VOLUME V, NO. 46
NOVEMBER 12, 1952

# EAST AND WEST

MANY years ago, G. Lowes Dickinson, one of the most civilized of Europeans, wrote an essay on Buddhism which was published in 1914 in his small volume of "Notes of Travel," called *Appearances*. In the Preface, Mr. Dickinson explained his reason for this book, which, he said, he published "because the new contact between East and West is perhaps the most important fact of our age; and the problems of action and thought which it creates can only be solved as each civilization tries to understand the others." How well Mr. Dickinson tried may be seen from his comparison of Eastern and Western outlooks on life, presented in the form of an imaginary conversation between himself and a "solemn Buddha"—a figure adorning the temple at Borobudur in Java:

> For a long time I was silent, meditating his doctrine. Then I spoke of children, and he said, "They grow old." I spoke of strong men, and he said, "They grow weak." I spoke of their achievement, and he said, "They die." The stars came out, and I spoke of eternal law. He said, "One law concerns you—that which binds you to the wheel of life." The moon rose, and I spoke of beauty. He said, "There is one beauty—that of a soul redeemed from desire." Thereupon the West stirred in me, and cried "No!" "Desire," it said, "is the heart and essence of the world. It needs not and craves not extinction. It needs and craves perfection. Youth passes; strength passes; life passes. Yes! What of it? We have access to the youth, the strength, the life of the world. Man is born to sorrow. Yes! But he feels it as tragedy and redeems it! Not round life, not outside life, but through life is the way. Desire more and more intense, because more and more pure; not peace, but the plenitude of experience. Your foundation was false. You thought man wanted rest. He does not. We at least do not, we of the West. We want more labour; we want more stress; we want more passion. Pain we accept, for it stings us into life. Strife we accept, for it hardens us to strength. We believe in action; we believe in desire. And we believe that by them we shall attain." So the West broke out in me; and I looked at him to see if he was moved. But the calm was untroubled, unruffled the majestic brow, unperplexed the sweet, solemn mouth. Secure in his Nirvana, he heard or he heard me not. He had attained the life-in-death he sought. But I, I had not attained the life in life. Unhelped by him, I must go my way. The East, perhaps, he had understood. He had not understood the West.

This colloquy, we may say, took place long ago, almost at the turn of the century. It seems a just enough account, if we take into consideration the undertone of feeling by which Mr. Dickinson admits that he has not really the best of the argument, although he *knows* that the West has a truth—or a part of a truth—which the East lacks. What Gautama Buddha might have replied, had he been met at Borobudur, instead of a graven image, we cannot say, but we think that Mr. Dickinson would have come away with something more than the impression of life-in-death attained.

Dickinson's account is just enough, that is, if we concede that he deals in the terms of refined stereotypes. His "Buddhism," we think, is the Buddhism that has been grasped by multitudes of human beings across 2500 years. His "West," likewise, is the West of 1914, an unsated, as yet not wholly self-betrayed West, moved by the emprise of a vigorous race still driving toward more distant horizons. But do we imagine that the East has never known this spirit of adventure? That the West will never long after passionless serenity?

The Wheel of Life—to borrow the Buddhist image—turns ceaselessly, and with it the strivings and longings of human beings. Already the East is apologetic about its famous "passivity." It is almost as though that urbane and sagacious Englishman, Lowes Dickinson, has won his argument after forty years, impelling us to ask, would he really *want* to win it, today ?

Perhaps—and this may be a large and presumptuous "perhaps"—the apparent withdrawal from life of Eastern religion belonged to a past age, and to Asia's teeming millions of that age, more than to the original teachers of Eastern religion. Perhaps the great religious philosophies of the Orient never taught that any other world could be gained without first accepting and understanding this world. In fact, what we have read of Eastern thought suggests that, in order to know and win either world, you have to seek to understand and feel at home in *both.*

The *vis-á-vis* relationship of Eastern and Western thought, today, seems to hold ironies within ironies. In the first place, the real "conquest" of East by West is only now evident, after the armed conquest is over and almost done with. It is, so to say, a moral conquest, in which the delusions of Western civilization—its material standards of the Good Life, its theory of progress through industrialization and endless mechanization—are rapidly being adopted in the East, practically at the same time that a few thoughtful Westerners are beginning to question these doctrines for themselves.

