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AMERICAN IN MOSCOW

THERE is an old newspaperman's phrase, still current and still applicable, to the general effect that the only experts on Russia are those who have been here less than twenty days or more than twenty years. My 30-day visa has another ten days to run, yet it is perhaps best that I write now, before the expertise of freshly-reacting naïveté is totally washed away by the flooding experience of life in Soviet Russia. One can only go ahead and write in a tone of dogmatic surety about what one may be not at all sure of, precisely because this experience can be almost overwhelming, not merely in its contradictory complexity and in the necessity of sorting out what one perceives from what one has heard, read and imagined, but most particularly because of the emotional reactions to which one is almost constantly subject, ranging from exhilaration through depression to loathing and deep anger.

It happens that I brought to the Soviet Union only two pieces of printed matter in English other than what I planned to give away, namely a paper-back on Russian art and the July 16 MANAS containing Roy C. Kepler's extraordinary "The Meaning of Peace." Later my parents sent me the issue with the "Letter from Moscow" (Aug. 6) written by the musician with the Philadelphia Symphony Orchestra. Taking my initial impetus from the latter two pieces, I shall try to tell you what I feel the situation here to be and what individual Americans can do in relation to it.

It is paradox, frequently stated in these times, but true nevertheless, that the Soviet Union is now one of the few sizeable areas remaining in the world where Americans are generally popular. One might qualify the musician's remarks by noting that the people of the Soviet Union are literally starving for transfiguring or even diverting experience of any kind, or that he was also being too modest in omitting to mention the powerful effect created by the consummate musicianship of Ormandy and his men; but I or any other tourist who troubles to open his eyes and ears can attest to the truth of what was written by your correspondent with the Philadelphia Symphony. There is a deep friendliness for Americans everywhere prevalent, revealing itself upon the slightest opening or gesture from ourselves. My own status is that of a student speaking enough badly butchered Russian to get along in ordinary circumstances; on a completely individual basis, I have seen both the friendliness and the yearning for peace of which the musician speaks.

These people do not have access to the truth, and many of them know this; it was perhaps for this reason that during my first conversations on arriving here, soon after the crisis in the Middle East and the landing of British and American troops in Jordan and Lebanon, I encountered real anxiety: Would there be war? what did I think? why did we intervene? why did we want war? More startling to me than the questions was the void which my answers seemed to fill—every answer produced a new question (or rather ten questions, since these encounters happen whenever one halts on the sidewalk for half a minute and appears the least bit receptive, and rapidly result in a crowd gathering), yet it produced murmurs of assent as well.

It would be well to remember that both this friendliness and this yearning for peace are attitudes openly manifested and therefore sanctioned by the Soviet government. For their own reasons, one of them certainly being their belief that the American "capitalist" system will eventually fall of its own rottenness and that therefore we will all become their subjects, the Soviet leaders have emphasized the good qualities of the American people and the deep gulf which they say exists between the opinions and attitudes of private American citizens and what our government says and does. This is the sort of gulf which does exist in the Soviet Union, making it a concept readily viable here. The peoples of the Soviet Union are told of our war-mongering, our aggression and imperialism, and the facts selected

and distorted, the motives misstated, in such a way that the bare news of our actions (or, at times, lack of action) at home and abroad would seem to bear out their allegations: it is a seamless web of half-truth which is presented. From this is born the real uneasiness of the Soviet citizen as to our intentions.

Images are always dangerous, but a slightly flowery metaphor may do no harm just now. The Soviet nation, government and people together, were well described to me, recently, as a giant trying to find firm footing in the sands of time. In the chaotic jottings which constitute my notes for this letter I find the word "change," or its equivalent, occurring more often than any other. It is of critical importance that Americans work out for themselves what is unchanging about the Soviet government and way of life, and note how other aspects have changed, are changing, or are susceptible of change. It is well time that we forget about two variants of an idea which has long proved attractive to Americans: that the Soviet regime is going to fall by reason of its own errors, or by a popular revolution. Such an eventuality may be possible, but only barely so. The position of the Soviet regime in Russia is stable (more so than in the satellite states) and visible progress is being made toward satisfying the material needs which alone Marxist-Leninist doctrine recognizes as valid and important. The current exercise of police power is moderate by comparison with other periods, in part because of this relative stability, yet the Soviet people live under a degree of constraint and official regulation which is not immediately apparent until one comprehends the rigid system of control by internal passports, "work booklets," and residence permits from which a citizen cannot for long escape.

