

## TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

YOU can leave out the children. They can't be expected to be concerned. They would be affected, of course. They would be killed, along with everyone else included in the eight-ninths mortality estimate of the Rand Corporation, but children can have no part in thinking about this possibility. In fact, the idea of involving children in the guilty thought of such universal destruction seems an ultimate indecency.

This estimate by the Rand Corporation occurs in a report issued a little over a year ago. It is cited in a pamphlet, *This Is the Missile*, prepared and published by Omaha Action, a loosely knit association of people who have undertaken nonviolent action against the nuclear missile policy of the United States. (Copies of the pamphlet may be obtained by writing to Omaha Action, P.O. Box 9057, Chicago 90, Ill. Single copies are fifteen cents, ten cents in lots of a hundred.)

According to this pamphlet, an intercontinental ballistic missile system is being constructed by the Army which will mount 4,000 solid-fueled, H-bomb war-headed ICBM's, pre-aimed at targets in Russia. It is a reasonable assumption that Russia will have similar ICBM's aimed at the United States. The pamphlet continues:

To understand what ICBM's mean for you, your family, your nation and mankind, consider carefully these figures.

The Rand Corporation, a private research corporation that does work for the United States Air Force, has estimated in a special report that if 150 American cities were hit in a thermonuclear attack, 160,000,000 (160 million) Americans could be killed within thirty-six hours. The total population of the United States is about 180,000,000 (180 million). Such an attack, therefore, could kill eight ninths of the population within thirty-six hours.

It has been estimated that the explosion of 750 hydrogen bombs could so contaminate the atmosphere

with radioactivity that every living thing on the face of the earth would be killed.

Taking the information that the Army's ICBM system will eventually have 4,000 H-bomb war heads (source: *Time*, March 10, 1958), and putting it along side the predicted need of only 750 such bombs to destroy all life on earth, you get quite a picture of the kind of future we are arranging for ourselves. It was this picture which made a "To Whom it May Concern" article seem practically compulsory.

Well, whom *should* it concern? The obvious answer is *everybody*, except the children, who, as we said, should not be compelled to contemplate such hideous possibilities. Should some people be more concerned than others about this picture?

You could say that the people who have made these arrangements should be more concerned than other people, since they have a special responsibility for the picture. But this is a technical matter. There is some point in talking about special responsibility in situations where, after a disaster has happened, you need to fix "blame." But after a thermonuclear disaster, it won't be important to fix blame. How could you "punish" people for blowing up the world? Who would be there to hold court and punish them?

So the ordinary idea of responsibility doesn't apply in such a case. This is not the kind of a thing you leave to others to take care of, and then, if they do a bad job, give the job to somebody else. If they do a bad job, that will be the last time they or anybody else has a chance to do any kind of a job. So, to be practical, we should say that everybody has about the same responsibility for the way things are, or for what will happen.

But this is wrong, since not everybody knows about the way things are, and how can you be responsible for something you don't know about?

So, right now, the responsible people are the people who know what intercontinental ballistic missiles are. What are they? The Omaha Action pamphlet answers this question briefly:

ICBM's are large rocket missiles using solid and/or liquid fuels and sometimes having as many as three stages.

An ICBM is Intercontinental because of its great range—up to 6,000 miles. It is Ballistic because it is aimed in a way similar to an artillery shell and follows a trajectory or path as if it were fired from a giant gun.

ICBM's can attain immense speeds, up to 18,000 miles an hour, and great heights, 600 miles above the earth.

Most military ICBM's have internal guidance systems.

All ICBM's can be equipped with H-bomb warheads of up to 20 megaton size {up to explosive power equalling more than a thousand times the blast that destroyed Hiroshima}.

ICBM's have been called the "ultimate" weapon. Their capabilities are imposing. The 6,000-mile range of an ICBM enables it to embrace an entire hemisphere. All of Soviet Russia is within range of ICBM's located in the United States, and vice versa.

The enormous speeds of ICBM's make them difficult to detect, virtually impossible to intercept and destroy, and provide defenders very little time to seek shelter. An ICBM can fly from Russia to the United States in 20 minutes.

Launching sites of ICBM's can be underground, thus secure against detection or destruction by enemy atomic attack.

If a "clean" ICBM's-megaton warhead struck a city, it would—

Vaporize a crater in the city two miles wide and 200 feet deep.

Destroy every building, regardless of how stoutly built, within a circle 14 miles wide.

Set wooden buildings on fire within a circle 20 miles wide.

Give third degree burns to every person caught in the open within a circle 40 miles wide.

Kill by blast, heat and radiation 75 per cent of the people within a circle 8 miles wide.

If the warhead is "dirty," it will also produce fallout which is deadly over an area of up to 100,000 square miles.