Why is the East vulnerable to these doctrines? The answer, on philosophical grounds, seems plain enough. The East did not understand the other-worldliness of its great teachers in a way that would give its millions of believers balance and discrimination against the hour of temptation to acquire the worldly blessings of the West. The otherworldliness, in short, suffered from religiosity, and, later on, became somewhat infected by a bad case of sour grapes. Meanwhile the West is beginning to be affected by a similar self-distrust. The minor prophets of the West read sermons which might have been taken from *The Bhagavad-Gita*. Speaking of the West's "popular philosophers," these critics repeat, in effect, the words of Krishna:

> They deny that the universe has any truth in it, saying that it is not governed by law, declaring that it hath no Spirit; they say creatures are produced alone by union of the sexes and that all is for enjoyment only. Maintaining this view, their souls being ruined, their minds contracted, with natures perverted, enemies of the world, they are born to destroy. They indulge insatiable desires, are full of hypocrisy, fast-fixed in false beliefs through their delusions. They indulge in unlimited reflections which end only in annihilation, convinced until death that the enjoyment of the objects of their desires is the supreme good. Fast-bound by the hundred chords of desire, prone to lust and anger, they seek by injustice and the accumulation of wealth for the gratification of their own appetites. "This today hath been acquired by me, and that object of my heart I shall obtain; this wealth I have, and that also shall be mine. This foe have I already slain, and others will I forthwith vanquish; I am the lord, I am powerful, and I am happy. I am rich and with precedence among men; where is there another like unto me?" . . . In this manner do those speak who are deluded. . . .

This is the opposite pole of the kind of activity of which Lowes Dickinson was the advocate—"Desire more and more intense, because more and more pure; not peace, but the plenitude of experience." Dickinson seems almost an occidental echo of Krishna's exhortation:

> And if, indulging self-confidence, thou sayest "I will not fight," such a determination will prove vain, for the principles of thy nature will impel thee to engage. Being bound by all past karma to thy natural duties, thou wilt involuntarily do from necessity that which in thy folly thou wouldst not do. . . . Thus have I made known unto thee this knowledge which is a mystery more secret than secrecy itself; ponder it fully in thy mind; act as seemeth best unto thee.

It is indeed a mystery, this paradox of peace which requires struggle; of struggle which must fail without serenity. In these terms, all history seems to unfold as successive courses of self-instruction for mankind. Each cycle of civilization seems largely a cycle of mastery of some great half-truth, being then overtaken by decline, above which hover faint intimations of the other half of truth which has been neglected.

The West made Action its dogma, and extracted from the practice of action all the major truths which devotion to action can reveal. The

East turned prematurely to the forest and quiet meditation, before it had known in its heart that other peace which comes from high achievement. The one became harsh and brutal, the other grew sickly with sentiment and pride. And now each longs for the wisdom and vocation of the other, as though the fruits of either "yoga" could be gained without being earned.

The end of all this will never come, we suppose, until there is no longer "East" and "West," with secretly cherished rivalries and egotisms of origin—until there is only mankind, with every race and nation enriched by the diverse gifts and talents of all. When the West no longer thinks of the *Gita* as an alien work, but welcomes it as belonging as much to America and Europe as to India, then will the wisdom of the *Gita* obtain a Western incarnation. And when the East no longer thinks, "I give these treasures to the outlanders, the *mlechchhas* who have no caste, no glorious tradition," then will the East begin to have a future as glorious as her past.

But in our present, as in nearly every "present" known to history, contemporary Eastern thinkers wish to make their heritage of wisdom into a tract for the times. Writing in *Swatantra* (an Indian weekly published at Madras) for September 6, a professor of Sanskrit, C. Kunhan Raja, seems over anxious to prove that the great Sanskrit epic, the *Mahabharata*, is more concerned with action in this world than with gaining liberation into the next.

> At a time [he writes] when we had completely lost our political independence and when our material wealth was completely shattered and when there was little hope of the foreigner getting out of the country and the people being left to themselves to look after their affairs and to build up their future, we might have derived some solace at the thought of the intangible spirit being the real wealth of the country and at condemning political eminence and material wealth as sins and sources of misery, but the times have changed. If Ramakrishna and Ramana Maharshi have attained to "Moksha" (final liberation), we cannot say that it represents the spirit of our civilization. We must also think of the warriors who have fought on the battlefield, who in modern times may not be recognized as having gone to Heaven. We must assign the correct value to active life, even shift the values from "escape" to "action." There must be a reinterpretation of our basic texts, especially of the Mahabharata and the Ramayana. We must realize that "earthly life to our ancients was (not) an ordeal and a curse." We must also realize that Sri Krishna, too, instigated many of the sins committed by the heroes of the Mahabharata, like Yudhishthira telling a lie to his own teacher Drona that Asvatthama was killed and Bhimasena hitting below the hip in a duel, to take only two examples out of many. . . .
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> Sri Rama is not free from blemishes in his actions as a national hero from the point of view of strict ethical codes. There are blemishes in Sri Rama and in the heroes of the Mahabharata and also in Sri Krishna who was the instigator of most of the sins in the Mahabharata; but they have become virtues in the great books in so far as the heroes showed humanity how to live in this world which is full of unevenness, which is also full of jungles and wild animals.
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> Unless we interpret our ancient classics as guides in life, it is impossible to fit them into the new civilization in which modern science has to be given a place. And modern science will not countenance a philosophy of "escapism" from sins. . . . There is nothing in Sanskrit that actually comes into conflict with modern science. . . . There is not a single drama, not a single poem, not a single literary work in the whole of Sanskrit that advocates renunciation and retirement as a path towards Moksha. Everywhere what we find is only "live, act, fight, kill if necessary, and save civilization."
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> This is the contribution that Sanskrit can make. If there is an apparent conflict between ancient thought and modern science, it is all an accretion of a later age of decadence. Those who speak of a conflict between modern materialistic sciences and ancient spiritual thoughts do not present the truth, do not serve the cause of man and his civilization, they do not help the nation. They may win cheap celebrity for the time being; but they get no lasting fame or gratitude from future generations. Sanskrit texts must be reinterpreted.