If there is one impression of paramount importance, among the many that one carries away, it is simply that this is not a people motivated by fear. There is, as I and many others have said, a tremendous hatred of war and some perplexity about the actions and motivations of America; but neither with regard to this external situation or toward their own regime is fear or hatred a significant factor. Where it exists in the latter instance (I am speaking more of the people as a whole than of the intelligentsia), it is less ideological than a result of specific wrongs suffered.

The man in the street, looking back on the destruction wrought during the revolution and two wars fought on the land of Mother Russia, believes honestly that his government has made tremendous progress in forty years against a multitude of handicaps. There are always speeches and songs and slogans to fill his eyes and ears and mind—it is easy to forget other factors which have held back even material progress in equal degree, like the slaughter of Russian people through the years attendant upon the "consolidation" of the monolithic Soviet state. And where the common man does not believe what he is told through the channels of the state, it is seldom that he knows what to believe from the few other sources to which he has access. Radio broadcasts from the West, when they are not jammed, are often marred by undue sarcasm and factual inaccuracy in speaking of conditions within the Soviet Union. The few Western-sponsored, Russian-language publications, like our own *Amerika,* are avidly read, but they are admitted in such small quantities by the Soviet government that thumbed and torn copies of *Amerika* are selling on the black market at 200 to 400 rubles—when the average wage of the Soviet citizen is about 600 rubles a month.

The depth of ignorance of the people here is a formidable obstacle to the exchange of ideas, yet there is the other side of the coin: not merely is there a great yearning for the truth (notwithstanding the fact that any single statement from any source whatever may be discounted almost automatically), but there is tremendous receptivity. It is necessary to come here, to submerge oneself to some degree in the people and their thinking, to realize the contrast with our own free market of ideas where almost every concept and proposal has grown a bit slick and greasy from repeated handling or prior connotation. During one of our evening conversational free-for-alls in the park in Sverdlov Square, an eager boy threw me his blockbuster: "So yes, perhaps we might have free elections; but what would you think when we chose socialism instead of communism—but instead of capitalism, too? What would you do—

wouldn't your troops again invade our land as you did in 1919?" I used this question to clear off some extraneous ones, and we came as close to having a coherent discussion as this format of lecture-argument seems to permit. Of the sixty or seventy people in the crowd, two or three had some vague idea of the working socialist governments in Scandinavia and other parts of the world; none, as we went deeper in the subject, had any accurate knowledge of the evolution in the United States away from freewheeling Capitalism in the last half-century, or of the existence in America of powerful independent labor unions (a concept in itself which is difficult for them to handle), of widespread unemployment insurance, social security, medical and pension plans, or of the myriad techniques ranging from SEC and FDIC to Sherman and Clayton Act prosecutions by which we control the manifestations of Capitalism as they think of it. Most difficult of all, for people who have grown up being told that their Party leaders alone perceive the truth and act upon it, and that adversary political parties are vestigial characteristics of vicious and fallacious politico-economic systems, was comprehension of the fact that what Americans yearn for is not their choice of a system modeled upon what they have (far from it, some might say), but their wholly free choice of any system within which their people can unleash their creative energies and genius, where there is realization of the primary importance of individual freedom and the responsibility (and responsiveness) of the government decision-makers to these individuals. I talked into dead silence for ten or fifteen minutes and finally said with the unsteady passion of fatigue and near-despair, "Can you understand what I am trying to say? Does any of this make sense to you?" There was a quickening pause, then there arose from the crowd a sound at once like a sigh and like a breath deep down, the sound of voices speaking things for which they had not the words.

If I am pleading for anything, in this letter, it is that we as American people, as individuals, clarify our own attitudes and carry some of them into action. Our government has no choice but to deal with a Soviet regime which thinks only in terms of one or another variant of force; as we should know, by now, all too well, unilateral peaceful steps on our part are all too often exploited unmercifully by the Soviet leaders to gain whatever change is possible in the balance of power, while the great bulk of the Soviet people hear of our actions, if at all, only in distorted form.

In other words, I do not believe that any action we or our government can take will evoke an affirmative human response from the few men who hold effective power in the Soviet Union. In ruling out the "change of heart" from above and the change from below by popular uprising, have I left anything?

The answer is affirmative, and not because the mind cannot accept the alternative prospect of an increasingly totalitarian American and Western world organized against a regime as devout as it ever was in the belief that our peoples and governments must and should fall before it.