Can one ICBM obliterate the largest city in the world? Yes.

Is there any military defense against ICBM's? In theory, an anti-missile missile could shoot down an ICBM before it reaches its target. However, the United States is not expected to have any anti-missiles until the middle 1960's, and no responsible governmental or military authority has claimed that more than half of the long-range missiles aimed at us could be stopped in this way.

These seem to be the essential facts about ICBM's.

Now that we know about the weapons that will be used in nuclear war, we have to take our place among the people who can be considered "responsible."

As responsible people, what are we going to do about the threat of this kind of war?

As individuals, what can we do?

The pamphlet, *This Is the Missile*, has a few answers:

What can you do? Here is what others have done:

Written, phoned and visited their Washington Representatives.

Written and telegraphed the President.

Sent letters to the editors of their newspapers.

Thousands of Americans in New York, Philadelphia, Los Angeles and San Francisco have marched and distributed leaflets for peace.

Citizens in New York, Los Angeles, and Coventry, England, have refused cooperation with Civil Defense because they believe it immoral to deceive people into believing there is a defense against H-bombs and missiles.

Americans have refused to pay their income taxes so that they would not underwrite weapons of mass murder.

Scientists and laborers in America and Germany have refused to conduct research on nuclear weapons.

Young men throughout the world openly and conscientiously refuse military service and ROTC.

Americans helped sail the boats *Golden Rule* and *Phoenix* toward and into the Pacific atomic test areas to protest nuclear weapons tests.

Young Americans have risked their lives to oppose installation of missiles which can burn to death millions of innocent people.

Besides these emergency actions to preserve the species, a world community must be constructed in which the hatreds which bring wars will not flourish, in which all people can live full and happy lives. This is the task of a positive American foreign policy. There is no room in this pamphlet to describe such a policy, but many sound proposals exist. Excellent recommendations are made in the pamphlet, *Speak Truth To Power* (25 cents), available from the American Friends Service Committee, 20 South 12th Street, Philadelphia 7, Pennsylvania.

Practical suggestions for a means of national defense that would replace military power are made in the book, *Defense in the Nuclear Age*, by Commander Sir Stephen King-Hall.

Well, now that we know about the weapons, and something of what other people have done about this knowledge, what do we think?

This is a discouraging question, since the same thought undoubtedly occurs to everybody who has it asked of him. How is this comparative handful of people going to make enough of an impression on others?

How can you get publishers—the publishers of the newspapers and magazines which have access to the millions of people in the United States—to give thorough attention to the prospect of a world in which thousands of ICBM's are mounted, ready to go off, when only 750 of these things set off at more or less the same time would kill every living thing on earth by poisoning the atmosphere, as well as in other ways?

This is not a question of whether or not you want to breathe the free air of the free world, or totalitarian air of the totalitarian world; it's just a question of whether you want to breathe.

The issue is of course a moral issue. It is a moral issue before it is an issue of physical survival. It is probably worse to contemplate shooting off ICBM's at other people, and to build the facilities to do it, than it is to get killed by such devices.

And if you think about it, you see that the most tragic figures of all are the men who, little by little have let themselves be drawn into the lunatic frame of reference where they think that it is "necessary" to build and test and finally to use these devices in war. For we know these men are not "evil" men. They are captives of a logic which the world has lived by for thousands of years, and where is the population which is ready to let its leaders reverse that logic, even though it has lately become the rationalization of absolute madness?

The leaders of this world, almost to a man, will tell you: "Of course, we'd *like* to abandon these dreadful weapons, but 'they' won't let us. You see, 'they' have them, too."

What we are asking, or considering asking, is that national leaders actually change their thinking from the way men concerned with national defense have thought since the beginning of the nation-state. We are asking them to abolish the very means by which social aggregations of people gained their identity as nation-states. It is unrealistic to expect this of national leaders, especially the national leaders of countries which try to practice democracy, without giving them a dramatic mandate from the people to accomplish this revolution.

Those men who are charged with the responsibility of providing the country with military protection are people very much like ourselves. It takes some time for them to absorb ideas. It is taking us some time to grasp the full implications of what an ICBM war will do to the world. It will take them as much or more time to grow into a realization of the insanity of playing Russian Roulette with the lives of all the people in the world. It is easy for us to give up something we had almost nothing to do with, personally. For

them, the change will be something like suicide. They will have to say to themselves—all that was good about the way I have spent my life was my intentions: the rest is useless and a folly to continue!

So we have to admit that these men need help, and it ought to be the kind of help they can understand and be willing to accept.

They have to be helped to understand that they will not be blamed, but will be praised, for abandoning missile projects and all similar undertakings.