So, the cat is out of the bag: Krishna and other eminent figures of Indian tradition can take their place with the rest of us rascals who are not above a little lying or cheating when a battle must be won or a civilization needs saving. And as for

Moksha, that was "okay" as a goal when the British had things fixed so that they had all the fun; but now it is different.

This article, doubtless, is not representative of the "best" Indian opinion. But it does represent a mood, a temper, which has a large role in shaping the outlook of modern Indians. It is probably too glib a rationalization to be acceptable even by persons whom it may properly represent, while its naive candor goes beyond the inclinations of many who are willing to practice, but not to preach, such doctrines.

These alleged "immoralities" are in the *Mahabharata*, of course, giving the reader occasion for some puzzlement and questioning. But if this writer supposes that they are counsels of compromise, he had better read the *Mahabharata* again, and much more carefully. Indeed, this is a work which has all the varied genius of life itself—yet a work in which the world of life and the world beyond life meet and mingle as the fibers of a fruit penetrate and give shape to its rich nourishment. Further, if any be so foolish as to believe that there is nothing in Sanskrit literature to suggest that withdrawal and meditation have a part or place in man's life, he should read, in Book XV, the counsel of Vyasa to Yudhishthira concerning the natural turning of the householder to a life of contemplation when his family responsibilities have been fulfilled.

What India possesses in Sanskrit literature is a great tradition of balance and wisdom in human decision. It seems a pity that, having abandoned the path of action for the centuries of the conquest, India should now, in freedom, belittle the path of reflection. Surely there is a wisdom in these ancient teachings beyond the oscillations and opportunisms of history. And it is the wisdom we have need of, in both East and West, today.

# *REVIEW*
## CRITICISM FOR CRITICS

HAVING done our best to pay tribute to Simone Weil by way of appreciation of her posthumous volume, *The Need for Roots*, we are now reflecting upon the fact that Miss Weil's belated popularity affords some wonderful opportunities for criticism of her critics. There are plenty of them, or will be. No one can be acclaimed as Simone Weil has been during the past year—acclaimed as a human being of exceptional moral greatness—without attracting the facile pens of detractors, who are always affronted by such stature.

Mr. T. S. Eliot, whom Putnam engaged to write the Preface to *The Need for Roots*, had the first opportunity for belittlement, and we should like to encourage readers to distinguish between the wholehearted affirmations of Miss Weil and the pedantic and sometimes confused criticisms of Eliot. Eliot's basic attitude toward Simone Weil seems to be one of condescension. One feels that he is not surprised to discover that the young Frenchwoman is unable to equal his own sophistication. But sophistication, as we understand it, means breadth of understanding, and here it is Eliot, not Weil, who fails, as we compare them. Consider a single passage of Eliot's evaluation of Simone Weil's religion, and note the words "dangerously close," in the middle of the paragraph:

> In one respect she has, at first sight, something in common with those intellectuals of the present day (mostly with a vague liberal Protestant background) who can find their way toward the religious life only through the mysticism of the East. Her enthusiasm for everything Greek (including the mysteries) was unbounded. For her, there was no revelation to Israel, but a good deal of revelation to the Chaldeans, the Egyptians, and the Hindus. Her attitude may appear to be dangerously close to that of those universalists who maintain that the ultimate and esoteric truth is one, that all religions show some traces of it, and that it is a matter of indifference to which one of the great religions we adhere. Yet she is saved from this error—and this is a matter for admiration and thankfulness—by her devotion to the person of Our Lord.

We wonder if Simone Weil was devoted to "the person of Our Lord" so much as she was toward making Christ's example live—a contribution of entirely different significance. Eliot here seems to typify the patronizing air of men who are well satisfied with institutional religion. They may praise Miss Weil for certain things, but we wonder if they have even a glimmer of understanding of Miss Weil's actual feelings and perspectives.