This healing change can only come through people, *not* The Soviet People or The American People, but just—people. I know this is oversimplification, but perhaps one of the crucial differences between the Marxian concept (whether in its pure state or in the Soviet embodiment) and our own is that, while both believe that continued striving for improvement is necessary, the one places *ultimate* faith in the agency of the state to organize and direct this change, the other in the individual and in more or less spontaneous organization of individuals. It is right and important that we continue to exert effort against what we may feel are totalitarian tendencies in our own system; yet there may be more fruitful uses of our energy and ingenuity in trying to remove the major external cause of this totalitarianism, by going to work as *people* on people of the Soviet Union. If by any means we can help in liberating the minds of enough individuals, their government must in time change as the people who will make up this government rise into it from an environment where the tyranny of ignorance is less absolute, even when the personal freedom and popular influence on governmental decisions may be absent for decades to come.

There are factors here which could lead to a considerable degree of non-violent change, although they are not easy to analyze or evaluate. For one thing, by the terms of the Soviet Constitution, effective power in the USSR could reside in popularly-elected regional and national soviets (councils) rather than in the hands of the Communist Party—even the literal application of this "Stalin Constitution" of 1937 would be a virtual revolution in itself, were there some liberty of expression and free elections with a secret ballot. Still more important is the whole question of modifications in the basic Communist credo. Where such changes are proposed from without—as with Poland, Yugoslavia, and the American Communist Party after Hungary and Krushchev's 20th Congress speech—there are denunciations by the Kremlin of the cardinal crime of "revisionism." Yet Krushchev announces (to the relief of much of the world) that the Leninist tenet may be wrong concerning the inevitability of violent conflict between Communism and its chosen enemies, and my Komsomol friends have explained, with the air of reasonable men, that this is the inevitable adjustment any wise and flexible system makes to changes in the international situation.

These have been only words, no matter how deeply I feel they are true. Let me beg your patience yet a while and, against this background, sketch briefly one channel which our thinking and action as individuals might take. Almost everyone agrees that the American-Soviet exchange program begun this year is a "good thing"; but rather than merely having twenty American students traded for twenty Soviet students, plus a number of delegations (with interpreters and watch-dogs) going to and fro, we could make this a factor of wonderful importance if we *as people* were to expand this program and supplement governmental action in every way we can. Eight million Soviet students, at a conservative estimate, are studying English right now—many people on the street can speak from a little to very well indeed. What if twenty American families were each to invite a Soviet student to stay in their home for a month and were to appeal to the Soviet government to select them and permit them to come—twenty families, or two hundred, or twenty thousand? This, it seems to me, would be Krushchev's "peaceful competition" with a loving vengeance.

The major obstacle would lie in getting the Soviet government to agree, though this is the kind of idea which could be effectively carried to the people of the world and at least tell them what Americans as people can do. (The cost of transportation would be a relatively minor problem, decreasing as numbers grow and private foundation or government help developed.) And what of it if the Soviets send only good, indoctrinated young Komsomols? Many young people join Komsomol (and later become full Communist Party members) only because access to advanced training and more interesting work is virtually denied to non-members. Beyond that, haven't we the faith in our system and way of life to believe that a month in an American family and community would make a dent in even the most tightly shuttered young mind?

VISITOR IN MOSCOW

REVIEW
PHILOSOPHY AND ECOLOGY

SOMETIMES the "amateur" ecologist is the most likely candidate to write reflectively on this subject, to hold the attention of the general reader. And Joseph Wood Krutch, perhaps, is the best living example of such an "amateur," for his books, such as *The Twelve Seasons,* and *The Voice of the Desert,* pass into specialized discussion only when carried on the wings of a piquant curiosity which the reader is apt to share. On the other hand, Aldo Leopold, as a professional, achieves the same result—a balance between science and mysticism—in his portrayal of the fascinating interdependencies of the natural world (see *Sand County Almanac).* Now Leslie Reid's *Earth's Company* (John Murray, London, 1958) may be added to the growing number of works on ecology by men whose profession is something more than wild-life management, soil conservation, etc. Mr. Reid sees no reason to forego his urge to philosophize about those factors in evolution which fail to fit neatly under the heading of "natural selection." Though he is not as provocative as Krutch nor as fascinating as Leopold, Reid seems to be working around a basic question—just what is the function of mind in the guidance of the processes of evolution, and to what extent is mind, as represented by the humblest of creatures, an evidence of free will? But before discussing the question of self-determination, Mr. Reid, like Krutch and Leopold, wishes to establish the fundamental interdependence throughout nature, and the unity of all things and creatures in so far as they share what Macneile Dixon called "the capacity to become something more than they presently are." This capacity, according to Mr. Reid, when expressed collectively, results in evidence of what man can only call "planning":