This means that the rejection of the nuclear tools of war—and of war itself—must begin as a grass roots movement, which is the way it has already begun. As the authors of the Omaha Action pamphlet say, the people who have joined this movement have been writing letters to legislators, to the President, and have been making other forms of protest. Some have disobeyed civil defense rules to call attention to the foolishness of attempted defense against nuclear weapons. Some have taken part in peace marches protesting the manufacture of nuclear armaments and some have entered areas restricted for nuclear testing, on sea and land. The problem is to arouse the interest and concern of people everywhere, to oblige the newspapers to report the issues of their protest and to make public the sort of facts which are contained in the Omaha Action pamphlet.

On Wednesday, July 1, three leaders of the Omaha Action project, A. J. Muste, a well-known pacifist, Ross Anderson, a man active in the cooperative movement, and Karl Meyer, a staff member of the Catholic Worker House in Chicago, approached the Mead ICBM site near Omaha, Nebraska, and came to one of the closed gates. They were refused entry and they climbed over the gate. They wanted to talk to the workers at this missile installation. They were handed written notice that they were trespassing and were escorted outside. They then climbed over again. A U.S. marshal took them into custody. They

faced a possible penalty of six months in prison and/or a fine of \$500.

This action by the three men was a climax of a quiet demonstration by a number of people who wish to give public evidence of their view of ICBM weapons and other aspects of nuclear war.

Each of the three men made statements as to their position. A. J. Muste's statement is in the form of a letter to the President of the United States, mailed on June 29. Mr. Muste's letter is as follows:

Dear Mr. President:

In accord with our practice of acting openly at all times and seeking an understanding with any of our fellows with whom we are dealing, we are sending you this letter about our plan of action at the Mead missile base on Wednesday, July 1, 1959. We write also because you are vested with authority in this matter and we wish you to be able to reflect on the decision you may be called upon to make.

Our action is scheduled to begin at 10 a.m. on July 1 at the gate near the little knoll where Omaha Action has maintained quiet vigil for several days. We ask to be admitted to the missile site at that time.

Our reason for this is that we feel called to speak with our fellows who are building the missile base *at the point* where our government is carrying out this crucial part of a nuclear military program, which we believe to be both profoundly evil and practically suicidal.

There is another and more fundamental reason why we wish to enter the site and will attempt to do so, if our request is refused, though this would presumably be an act of civil disobedience. The great stretch of land which is being used for military purposes at Mead belongs, in the final analysis, to God, as does the entire earth. Man did not create the land. It was given to him as a heritage to use for the production of food and clothing and shelter, and that he might enjoy its beauty. Men are now preparing destruction, which can hardly be called war in the old sense at all, which may actually wipe out vegetation and poison the soil. This is a desecration of God's own gift to mankind which must not be permitted to happen.

From the human standpoint, the land is a trust committed to each generation. Our fathers cultivated and enriched this land. It is not the property of this

generation or of the present government of the United States to do with as it pleases. They have an obligation to pass it on unspoiled to the generations to come.

For the reasons which we have set forth in our literature, we do not believe that our nation has any right to engage in preparations for mass destruction by nuclear weapons or to hold the threat of such destruction over the people of other countries, to make "the women and children and noncombatants of another country," as Mr. George F. Kennan recently put it, "the hostages for the conduct of their government." The fact that our own people are similarly threatened by the Soviet Union only means in this nuclear missile race we are preparing our own destruction as well. The whole policy, on the part of every nation engaged in it, is mad as well as evil.

Therefore, we cannot recognize the right of the government to take over, directly or indirectly, more and more land and equipment of all kinds for mass destruction. Rather, we stand aghast at what is happening, as the farmers everywhere usually do when their lands are first seized, taken out of cultivation and devoted to war purposes. We stand aghast because more and more hundreds of thousands of acres are thus desecrated while there are hundreds of millions of people on this earth who go to bed hungry every night.

The land at Mead does not belong to the United States government for the purpose to which it is being put. It does not belong for any such purpose to any person, military, or civilian, who is engaged there in constructing a missile site. It belongs to the people of Nebraska, the people of the United States, the people of the world. It belongs to us of the Omaha Action project as human beings, members of the family of mankind. All those who use the land for evil purposes whether deliberately or otherwise, are the invaders, not we as we enter the missile site.

We bear no malice toward anyone. We do not arrogate any moral superiority to ourselves. We contemplate no use of violence under any circumstances and no resort to subterfuge. We are driven to act on the Truth as we see it. Somehow we hope that what is most truly human in us may speak to what is most truly human in our fellows.

As a Christian minister, I feel called to speak what I believe to be the word of God to all who may be present at the Mead site, as, on Wednesday, July 1 at 10 a.m., along with two of my companions in Omaha Action—Ross Anderson of Americus,

Georgia, and Karl Meyer of Chicago—I initiate the undertaking described above.