A discussion of *The Need for Roots* by Isaac Rosenfeld (in *Partisan Review* for September-October) gives point to analysis of other typical assumptions of Simone Weil's critics. Rosenfeld, the skeptic—some would call him "materialistic"—completes Miss Weil's encirclement by men of conventional mind. Eliot marks her "dangerous leaning towards universalism in religious tradition," while Rosenfeld questions whether men need any "roots" at all. Does Miss Weil mean, the latter asks, that one *needs* to be "rooted in an intellectual cultural or religious tradition?" If so, *this* would be dangerous, it appears; Rosenfeld thus contradicts Mr. Eliot, finding "danger" in the opposite direction:

> If this ["rootedness"} is not to mean the surrender of curiosity or the circumspection of intellectual life within a narrow compass, some provision must be made for learning of the world outside one's tradition. If this learning is not to be superficial, there must remain the real possibility of one's never sinking roots. Yet the image of the rooted intellectual presupposes a single tradition: a man rooted in many traditions, if this is not a contradiction in terms, would exhibit all the traits presumably characteristic of the uprooted condition. The problem, how to combine the values of rootedness with those of variety and stimulation necessary for growth, is never squarely faced by Miss Weil. . . .

Interesting considerations revolve around this point. Mr. Rosenfeld seems to be incapable of imagining "rootedness" in other than institutional terms. Personal life—and social life, too—he

seems to regard as inevitably a sort of patchwork arrangement based upon relative expediencies. Mr. Eliot, similarly, feels a certain necessity for religious institutions and formalized traditions as guarantors of "stability." Mr. Rosenfeld distrusts the religious institutions because he believes—correctly, we think—that no institution can represent truth, but he also seems to insist that no human being can grasp a basic truth. He criticizes Simone Weil's suggestion of a search for "valid beliefs," apparently believing that *no* beliefs are valid in this basic sense.

The important distinction that needs to be made, here, is between a settled and immobile life of the mind and a stable condition of social living. Unless one is an economic determinist, it is not necessary to hold that a stable society inevitably means an intellectually static society. Miss Weil is obviously a "synthesizer" at a profoundly philosophical level, and the reason that she is so often dealt with superficially by her critics is probably because she combines values of the extreme anarchistic or individualistic view with others which can only be classified as belonging to some sort of "higher socialism." Her terms may be strange or unfamiliar, but if her critics are so easily annoyed, this seems to prove that "the lack of mobility" is principally manifest in the minds of these detractors.

Mr. Rosenfeld does make an attempt to qualify his earlier criticism by examination of "rootedness" in terms of religion and "supernatural" beliefs, but this is something of an empty gesture, since the same basic criticisms and disparagements are repeated, as follows:

> The one meaning of the term ["rootedness," again], as she uses it, that may be able to stand inspection is that of rootedness as the condition of religious faith. Here the temporal difficulties are avoided, faith presumably being a clinging to values of an order above and beyond the natural world. (I grant, but only for the sake of argument, that such a combination of words is meaningful.) But here again there are difficulties, waving aside the immediate one, whether we are not talking plain nonsense: to the extent that faith really is an act that lifts us out of nature, we are freed of the obligation to represent rootedness in terms of this life, and are in no better a position to reveal what it means; and even if the consequences of faith can be shown to consist in a harmony between ego and universe—the feeling of being at home in God's world—it does not follow that such harmony will manifest itself in man's world, or it should long ago have done so. Moreover if our objective is the reconstruction of society, it seems to me a confession of failure to resort to the supernatural, and an admission that the condition of rootedness is not to be achieved on earth.

Mr. Rosenfeld named his review, "In Defense of Animal Nature." He apparently feels that Miss Weil has slighted what is to him a profound truth—that "a healthy society encourages mobility among its traditions with everyone's right assured to pick and cultivate what he pleases, provided it do no harm." Thus when Miss Weil claims that man *cannot* be happy without becoming a conscious heir to philosophic tradition, and without being also something of an individual metaphysician and idealist, she displeases both Mr. Eliot and Mr. Rosenfeld. For, although these two critics represent opposite poles of thought, they are at one in their refusal to allow religion a transcendental role, both insisting that it remain a familiar and wholly predictable social institution.

We should like to close with a single sentence occurring in Miss Weil's essay on "Liberty." "Those who are lacking in good will," she writes, "or who remain adolescent, are never free under any form of society." Mr. Eliot and Mr. Rosenfeld have attempted to dispose of Miss Weil, albeit with faint praise. But, to us, they seem instead to have disposed of each other. Inspired works, we imagine, often produce this interesting and confounding effect.

