed by an interesting and observing woman whose life-span covers ninety-nine years. Victorian appanages of apparel and the fusty knicknacks in keeping with stylized restraint form the environment of her birth, while the close of her life witnesses a sober and maturer England struggling to rise out of the debris of war. The Old Lady, in nineteen-forty-seven, looks back upon her life from its closing hours, giving us a touch of Spring's own delicately balanced "acceptance of life":

> What have I seen? I wondered, looking out on the wide heave and swell, and down onto the bar, and away to Porteven whose gray roofs shone in the sunlight. Well, I have seen no salvation, no peace on earth, good will to men. I have seen courage, endurance and loyalty, dishonor, treachery and shame. I have seen what makes the life of men. It was so long ago since a child had been childishly uplifted by thoughts of Man, an animal advancing with one heart and mind toward a good goal. And now all that was gone; the crystal ship had sailed away and vanished over the horizon, as these majestic swans now came, with a heart-stirring noise of wings, beating up from the landlocked water and out into the blue over the sea till my eyes could follow them no longer. There were left for me only men and women—and not many of those now—good, and bad, and oddly mixed; and until enough of these separate bricks were good I did not see much hope of palace-building.

The title, *The Houses in Between*, derives from an old music hall verse, "You could see the Crystal Palace if it wasn't for the houses in between." Spring adopts this as a symbol for man's difficulty throughout history to obtain the vision of the Heavenly City, or the Good Society; and another meaning is implicit—that man never stops *looking*, in the hope that the horizon may some day clear.

Spring now resides quietly in a country cottage, according to a BoM character sketch. His career has taken him from humble poverty and menial work to world fame, both as author of *My Son, My Son!* and as one who accompanied Mr. Winston Churchill on the occasion of the signing of the Atlantic Charter. He is, in other words, "a philosopher who has seen the world," known to the poor and the mighty alike, having been of the company of both. Such men, unless they are either bitter from experience or partisan by temperament, are apt to be worth listening to.

The word "philosopher" may be used loosely, certainly, and often is, but since Sir Howard proves again and again that he is not a "side-taker" in respect to anything except insistence on clarity, the term seems deserved. His essays on Christianity, published under the title, *And Another Thing*, at the conclusion of World War II and following the loss of his only son, are excellent illustrations. For the real argument Spring advances is not in favor of Christianity as a pacifist religion, nor an apologia for war-participation—though *And Another Thing* has been taken for both—but rather amounts to an insistence upon consistency and self-conscious moral decision. During the late 1930's, Spring did not believe that the last war was avoidable, but he did believe that any person who honestly professed to follow the precepts of Jesus of Nazareth should

refuse to have anything to do with it—avoidable or not. Spring indicated that he had never quite been able to decide whether or not he should be a Christian, but he was sure that if he *did* so declare himself, it could only be as a pacifist. In wartime, he observed, a sort of half-recognition was accorded the effrontery of claiming to believe in War and Peace at the same time—the Christians never mentioned Jesus, and addressed their prayers for victory exclusively to God, who was known to be himself sometimes addicted to violence. The following from *And Another Thing* shows Spring's humane temper:

> The truth is, or so it seems to me, that a soldier can not be allowed to follow the dictates of his conscience or to exercise his free will.
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> There are two reasons for this, and they stand together. The first is that mankind is in a low state of moral development. I remember walking, some time before this war began, through the streets of London with a well-known writer who suddenly began to shake with laughter. I asked what amused him, and he said: "I was thinking what a lark it's going to be when the people of this country realise that they are not living under a democracy." My companion was an ardent Catholic, and I could have replied that it would also be a lark when people realised that they were not living in Christendom, but I did not do so because neither the one discovery nor the other struck me as having the elements of amusement.
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> Yet it is a fact, if Christendom means a territory subject to the laws of Christ, that we do not live in any such kingdom. We need a simplification in our view of what that kingdom is. For two thousand years the teaching of Jesus has been overlaid with such accretions of theology, so decorated with pomp and ceremony, that the simple digestible bread of it has become as garish as a Christmas cake. It is time the world, for its own safety and sanity, realised that behind mitre and triple tiara and all the other spectacular gimcrackery of a world organization there is a simple man walking our common dust in sandals, and talking a divinity so humane that the wayfaring man, though a fool, may not err therein.