Sincerely yours,  
A. J. MUSTE

It is of interest that the behavior of the government officials at the Mead site was exemplary. A bulletin issued by Omaha Action said: "Air Force officials, the U.S. marshal and the U.S. attorney have been courteous and considerate.

The extreme difference in religious and political opinion which separates them from members of Omaha Action has not been manifested in rough spirit or behavior. This has helped both to preserve the atmosphere of seriousness in all action and to hold attention on the political and moral issues which are being raised." The bulletin concludes:

In sum, the initial action phase of the project has carried far better than could be expected. To those participants who have worked for two months to promote, develop and interpret Omaha Action, this is gratifying. We are alert, however, to problems that can develop in the future. Omaha Action can swell to become a mass demonstration against the now obsolete tradition of security through military power, but if this is to happen the spirit of the participants must remain one of unity; careful thought and planning must characterize their action. . . .

Since the July 1 demonstration, a number of other protesters have climbed the fence and been arrested.

The question that keeps recurring in the mind of the reader of the Omaha Action literature is the one which asks: Is there any other way to bring about public education concerning what is involved in national preparations for nuclear war?

We, at any rate, have no suitable answer to this question, unless it be that if everyone who feels that the time has come for some kind of action would take the action that appeals to him, such demonstrations would probably multiply and lose their unique distinction. Conceivably, some kind of milestone in the affairs of self-governed peoples has been erected in Nebraska.

## REVIEW

### PEARL BUCK AND THE ATOM AGE

As an essay in the *Saturday Review* (Sept. 20) indicates, Mrs. Buck is hardly one to retreat into nostalgia for a less complex past, even though she writes about the older days of rural China with such insight and affection. In *Command the Morning*, her latest, Mrs. Buck endeavors to help her readers to understand the lives and feelings of the nuclear scientists. Their problems, she apparently thinks, are symbolic of the larger problems of the world in the century to come. Mrs. Buck finds herself engrossed with the new dimensions of thought of the atomic age. Thousands of hours were spent by the author in conversation with atomic scientists at Oak Ridge, Los Alamos, and wherever else they are to be found—an absorption which is evident in the pages of *Command the Morning*. To quote from her publisher (John Day):

In *Command the Morning*, Pearl S. Buck has turned to the greatest topic of our times—man's conquest of the atom—and, seeing it as both novelist and woman, woven this suspenseful story of the thoroughly human beings who brought it to pass. She takes us back to those fateful years early in the second world war when great physicists had become convinced that a weapon of unutterable destructive power was within their grasp. We live with the scientists from then on, as they become ever more awestruck at what they are unleashing. We listen in their laboratories as they work out the mechanics of their monster—the details that may mean the difference between a dud, a usable bomb, and a holocaust that will set the hydrogen in the oceans ablaze and consume the world. We sit in their homes as they struggle with their disrupted private lives—and we stand beside them in their sleepless nights as they grapple with that nightmare question which each of them must ultimately confront squarely: *Shall this weapon be used?*

*Command the Morning* undertakes to balance an extraordinary number of contradictory situations and ideas, a project which involves too much explanation to please technical critics of the novel form, but which demonstrates Mrs. Buck's

seriousness. We find scientists and generals hotly debating, first, whether a test explosion should be attempted, and then debating whether the bomb should be dropped on Hiroshima. Since neither attitude is identified as "right" by the author, it seems that Mrs. Buck herself accepts both the bomb and the destruction of the two Japanese cities as inevitable—horrifying, yet the inevitable outcome of thousands of years of Western history. And she may be right—or, rather, it may be that the most constructive attitude is one of acceptance *so far as the past is concerned*. As for the future well, it is our horror at the future use of atomic weapons which may serve some useful purpose.

There is little point in making monsters of governments or of the generals who reached the fateful decisions. From a military point of view, the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki was an obvious course. American lives were theoretically saved, and it may even be that fewer Japanese lives were lost than would have been the case if surrender had come after invasion. Yet the application of this logic—one might stretch so far as even to call it "conscientious" logic—has still made many Americans sick at soul. So a whole new way of thinking must develop if we are not to suffer from further soul-sickness in the future. This consideration, we feel, led Mrs. Buck to conceive and write *Command the Morning*.