# *COMMENTARY*
## CULTURAL IMPERIALISM

No one who has spent time in publishing can fail to feel an admiration for the achievements of *Life, Time,* and *Fortune* at the technical level of journalism. Even editorially, there are occasions when they earn genuine respect, despite the mass-audience appeal of *Life,* the glib "personality" of *Time,* and the big-business orientation of *Fortune.* That critics will be able to point to "biasses" in all three, we have no doubt. What we are trying to suggest is that they are representative of the culture of the United States as a whole, rather than of a particular segment of the population. We may be wrong, of course, and more astute observers may be able to discover a Machiavellian hand behind the policies of *Life, Time,* and *Fortune,* but, so far as we can see, these papers are mostly "pro-story."

A recent development in respect to *Life,* however, is of interest in connection with this week's Frontiers discussion. It seems that *Life,* having acquired some five million circulation for its English edition, now contemplates an "invasion" of Latin America. Plans for a Spanish edition of *Life* are well along, and exporters in the United States and Great Britain have been invited to place advertisements in the Spanish *Life* as a new and effective means of selling the Latin-American market.

Naturally, Latin-American publishers are up in arms. Cuban publishers announced their opposition to this project in the *Havana Post* for Aug. 9, asserting that they will not "permit the subordination of the culture of the Cuban people to a pattern prepared abroad." Their fears are surely well founded, especially in regard to loss of advertising revenue, for a single, large-circulation medium is always less expensive coverage of a market than a number of smaller magazines. The Cuban publishers declare, however, that a Spanish *Life* cannot succeed in Cuba, claiming that both the Cuban Government and the Cuban people will oppose this "unfair competition." Publishers in other Latin-American countries are also aroused, so that what might be called a Latin-American Press Bloc, militant against a Spanish *Life,* is now in process of formation.

What is one to say to all this? On the one hand is the principle of the free press in a world rapidly becoming one. If, by any other means than popular rejection by readers themselves, *Life* can be stopped from publishing in Spanish to Latin-America, even on grounds of cultural imperialism, then what could easily become an extremely vicious precedent will have been established. On the other hand, if the Spanish *Life* succeeds, the glossy stereotypes of the mass culture of North America will be helped to gain hemispheric acceptance. This is one of the subtler problems confronting the future, for which there seems to be absolutely no solution except in greater individual responsibility on the part of those in a position to exercise power.

# CHILDREN
## . . . and Ourselves

OUR intent this week is to promote purchase of the *Partisan Review* for September-October, by parents and teachers especially. Our reason is the lead article, "Such, Such Were the Joys," a manuscript found among George Orwell's papers after his death. These forty pages strike us as something of a classic, in which the author of *1984* becomes an authentic philosopher. While his account of days spent at a not-so-good English public school is in many respects depressing, the basic orientation is one of provocative analysis—an aspect of Orwell that is nearly obliterated by the hopelessness of *1984*. In any case, the *Partisan Review* is probably the best of the *avant garde* publications, or "little magazines," so that readers unfamiliar with this journal may be pleased to make its acquaintance. "Such, Such Were the Joys" is alone worth the purchase price of 75 cents. (Address: PR, 30 West 12th Street, New York 11.)

"Such, Such Were the Joys" defies review, for it has its own symmetry and needs to be read entire. However, a passage or two may demonstrate that Orwell in retrospect on English school life makes very much more than a historical document. Apparently, he was one of those rare beings who are able to return to the feelings and experiences of childhood with no loss of capacity for feeling their emotional impacts. Though he is very much a rebel against the psychology of contemporary society, Orwell's treatment is always measured, even sympathetic, to the boarding school dictators who persecuted his small frame and brain so long ago. He writes, however, that,

> The weakness of the child is that it starts with a blank sheet. It neither understands nor questions the society in which it lives, and because of its credulity other people can work upon it, infecting it with the sense of inferiority and the dread of offending against mysterious, terrible laws. It may be that everything that happened to me at Crossgates could happen in the most "enlightened" school, though perhaps in subtler forms.

Orwell wonders whether the basic situations in school life have really changed so much as may appear, during the past thirty years. "We cannot be certain that school, at any rate boarding school, is not still for many children as dreadful an experience as it used to be. Take away God, Latin, the cane, class distinctions and sexual taboos, and the fear, the hatred, the snobbery and the misunderstanding might still all be there. It will have been seen that my own main trouble was an utter lack of any sense of proportion or probability. This led me to accept outrages and believe absurdities, and to suffer torments over things which were in fact of no importance."

One of the first things Orwell learned from his moralistic trainers at Crossgates was that it was possible "to commit a sin without knowing that you committed it, without wanting to commit it, and without being able to avoid it."