Few American readers have had the privilege to peruse Fenner Brockway's now out-of-print *Inside the Left*, the autobiographical life-story of a courageous man whose labors for the cause of truly international, non-violent socialism carried him all the way from a prison term as a Conscientious Objector to World War I to editorship of the British ILP organ, *The New Leader*, and finally to a seat in Parliament. For the many who, unfortunately, will never see *Inside the Left*, Howard Spring performed an outstanding service by writing *Fame is the Spur*, a story—the true story, we think—of the Labor movement in Britain, its glories and its downfalls. In this book, as in Willard Motley's *We Fished All Night*, we view a struggle for political eminence from the "inside," and are even able to find sympathy amidst our disapproval for those who gradually betray the ideals they began by professing, since the spur of Fame is always so demanding. *Inside the Left* demonstrated to this reviewer how fair and accurate a chronicler Howard Spring is, even when he writes fiction. The two books, one incontestably authentic, the other but a novel of imaginary characters, dovetail so perfectly that one is thereafter inclined to prefer Spring's fiction to official histories of the political struggles of Britain.

Fame is the Spur was undoubtedly inspired in part by the life of one of the great heroes of the International Labor Party, Keir Hardie, who also figures as a man of legendary stature in Brockway's account. Spring appreciates the heroes worth appreciating, but at the same time manages to avoid contempt for lesser beings. Few authors are as well balanced—it being more customary to show either derision for heroes by debunking them, or disdain for the many somewhat confused non-heroes, like most of us.

COMMENTARY
THE LIVING MYSTERY

As a sidelight on the "Secularism" controversy, it is a fact which seems worth noting that the independent reflections of secularists and agnostics are almost always more *interesting*, philosophically, than any amount of pious loyalty to established religious institutions or familiar religious concepts. The reason is obvious: the thoughts of men whose allegiance is to their own thinking, rather than to inherited tradition, are bound to be much more alive.

Excellent illustrations of this fact are found in a series of articles running currently in the London monthly, *Literary Guide and Rationalist Review*, under the title, "This Is What I Believe." Take for example the following by Gerald Bullett, in the June issue:

> What I believe, and have always believed, is, in (I think) Herbert Spencer's words, that "the universe, with all it contains, is a mystery ever pressing for interpretation." But by mystery I mean something more than puzzle, and certainly something more than a puzzle that can be progressively solved by the advance of physical science. I mean, in fine, a *living* mystery. I believe that what for lack of a better word we call the universe is alive in all its parts, the infinitely complex manifestation or self-expression of spirit. If you ask me what "spirit" is, I answer that it is what you are, and what I am, the one irreducible and indubitable reality that we know not by inference or hearsay, but by being it.
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> . . . My quarrel with Christian orthodoxy, . . . is not that it promulgates a mythology, but that it insists on our-either swallowing it whole, taking it literally, or rejecting it out of hand.

Another writer, Royston Pike, wrestles with his deep conviction of Determinism in the April issue.

> No scientist [he writes] convinced me of this, no metaphysician, no spinner of philosophical cobwebs. If one man is responsible, it was not Karl Marx but the very English H. T. Buckle. "The whole world forms a necessary chain, in which indeed each man may play his part, but can by no means determine what that part shall be."
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> But all the same, how true is Leopold Infeld's remark that the most sensible attitude is to accept emotionally the inevitability of the past, while as regards the future "trying to live and act as though our wills were free, as though we could decide between good and bad, even when torn by emotions and pricked by desires."
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> Deeply imbued with this almost Calvinistic determinism, I yet am persuaded that mine is not the insignificance of a grain of sand on the seashore, buffeted for eons in a senseless surge. I have the conviction that I am a partner, however lowly and weak, in a scheme of things which is so gigantic that it embraces the whirling universes, and so timeless that it is as impossible to conceive of its beginning as of it ever coming to a finish.

Such thinking merits being remembered, with thanks to *Literary Guide* for publishing it, month after month.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves

FOR a few years longer we shall be able to learn at first hand about the disciplined virtues of continental European education. Eventually, those who received their degrees in Germany and Austria will be gone, and, unless we are watchful, a great deal that we could learn from them will also vanish with their passing. Germany and Austria are still there—so, too, are the Universities of Milan and the Sorbonne, but post-war Europe is undeniably different. It has become Americanized, not only through the infiltration of American energy and money, but also because the huge political struggle involving Russia and the United States has speeded up the tempo of every European's concerns—and when one's concerns are speeded up to a frenetic degree, one reaches the "American" rate of vibration.

It is of course difficult for us to see reasons for praising the education practiced in Europe and discounting the education which our own country has produced; after all, the great German universities didn't prevent the rise of a Hitler, did they? And what is so good about super-discipline in learning, if it goes hand in hand with a liking for military order, a passion for duelling scars, etc.? But these considerations, important as they are, have little to do with the fact, the several million times demonstrated fact, that those who passed through the old German universities received a training in the tools of learning incomparably better than that supplied in America. It is probably no exaggeration to claim that, on the average, it took eight years of American studies to equal four passed at Bonn, Heidelberg, Leipsic, or the Sorbonne. In other words, the average young Ph.D. in the United States seemed to reach only the same degree of general cultural capability as that possessed by an ordinary graduate from an outstanding European University.