In a passage which describes the general psychological atmosphere when the war was over, Mrs. Buck repeats the thoughts of one of the leading characters:

They were leaving the mesa like rats fleeing from the proverbial ship. A ship was not a bad metaphor in that dry and desert sea. And industry would take over completely the great works in the northwest and in Tennessee. The reactors would now begin to irradiate the isotopes of peace. But beneath and above all else was his promise not to allow the creative essence hidden in the nucleus of the atoms to remain in the hands of the generals. It must be put in the hands of civilians, men—and women, too he supposed, when he thought of Jane—whose purpose was to create life and not death. He'd get his scientists together, they would descend upon

Washington and make such a disturbance that the nation would hear and heed. Then when the hubbub was over he'd retire to a certain small college he knew, a religious place, founded by a father of the church, and he'd spend the rest of his life there, teaching and training men and women to be fit to use the divine energy.

Here in his shabby study, alone with such thoughts, he laughed silently and deeply. How clever of God to hide the dynamo of creation in a thing so small that the eye of a human being could not see it! And how diabolically clever of that human being to devise ways of enlarging his vision and stretching his sight so that he caught at least the shadow of the reality and with his monstrous imagination guessed the truth! Adam, Adam! The Garden of Eden was happy ignorance and now it was lost forever. He had eaten of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge, and there had been no Eve, either, to hand him the rosy apple. He had only himself to blame.

Mrs. Buck has penetrated deeply into the problems of the scientific temperament. Here we see a number of fine men, not in the least indifferent to what is usually considered "social responsibility," who are nonetheless led to poise humankind on the brink of extinction because of their allegiance to the mathematical equations of "probability." In the novel, before the first test explosion is touched off, one hundred atom specialists are asked to figure the chances of a chain reaction resulting which would "vaporize" the earth. The leader of the project is determined to call the whole thing off—so far as he is concerned—if the majority conclude that the risk may be "as much as three-tenths of one chance in a million." As honest calculators the hundred specialists decide that the probabilities are slightly less than this, and so the machinery for production of the bomb continues to move. But the point is that the project leader and most of his subordinates *wished* that the results would excuse their further participation! By similar pressures these men were constrained to give assent to use of the bomb against Japan, after studying the comparative probabilities of losses in life with or without the explosion as a means of ending the war immediately. Instincts—or intuitions—

pointed one way, and the brain the other. As scientists, they could only respond as they did.

## COMMENTARY

### SPAIN—"FREE" AND UNFREE

ACCORDING to the January-March *Newsletter* of the Labor Committee to Release Imprisoned Trade Unionists and Democratic Socialists, letters by American citizens protesting the fate of political prisoners in Spain have an effect. During last September and November a new wave of arrests broke out in Spain. Somewhere between 75 and 150 persons were arrested for socialist and labor union activity. After some news of what happened to these men had reached the United States, Norman Thomas issued this statement for publication in the *Newsletter*:

The latest reports indicate that some of the Socialists and others—by no means all—arrested in Spain during November have been released. That small gain is doubtless due to the outspoken criticism of Franco's actions in Europe and America by individuals and groups, Socialist, labor and liberal. In our country, letters were sent to President Eisenhower, Secretary of State Dulles, the Spanish Ambassador, the UN and many newspapers.

Most of the press had neglected this new crime against humanity on the part of the dictator of what Secretary Dulles persists in calling one of the world's "free" peoples. In behalf of the magazine, *Iberica*, I wrote to some score of papers calling attention to the news they were neglecting. The American people have been taxed to give Franco \$400 million in military aid, \$980 million in economic aid, plus \$350 million for air bases easily sabotaged. This money has temporarily strengthened the dictator without helping the economy or the people. At least it should give the United States the right to demand an end to terrorism by the arrest and imprisonment of the political leaders of all classes, workers, students and professional men.

The report (see *Frontiers*) of the case of Cristobal Vega Alvarez, who has been in Spanish prisons for the past eighteen years, shows that the persecution of Spanish trade unionists, socialists, and intellectuals is a standard practice of the Franco regime. Americans may not *feel* a responsibility for this policy of the Spanish government, but how will they answer the statement of the CNT?

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We have word from *Liberation*, the independent pacifist monthly published in New York, that a pamphlet by A. J. Muste, *Getting Rid of War*, is available (at 10 cents each; 20% discount in bulk) from *Liberation's* office, 110 Christopher Street, New York 14, N.Y. Also, that the Linus Pauling pamphlet, *Every Test Kills*, may now be had for two cents a copy from *Liberation*.

Readers who have had even a slight inclination to be affected by the campaign of political innuendo directed against Linus Pauling should make it their business to read him directly, without the intermediary of some belittling interpreter. Dr. Pauling is a Nobel-prize winner and he speaks, if not with "authority," at least with the discipline we are accustomed to expect of our scientific authorities. His *No More War!* is now in print as a paperback (Liberty Book Club, 100 West 23rd Street, New York II, N.Y., \$1.85) and makes a splendid introduction to the kind of thinking that led Dr. Pauling and more than 11,000 other scientists to sign the petition protesting nuclear testing.