> Sin [he continues] was not necessarily something that you did: it might be something that happened to you. I do not want to claim that this idea flashed into my mind as a complete novelty at this very moment, under the blows of Sim's cane: I must have had glimpses of it even before I left home, for my early childhood had not been altogether happy. But at any rate this was the great, abiding lesson of my boyhood: that I was in a world where it was *not possible* for me to be good. And the double beating was a turning point, for it brought home to me for the first time the harshness of the environment into which I had been flung. Life was more terrible, and I was more wicked, than I had imagined. At any rate, as I sat on the edge of a chair in Sim's study, with not even the self-possession to stand up while he stormed at me, I had a conviction of sin and folly and weakness, such as I do not remember to have felt before.

Young Orwell even became persuaded that it was his fault that "Sim's" riding crop had been destroyed during a beating administered. The acceptance of "guilt," as Orwell points out, has a very damaging and distorting effect for the child, and while, as he puts it, "religious belief, for instance, has largely vanished, dragging other

kinds of nonsense after it," there are innumerable other guilt feelings which adults can easily foist upon children.

Young Orwell differed from many of his contemporaries in discovering that in order to have any feeling of personal identity, he must have the courage to assert individuality by rebellion, even when rebellion seemed fruitless. His final childhood slogan, "Break the rules or perish," we can easily see, provided background for *1984*, in which stark individual resistance to authority became, for some, more important in a totalitarian society than anything else. Other correlations with *1984* are supplied by such conclusions as the following:

> That was the pattern of school life—a continuous triumph of the strong over the weak. Virtue consisted in winning: it consisted in being bigger, stronger, handsomer, richer, more popular, more elegant, more unscrupulous than other people—in dominating them, bullying them, making them suffer pain, making them look foolish, getting the better of them in every way. Life was hierarchical and whatever happened was right. There were the strong, who deserved to win and always did win, and there were the weak, who deserved to lose and always did lose, everlastingly.
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> I did not question the prevailing standards, because so far as I could see there were no others. How could the rich, the strong, the elegant, the fashionable, the powerful, be in the wrong? It was their world, and the rules they made for it must be the right ones. And yet from a very early age I was aware of the impossibility of any *subjective* conformity. Always at the center of my heart the inner self seemed to be awake, pointing out the difference between the moral obligation and the psychological *fact.* It was the same in all matters, worldly or other-worldly. Take religion, for instance. You were supposed to love God, and I did not question this. Till the age of about fourteen I believed in God, and believed that the accounts given of him were true. But I was well aware that I did not love him. On the contrary, I hated him. The Prayer Book told you, for example, to love God and fear him: but how could you love someone whom you feared? With your private affections it was the same. What you *ought* to feel was usually clear enough, but the appropriate emotion could not be commanded.

If we were asked to identify just what is Mr. Orwell's subject in "Such, Such Were the Joys," we should say that it is an examination of the psychology of world politics at the level where typical political attitudes impinge directly and cruelly upon children. Certainly, we cannot imagine the fear and hatred endlessly generated by competition for privilege failing to mutilate the sensitive psychological natures of children.

Orwell's report is not altogether depressing. When one takes account of the tremendous emotional handicaps suffered by the author and his contemporaries, there is something inspiring about the revelation that youth persevered in spite of it all. Youth persevered, and youth *wanted to learn.* Youth even sought the disciplines which would make learning possible, and though the disciplines acquired and the learning endured by Mr. Orwell were of a poor sort, his testimony concerning these things is worth much pondering.

# *FRONTIERS*

## Ibero-America's Expectancy

LATIN AMERICA is considering what her position ought to be when and if the two principal ideologies embodied in political systems now struggling for supremacy again involve the world in the throes of calamity.

In the past, Latin America has stood faithfully for Continental solidarity; now, however, some of her people are deeply meditating on what course would, in the end, bring less suffering to the Ibero-American nations, and whether withdrawal would not be better than active cooperation with Anglo-Saxon Americans.

A distinguished writer, Alvaro Fernández Suárez, has recently published in *Cuadernos Americanos* (a quarterly review published in Mexico, read by the most cultured people of Latin America) a well-thought-out article, "Expectancy and Future of a Somnambulistic Continent," in which the position of the Ibero-American nations is considered from this point of view. What follows, here, is largely translation and condensation of the views of this reflective thinker.

Looking at the map, one finds that Anglo-Saxon America is situated mostly in the temperate and cold zones, the regions best adapted for the white man's residence. It was he who, being of European ancestry, created the present machine civilization. These lands, together with those north of the 30° Lat. in other continents, have the most important coal deposits under exploitation, also the largest hydroelectric plants. With the exception of oil, therefore, the inhabitants of these areas have had the motive power for all basic industries upon which the lesser ones depend. This has brought about the birth of great rival States.