Even if this high estimate of European learning is held to be extreme, informed readers will grant us something of a point, since all that is needed in the way of first-hand experience for evaluation is to have had a few conversations with those who gained their fundamentals of philosophy, psychology, or science abroad. The present writer does not feel that he knows exactly *why* the disturbing fact exists, but is convinced that facts of this sort—facts which annoy us because their explanations are so elusive—deserve continued attention. A part of the secret, perhaps, is that Americans have been most consistent in proving that they are in an all-fired hurry, and if you are in a hurry—if you want to get to college fast, have the "best experiences" of your life fast, and get out and make several hundred thousand dollars fast—you are apt to be more than a little impatient with details. The European was not in this all-fired hurry, apparently, and as a result he learned how to speak English correctly with greater rapidity than those to the royal language born. He didn't "make" as much money, but perhaps it was in some ways fortunate that he found fewer opportunities out of which money could be "made." At any rate, he had time for details, and basic education, whether we like it or not, requires patience with details.

Dr. Hutchins' revolutionary proposal to the faculty of Chicago a few years back—that professors should be paid only that which they actually needed for themselves and their families, turning over the proceeds from lecture tours and syndicated articles to a general fund—would have seemed far more natural at Bonn or Heidelberg. In fact, as we come to think of it, a good many of Hutchins' ideas were compatible with the thoroughness of the European ideal. Hutchins advocated that a considerable proportion of well-to-do youngsters then attending universities should after two years be given their B.A.'s, a nice pat on the head, and a release from the pretense of further studies, leaving Higher Education for the few who wanted it for its own sake. Hutchins was instinctively against mass production in education, and so, apparently, were the Europeans. We recall the story of a capable American instructor,

selected for teaching work at the Sorbonne, who was first amazed and later overjoyed to discover that he wasn't even supposed to know precisely what he was going to teach upon his arrival. Instead of being presented with a schedule and a flock of pupils, he was told to look things over for a while, attend the lectures of other professors, and leisurely come to an understanding with a most non-interfering administration as to just what he felt himself able to do, and how and when he felt he could do it.

These are all digressions from our original thought, yet all, we think, related. The point is that the secret of the fine education made possible by many European universities was a secret of general temperament and attitude, not the secret of a special "system." Systems are so often dangerous—they encourage oversimplifications, whereas the truly educated man needs to find his way slowly.

If you, as teacher or parent, are able to talk with some who really *pursued* studies in Europe before the war years—before World War I—you may have the opportunity to gain a host of new insights. You may discover that the European education was not forgotten when the years of formal instruction were over, that whether or not opportunities subsequently existed for direct application of those studies to a profession, five minutes' talk will reveal that university training became a permanent part of men's lives, even though those lives might have been spent in clerical positions. You will discover, too, as we did recently, how deep is the sense of sorrow that such men and women feel when they see the children in their neighborhood growing into their teens without any real knowledge of how to speak, write, or read correctly. Many of these well-educated immigrants love America for its noble ideals of freedom and self-expression, but perceive a good deal more clearly than most of us "natives" that freedom usually means the most to the truly literate individual. The recommendation we will usually hear from such sources—if we ask an opinion—will run to a stricter planning of curricula for the earlier years, and much more freedom when and if one reaches the stage of graduate work. This seems to make a great deal of sense, especially if we realize that stricter requirements of the curricula do not necessarily imply discarding the fruits of progressive methodology.

We *have* learned to see each child as "an individual," and this insight was probably grievously lacking among most of the disciplinarians of Europe, but the swing of the pendulum need not blind us to the fact that the basic tools of learning are disciplines which must be approached with rigor. The seriousness of genuine education need not be overlooked because of the realization that the problems of the individual child require adequate attention.

FRONTIERS
High Calling

IN the Jan. 13 issue of the New York *Times Magazine* appeared an article by Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas, "The Black Silence of Fear." This discussion of the decline of civil liberties in the United States was forceful, stirring, even inspiring. It has been widely referred to and quoted, and Justice Douglas has since repeated its themes on later occasions. One passage of this article, quoted more briefly in MANAS for Feb. 27, reads as follows:

> Fear even strikes at lawyers and the bar. Those accused of illegal Communist activity—all presumed innocent, of course, until found guilty—have difficulty in getting reputable lawyers to defend them. Lawyers have talked to me about it. Many are worried. Some could not volunteer their services, for if they did they would lose clients and their firms would suffer. Others could not volunteer because if they did they would be dubbed "subversive" by their community and put in the same category as those they would defend. This is a dark tragedy. Lawyers are the first to be aware of the bar's great historic role—the role of the defender. They know that the law's brightest days have been when an Erskine stepped forward to defend an unpopular person accused of an ugly or infamous crime. Yet such has been the temper of public opinion in recent years that good men have been reluctant to undertake this great historic role.