A. J. Muste's pamphlet, *Getting Rid of War*, is valuable for a number of reasons, not the least of which being its quotations from C. Wright Mills, Columbia sociologist, and George F. Kennan, former U.S. Ambassador to the Soviet Union. We reproduce here a passage cited from Kennan's *Russia, the Atom and the West*. Speaking of the advocates of more destructive armaments, Kennan wrote:

What sort of a life is it to which these devotees of the weapons race would see us condemned? The technological realities of this competition are constantly changing from month to month and from year to year. Are we to flee like haunted creatures from one defensive device to another, each more costly and humiliating than the one before, cowering underground one day, breaking up our cities the next, attempting to surround ourselves with electronic shields on the third, concerned only to prolong the length of our lives while sacrificing all the values for

which it might be worth while to live at all? If I thought this was the best the future held for us, I should be tempted to join those who say, "Let us divest ourselves of this weapon altogether; let us stake our safety on God's grace and our own good consciences and on that measure of common sense and humanity which even our adversaries possess; but then let us at least walk as men, with our heads up, so long as we are permitted to walk at all. We must not forget that this is actually the situation in which many of the peoples of this world are obliged to live today; and while I would not wish to say that they are more secure than we are, for the fact that they do not hold these weapons, I would submit that they are more secure than we would be if we were to resign ourselves entirely to the negative dynamics of the weapons race, as many would have us do.

Mr. Kennan is no pacifist, but a hard-headed diplomat whom the hard-headed men who run the United States Government sent to Russia to represent us there. This is the sort of material to be found in Mr. Muste's pamphlet.

## CHILDREN

. . . and Ourselves

### "THE FUND" ON RELIGION IN THE SCHOOLS

RECIPIENTS of reports from the Fund for the Republic may be excused for using such phrases as "according to the Fund," since the diverse authors of these reports all seem to speak the same language. They are all "liberals" in respect to civil liberties, racial integration, loyalty oaths, etc., but the basic attitude reaches beyond most liberalism. Due, perhaps, to the leadership of Robert Hutchins, most of the men who do research for the Fund proceed on a basis sufficiently philosophical to discourage attempts to classify them with conventional labels—including that of "liberalism" itself. It is no wonder that, in some confused or reactionary quarters, both Hutchins and his researchers are accused of unholy tendencies. So, with the present Fund spotlight on "Religion in the Schools," one can expect annoyed objections from some, along with deep appreciation from those who value the Fund's discussion of issues vital to a free and self-governing people.

*Religion and the Schools* is based on the results of a study project in September, 1957. John Cogley's introduction reads, in part:

The problems can be subsumed under two general headings: What is the proper role of the parochial school in our society? Does religion (its teachings, observances, and symbols) have any place in the nation's public schools?

These questions in turn break down into others like the following: Do parochial schools have any claim on public support? Does a proper understanding of the First Amendment preclude both the teaching *of* and the teaching *about* religion in the public school? What is to be said about efforts to find a common core of moral and spiritual values which can be taught in the schools?

As will be readily evident to all who read this pamphlet, its authors do not agree on the answers to these and similar questions. The views each expresses are his own. But each would acknowledge

gratefully that his own understanding of the issues was widened by the opportunity to discuss it with the others.

None of the four authors pretends to have put forth the last word. This pamphlet, like all the others in this series, is intended, rather, as "a contribution to the discussion of the Free Society." Its four authors agree that much more discussion of the subject with which they deal is necessary, for each of them is thoroughly convinced that the topic is sufficiently important to deserve the best thought a free people can give it.

The first paper in *Religion and the Schools* is by Robert Gordis, Rabbi in the Jewish Theological Seminary of America. Dr. Gordis gives ample illustration of the cogency of rabbinical thought on this question—something demonstrated during many hotly contested public school issues concerning religious instruction. According to Dr. Gordis, only complete separation of Church and State can fulfill the basic intentions of the Bill of Rights:

The most striking instance of a specific American method for achieving a democratic ideal lies in the area of freedom of religion. Here again the principle has been accepted universally as basic to a free society, but the American policy of the separation of church and state has rarely, if ever, been followed elsewhere. After the century and three-quarters that have elapsed since the ratification of the Constitution, the unique American experiment still remains largely unique.

It is because of this determination to safeguard the rights and liberties of the citizen that religion was made one of the subjects of the First Amendment in the Bill of Rights: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof . . ."