North America grows progressively wider toward the Pole, and is reduced to a narrow strip in the tropics. The contrary is the case with South America, which is very extended in the tropics and narrow in the temperate and cold zones. This geographic fact, Suárez thinks, is enough to explain the fundamental difference in economic development, power, and cultural level between these two great regions of the American hemisphere. He expatiates largely on the reasons commonly given for this difference, but denies their real importance. It is evident, he says, that if the British had been transported to Sierra Leone or to Bengal, they could have never established in an equal period of time a society as rich and powerful as that which developed in the British Isles. On the other hand, mountainous Ibero-America presents tremendous obstacles to the building of roads, the arteries for the development of modern Occidental civilization. Therefore, he concludes, "if the 'Pilgrim Fathers' had meandered into the American tropics instead of to the north, they would not have created anything very different from what the Spanish or Portuguese 'adventurers' created in Brazil or in Ecuador. Geography may not 'determine,' but it certainly 'conditions' settlements."

For this reason, he states, Ibero-America has been relegated to a secondary position at this stage of history. It is like a *"pseudopod,"* a cut-off arm of Occidental civilization, on a long road to the South Pole, and this places it on the margin of the lines of present world conflict. "History is not being made below the Thirtieth Parallel at the present time. Rather than making history, Ibero-America is suffering from it."

The disadvantages of being on the margin are evident. Worse, still, however, is the position of the countries which are forced into the turmoil against their will. This is the unfortunate fate of the weak nations which lie geographically within the lines of conflict. These nations are to be pitied because Destiny has not left them the least freedom of choice. Consider the already classical example of Poland. These weak nations, dragged into the quarrels of the Colossi, never get any of the prizes. They always lose. They can't even try

for self-preservation and are without the power to determine their own fate. They are the eternal complainants in the Lion's court and have to accept its rulings, whether just or unjust, even if their contributions in war have excelled those of larger nations. Consider what happened to Yugoslavia.

It is obvious that there are now only two really sovereign States. The others are vassals, in an open and heartless way, or through underhanded sweetness. Not only the satellite countries of Moscow suffer dependence. In substance the fate of Great Britain and France does not differ fundamentally from that of Poland and Czechoslovakia. On the other hand, it can be asserted that Communist China is more independent with respect to the Kremlin than any Occidental country is in respect to the United States. Communist China is a colossal power emerged from a revolution of undoubted national character; if she needs Moscow, Moscow needs her, too. But Great Britain and France have fallen into the worst kind of dependency, a chronic parasitism. A people or a man that endures a physical oppression does not give up his soul. But a man or a country, made prisoner by the insidious ties of gifts, is lost by renouncing all rebellion. He retains only a kind of non-conformism which is resented as very similar to ingratitude. His soul becomes divided. The final outcome of this is that Occidental Europe has given up her right to choose her own destiny.

But the fact that a country has no sovereign power to choose between the alternatives being offered by history may represent a precious gift: Marginalism permits a kind of freedom, a latitude not tolerated in nations situated within the lines of conflict. European nations on both sides of the Iron Curtain have had to endure the will of greater powers. Ibero-America does not suffer this fate—not in the same form. Ibero-America can slant away from the zone of struggle; she can, to a large extent, elude the tail-lashings of the storm and prepare herself for a very different future—a future no more governed by a strange hand, but by her own.

Everything indicates that the Great Powers are moving toward an armed clash. "Our personal conviction," says Suárez, "is that there is nothing that really can be considered an objective cause, such as a vital congestion." Even though we suppose that we are living through a melodrama of strife between the Good and the Wicked—whatever judgment we may pass on the situation, if the vital interests of Ibero-America are considered, her course should be *to look for self-preservation.*

We do not say this because we disdain certain ideological values. If the struggle in view really threatened some sort of slavery, and if war were really an efficacious means of preserving freedom, we would not hesitate nor counsel hesitation. Everything ought to be offered on the side of the good, or even on the side of the least evil, party. But, in our judgment, such a presentation of the facts is deceitful, treacherous. We are firmly convinced that, *in a third world war, the ideal content of the struggle would rapidly be devoured, and that the phenomenon of war would quickly invent its own inhuman objectives—objectives which, that is to say, having escaped from the frame of ideological schemes, would rebel against the direction of the responsible governing body.*

So far as it is possible to see ahead, victory of any side cannot be forecast. The most one can foresee is that the protagonists will end by destroying each other—destroying not all the peoples, but the technical apparatus on which life of the industrial civilization rests, the few centers, all of them situated in the Northern Hemisphere, where basic metals, the large machines that make other machines, and the laboratories of the finest tasks for the key mechanisms, are located. The secrets of science, in possession of only a few, and the knowledge of how to use them, are fragile. In other words, the nourishing apparatus of industrial civilization would be rendered useless.