This brings us to the story of Mr. Royal W. France, American lawyer, liberal, and college professor. The story is told by Mr. France himself in the June issue of *Fellowship*, monthly magazine of the Fellowship of Reconciliation, a Christian pacifist organization. Whatever one may think of pacifists, it is necessary to honor their consistent devotion to peace and their equally consistent service to the cause of civil liberties. Mr. France, we suppose, may be called a pacifist, but this is not our present interest.

In March, 1917, Mr. France was the bright young man of a mellow old law firm in New York City. As a member of the Brooklyn Young Men's Republican Club—"one of the largest political clubs in the country"—he moved in the best Republican circles. (The senior member of his law firm was Treasurer of the Republican Party.) Unlike most members of the business community, however, Mr. France disliked the trend toward war which that "great liberal," Woodrow Wilson, had finally adopted. At a meeting of the Brooklyn Club, this young Republican publicly opposed the policies of the President, quoting Wilson against himself. The New York newspapers made first-page news of France's speech, with the result that, while not exactly "fired" from his job, he had to choose between suppressing his opinions and association with his law firm. He chose to express his opinions.

During the war, he served the Army in a legal capacity. "The most satisfaction," he writes, "that I ever had out of wearing an officer's uniform was that I was able to use my military authority to help the police disperse a mob of unruly soldiers who were trying to break up a pacifist meeting in the old Madison Square Garden."

After the war, when the New York State Legislature refused to seat some socialists who had been elected to that body by the voters—refused to seat them on the ground that they were "atheists" and could not, therefore, take oath to uphold the Constitution—Mr. France found himself addressing at Madison Square Garden a mass protest meeting which his brother, a United States Senator, had been scheduled to address, but could not, because of severe laryngitis. One thing led to another. His speech was so good he was invited to give another on the same subject in Philadelphia. There, he sat on the platform with Jim Cannon, labor leader and later important in the Trotskyite faction of the radical movement. Cannon got up and started to read the Preamble to the Declaration of Independence, without announcing what it was. Before long Cannon and all the other speakers, including France, were hurried off to spend the night in jail. The Preamble, it will be recalled, contains the words, ". . . if any Government becomes destructive of

those ends, it is the right of the people to alter or abolish it." An eager policeman who had studied his manual ran them all in for "advocating overthrow of the Government."

Although, next morning, an embarrassed judge released them, and the arresting officer was dismissed from the Philadelphia police force by the Mayor, Mr. France felt he was doing his new law partners no good, so he again resigned, although over their protests. He prospered as an independent attorney, but a successful career as a corporation lawyer held no permanent appeal. In 1929 he left the legal world for a professorship at Rollins College in Florida.

Today, in 1952, he is about to go back to the practice of law, because, he feels, there are clients who need him—the kind of clients Justice Douglas spoke of in his *Times Magazine* article. "I," says Mr. France, "will defend them." The closing words of his article in *Fellowship* are a testament to the human spirit which they so ably represent:

> Having terminated my duties to Rollins College at the end of the College year, my services will be available to unorthodox minorities, to conscientious objectors, to victims of racial and religious intolerance.
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> Already my acceptance of the defense of Communists has caused deep chagrin to many friends whom I cherish. That was inevitable, but to me the case is clear. Certainly, behind the mythical Iron Curtain the rights of dissenting minorities are not protected. There is only one way to help those countries to believe in and practice political tolerance, and that is to practice it ourselves.
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> If we, with a tradition and practice running back to the Magna Carta and through the Declaration of Independence and Bill of Rights, are unable, in times of tension, to preserve the freedom of speech of our dissenting minorities; if men are now in jail not, as I believe, because either the government or the courts seriously believed that anything they had said or done really tended to overthrow this government by force but because of what Justice Douglas calls "The Black Night of Fear," because we have lost the faith in the competition of ideas in the marketplace that dictated the Bill of Rights, how can we expect religious and political tolerance in countries that have no such background of liberal tradition and that have just recently passed through revolution? If a Negro could not speak for his race in my own State of Florida without being bombed, what right have I to stickle on the absence of civil rights elsewhere? Free speech is a principle that is at the very heart of the democratic practice. The only way to spread its beneficent light to other lands is to practice it uncompromisingly ourselves. This I will defend.