We have looked in vain, however, for notice by any contributors of the points made by E. M. Halliday in the *New Republic*, quoted in last week's review. Mr. Halliday shows that Thomas Paine found a philosophical lack in *all* religions. Apparently it did not occur to any of the Fund writers that such a question can be raised, and raised democratically. What Rabbi Gordis *is*

extremely clear upon, however, is plain from the following:

It is clear that the separation of church and state was adopted principally to safeguard the stability of the state against the divisiveness of sectarian strife. This direct purpose has been achieved to a very high degree—America has largely been spared the ravages of a *Kulturkampf* between the religious and non-religious elements in society. As a result we have been free both from the clerical political parties common on the European continent and from the violent anticlerical movements which flowered into the Nazi, Fascist, and Communist dictatorships. Moreover, the differences among the various sects, Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish, have rarely been exacerbated to the point of violent conflict in America.

This is a record of which all public-minded American citizens can be legitimately proud. But the record derives largely from men who were not, themselves, sectarian religionists! The sectarian may himself agree to a policy of equality before the law for all religions, when the necessity is explained. But as a sectarian, he is not likely to think of such a policy himself. So we are able to say that the Fund study is incomplete, and lacks, also, the searching probe of a question such as—*Is not any religion based on dogma, regardless of the nature of the dogma, subversive of the ends which Democracy seeks to serve?*

What is the use of asking such a question, and how may it be discussed, by or with conventional religionists? The point is that a lot of discussion is already going on around issues affected by this question. Take for instance the Chicago *Daily News* report by Dave Meade on the views of the National Council of Churches on the question, "Should Public Schools Teach a Belief in God?":

To avoid controversy, churchmen and educators have often steered clear of any discussion of the place of religion in education. Some feel the schools should take no stand on even the basic issue between acknowledgment of God and a denial of the existence of God. "This neutrality is practically impossible," says the National Council of Churches document.

It goes on to say that such fence-straddling, where God is concerned, is "historically unjustified"

and unfair to the cherished beliefs of the vast majority of the American people. "The actual results of a studied neutrality is practical support for the view that God does not count."

On the other hand, "studied neutrality" may reflect the opinion, shared by some of our Founding Fathers, that each man's conception of deity should be his own, philosophically forged, not part of a "group belief." And since, as the *Sama Veda* puts it, "He who speaks of it the most, knows it the least," we should not have callow talk of "God" in our schools—quite apart from the question of whether *all* sectarians are able to agree upon a common policy.

## **FRONTIERS**

### **A Spanish Writer Rots in Jail**

[This article is a release prepared by the National Confederation of Labor of Spain (CNT), in Exile, a Spanish union organization which is not connected with any political party. We print it almost without change, as a moving testament to the courage of Spanish patriots and as an appeal of self-evident merit to Americans.—Editors.]

WE wish to call the attention of the people of the United States to the tragic case of the Spanish poet and labor unionist, Cristobal Vega Alvarez. This man has been imprisoned for eighteen years, and will remain incarcerated unless the force of international public opinion is brought to bear on the dictatorship which has oppressed our country since 1939.

We believe that his case should be of special concern to the people of the United States, whose government is pouring so many millions of dollars into Spain to sustain dictator Francisco Franco in power, and thus gaining the eternal distrust and resentment of the Spanish people. For they cannot understand why a country which says it is defending freedom is so determined to defend a dictator brought to power by the combined forces of Hitler and Mussolini in the so-called civil war of 1936-39. They cannot understand why the United States, which engaged in a long and bloody war against fascism, should today support the fascist dictatorship of General Franco, which they know would soon fall of its own weight if left alone.

We have chosen Vega Alvarez as the symbol of the million and a half Spaniards who died defending their country against international fascism, the hundreds of thousands who went into exile after Franco's victory, and the thousands more who are now rotting in Franco's jails.

Vega Alvarez is not a communist just as he is not a fascist. Why, then, is he being so savagely persecuted for having defended in arms, freedom

of thought, the crime most repugnant to the present regime? Let us review the facts.

Cristobal Vega Alvarez was born in Andalucia, a region rich agriculturally but where the peasants live perpetually on the verge of starvation due to the extremely unjust distribution of land. Vega Alvarez resented deeply the condition of his people and dedicated his life to building the Andalucian agricultural union affiliated to the National Confederation of Labor, a free union movement that has always defended the Spanish people against oppression no matter what the oppressor might call himself, and which today maintains organizations both in exile and in Spain itself to carry on the underground struggle against Franco.

Due to the desperate poverty of the Andalucian peasant, these people have frequently revolted and tried to seize the land for themselves. One such revolt occurred on Jan. 8, 1933 in the small village of Casas Viejas. Vega Alvarez who was living in nearby Jerez de la Frontera, tried with others to organize support for them. After the police forces had exterminated the brave peasants of Casas Viejas, Vega Alvarez and others were arrested, savagely beaten and taken to the penitentiary at Puerto de Santa Maria. He was subsequently released under a general amnesty, but was again imprisoned almost immediately, accused of having participated in the escape of several other prisoners. His release was finally obtained with great difficulty under the term. of the amnesty of February, 1936.