The gravest consequence of this trauma would be a sudden impoverishment of the belligerents, making them impotent to repair the damage and restore the machine. And millions upon millions of human beings now live, not from the earth, but from mechanical energy. Once this vital system is destroyed, thousands of millions would go hungry and suffer all kinds of ills. Such a situation would provoke irrational mass movements, political and social perturbations, dissolution, and collapse.

If these considerations are reasonable, it is right to see that at least some marginal zones are preserved from the worst consequences of this enormous disaster—not only for the benefit of those zones, but for civilization itself. The preserving operation should not be carried out by means of a timid egoism, but should be led by a courageous spirit of justice, vanquishing the universal blindness of hatred now prevailing.

We have said before that when the industrial centers of the Northern hemisphere are destroyed or severely damaged, the nations will be forced to descend below the levels of industrial civilization to bedrock. But not only the nations directly involved would meet this fate. Under actual conditions, civilization would not survive anywhere. Mother industries, we repeat, are not spread everywhere on the geographical surface of Occidental civilization, but are concentrated in four or five points all situated above the 30° Latitude. The industry of the marginal regions depends upon those centers for its machines and spare parts. Therefore, it is necessary to create self-sufficient, autonomous centers, capable of maintaining all the mechanisms of the industrial societies in the now marginal countries. We mean basic industrialization, aimed at the development of sources of energy, development of fuel deposits and mines, in order to establish as soon as possible new mother industries (principally the steel industry), which would be followed by the development of secondary branches of industry. Without basic industry, Ibero-America could not save herself from the general ruin of Occidental civilization, however marginal its position may be in respect to the lines of conflict.

Even if a third world war is avoided by prolongation of truce conditions, or because a lasting peace is brought about, marginalism would not disappear. The tensions between the great powers would continue, just as the valley continues being a valley, even if the volcano nearby is quiescent. Under this supposition, the program for autonomy should nevertheless prevail for the marginal zones. The truce can be very devastating, too. In another article, "The Cavalcade of Suicides" *(Cuadernos Americanos* for May, 1959), Suárez studied the universal impoverishment caused by armed rivalry, even without actual warfare. That impoverishment would precipitate another form of disintegration and would demand from Ibero-America a specific program of defense to avoid the worst consequences of the process. For this purpose, two modes of action may be considered: an authentic, and an "inauthentic" one. We call "inauthentic" the purely imitative tendency that consists in following the more powerful and fortunate nations, repeating their steps. This was the doctrine of "progressive" Hispano-Americans of the nineteenth-century who were intent upon "civilizing" their countries and peoples. While more enlightened minorities of today know that the time for exhibiting the petulance of the nineteenth-century has passed, in daily life, in politics, in operative economics, the marginal zones still continue to be dazed and subject to the mimetic instinct and they do not even theorize on how to take advantage of their own backwardness, and so be in a position to rectify the errors of the masters.

Suárez affirms that in his opinion the men of Ibero-America should seriously investigate the values of Occidental culture and declare for certain features of their own culture once considered inferior, but which tomorrow may be held as precious possessions. Not everything is

perfect in Western civilization. "In our opinion," says the writer, "not even the form of organisation and machinism that rendered such ostensible successes to this culture, will endure much longer. Technique itself will show a turning tendency in the not distant future, that will underline individual quality above very useful modalities of cooperation that nevertheless caused atrophy in the single human unit."

The only authentic and really fruitful effort lies in *getting ahead of what now exists*—to anticipate the future tendencies of Occidental civilization, thus imitating, not the past, but what is to come.

But will this be possible without creative effort and wide-awake vision of true reality? What is true reality? It is not, of course, that of the official realists who believe only in the tangible, now more perishable than ever. Ibero-America's program—if one can speak about an Ibero-American mystical body—would have to be traced by leading men, starting from the marginal status of the continent; exploiting their own peculiar genius, including some "apparent vices" that tomorrow may be considered virtues; everything with an effective and original knowledge of the actual turn in the world. In this manner one could transform Ibero-American expectancy into a real future. And perhaps thus the Ibero-American might awake from his somnambulistic condition into true waking consciousness.

If the worst should occur—if Occidental civilization collapses, and if Ibero-America, under this hypothesis, is able to subsist, undamaged, having found out how to prepare herself for the crisis, she would then be called by the force of the situation itself to take a foremost position; she could at last make history instead of receiving it by dictation. Thus this marginal reserve of the West would enter into action for the welfare of the whole world.

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