At that time Vega Alvarez was editing and writing for the paper *La Voz del Campesino* ("The Voice of the Peasant"). It was also during the same period that he published his first poetical compositions, a field in which he was later to distinguish himself.

On July 18, 1936, Spanish troops in North Africa and in certain key cities in the peninsula rebelled against the Republican Government with the purpose of establishing a fascist regime in its place. The Republic was too liberal for those

elements in Spain who had always fought savagely against such basic elements of progress as were already taken for granted in most of Europe and America.

Moorish mercenaries landed near Cadiz in airplanes provided by Hitler and within a few days had occupied the entire province. Vega Alvarez was trapped behind the fascist lines in Jerez de la Frontera. The intentions of the conquerors were soon made quite clear. To celebrate the capture of Toledo by Franco's forces, one hundred hostages were shot by the Falange (Spanish Fascist party) of Jerez. Among the victims was an intimate friend of Vega Alvarez.

The latter, knowing that he would be executed if he were captured, tried to escape to the Republican zone, failed, and was forced to spend the rest of the war in hiding. In reprisal, the fascists seized his fiancée and were about to execute her when an important business firm intervened in her favor, obtaining her release. Vega Alvarez was finally captured on Feb. 11, 1939. This date marks the beginning of his long period of imprisonment.

On May 10, 1943, he was placed in provisional liberty and went to work in the north of Spain. Since he was in constant danger of reincarceration, he escaped to France at the first opportunity. There he joined other Spanish exiles who having fought in the French underground and the Allied armies throughout World War II, were now preparing to free their own country. This effort failed due to the machinations of the Communist Party, which issued a premature call for invasion under the guise of a fictitious National Junta. Many hundreds of young Spaniards, and among them Vega Alvarez, answered the call, not realizing who had issued it and invaded Spain, where they were all killed or imprisoned. Thus the Communist Party repeated the treacherous behaviour which had characterized it during the Spanish War, sacrificing thousands of lives to its own political aims and playing directly into the hands of the

fascists. Was this deliberate? Only time will tell, but it seems probable, and such behavior has gained only hatred for the communists among the Spanish people.

So Vega Alvarez fell into the hands of the dictatorship for the second time, and this time there was to be no escape. He was sentenced to fifty years in jail and imprisoned again in the penitentiary of Puerto de Santa Maria. His only chance now to ever see his home and family again is to outlive the dictatorship he has fought against so bravely, unless we succeed in arousing the just indignation of free men everywhere.

While in prison Vega Alvarez has written both prose and poetry constantly in a desperate effort to raise money to pay the legal fees involved in the unceasing efforts of his friends to obtain his release. He is preparing a book for publication now. His considerable literary production is characterized by good taste, a rich poetical language and purity of style.

Several Spanish intellectuals who are in favor with the present regime have visited Vega Alvarez on various occasions to suggest that if he publicly repudiates his ideals to support Franco, it may be possible to secure his freedom. But he has not yielded, and so his efforts to obtain a fair hearing are ignored.

Cristobal Vega Alvarez is thus the symbol of resistance to the dictatorship of General Francisco Franco. He is only one of the men of many political beliefs who are lying forgotten in prison cells all over Spain. We hope that by obtaining his release we will help all and bring to public attention the true nature of the present Spanish State.

As stated before, this case is of special interest to the people of the United States. It is a well known fact that the economic and military aid given by the United States Government is the only thing now holding up the corrupt Franco regime. Even with this aid, the days of the dictatorship are numbered. The same blunder which has been

committed so many times in Latin America is repeated in Spain; a friendly people is alienated by supporting a hated dictator who will soon fall. This was the policy of the U.S. Government in Colombia, in Venezuela, in Cuba. The results of this short-sighted policy can now be seen only too clearly.

The responsibility for this policy falls directly on the shoulders of the people of the United States, for silence indicates approval of a government's policy. For years, and under the most dangerous circumstances, the Spanish people have voiced their disapproval of the Franco regime with strikes and mass demonstrations. What will the people of the United States do now? Every thinking man should also know that it is his moral responsibility to protest injustice wherever it may occur, and more so in these perilous times for freedom.

Is it moral or just to protest loudly the case of Pasternak and say nothing of the same or worse elsewhere? The treatment of Pasternak justly outraged free men everywhere, but what of Vega Alvarez? Is it wrong to persecute a dissident writer in Russia and right in Spain?

We call upon free men everywhere to protest with every means at their disposal against the treatment of Vega Alvarez and the thousands of other Spaniards condemned to a slow death in the prisons of General Francisco Franco, tyrant of Spain by the grace of Hitler and Mussolini!

CNT