> It is one of the purposes of this book to show that evidence in favour of a planned world is unmistakable. It is to be seen in the first place in the unity that binds the manifestations of nature into an integrated whole, each one of these manifestations depending on the others with an intimacy that besides being vitally necessary is also frequently mutual. The principle of dependence governs the lives of all creatures; even the struggle for existence is an organized struggle, and that in addition to keen and sometimes bitter competition, there is also co-operation between animals and plants, between one species of animal and another, and finally between animals of the same species. It can hardly be denied that this unity on the one hand, and this organization of an exceedingly complex kind on the other, provide evidence of planning, of a directing, creative mind somehow and everywhere at work. Further evidence is in the chapter on evolution.
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> A world governed by chance could not be the organized world that this book attempts to describe. Unity and organization are incompatible with what we call chance. That is a declaration of faith reinforced by reason, but it relies in another sense on reason, for it is my firm conviction that whatever mind has planned this world fulfills the plan by means of what we call natural agencies, those that is to say that we are capable of observing and understanding for ourselves through the exercise of our reasoning faculty.

Since we discuss "The Problem of Man" all the time, and since we cannot discuss man in this age without referring to the word "evolution," it is of more than passing interest to note the variety of opinions on the causal factors in the evolutionary process. As Mr. Reid puts it:

> Evolution is still a highly controversial subject, and it is quite idle to pretend that we have anything like a complete knowledge of it. It will be fitting to conclude this chapter by stressing the deficiency in our knowledge and referring briefly to one or two further considerations, from which the principal point emerging is that perhaps we are wrong in assigning too dominant a role to natural selection, extremely important though it almost certainly is.
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> During the phase of increase in density natural selection operates weakly, from which it seems to follow that this phase would also be that when non-adaptive, trivial characters get their opportunity to spread. If such characters, besides bringing no advantage, brought no disadvantage either, some at least would stand a chance of becoming established.
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> There is another way in which changes could come about, and again perhaps it is one in which

selection plays, if not no part at all, at least a minor part. This depends on whether or not we regard animals as having something in the way of a will of their own. Are they wholly under the compulsion of blind forces owing nothing to their own volition, or do they, for instance, in migrating from an environment slowly becoming hostile to another and more favourable one, exercise any kind of choice? It seems that we must credit them with some concern for their welfare, responding negatively to a growing deficiency in their environment, as for instance to the extermination of a food-plant in the case of insects. But such a negative response, if it is to have any value, must be followed by a positive response, inducing the same insects to seek out their food-plant elsewhere. Is this in itself natural selection, no more after all than elimination of those that fail to make the move, preservation of those that do, or is it on the other hand initiative on the part of the animal? If it is initiative then natural selection would seem to play little part in the process.

At times one wonders if Mr. Reid is heading in the direction of "God" as the planning agency, but this would seem to be the case only if you are willing to redefine God after the fashion of Spinoza, using this term for the godlike powers of Nature viewed collectively. Of one thing Mr. Reid is sure—that the scientists who neglect to consider man's responses to the beauty of nature are leaving out something of vital importance. He takes a text from Shelley,

Glorious shapes have life in thee,
Earth and all earth's company;
Living globes which ever throng
Thy deep chasms and wildernesses; And green worlds that glide along, . . .

continuing—

We find difficulty in giving weight at the same time both to the parts and to the whole. Nevertheless it is of capital importance that an attempt in this direction should be made, for only then may we hope to grasp that attribute of fundamental unity which is the very essence of the natural world. Only then can we begin to apprehend the fact that each single phenomenon of nature has no meaning, no existence, except by virtue of its relationship with all the other phenomena, that the beauty of the panorama, its illimitable impressiveness, depends on this realization.

Scientists are inclined to avoid words like beauty: the aesthetic appeal of their subject seems to be one that many of them feel ashamed of. This is unfortunate since the examination of phenomena and the relating of them to other phenomena is their whole concern, and it is just there that the beauty is chiefly to be found.

The belief that whatever mind designed the great panorama of nature did so in terms apprehensible by the human brain caused the design to be worked out through the mediumship of natural agencies capable of elucidation by the process of reasoning. What after all is the most marked characteristic distinguishing man from the other animals? Not just the possession of a brain, but the capacity to use that brain for disinterested thinking, for speculating about his origin, about his place in the scheme of things, and about the laws governing that scheme.

With this in mind and embracing the general doctrine of Sir James Jeans, though differing from it in one important particular, let me put forward with becoming diffidence another interpretation. The immense and beautiful panorama of nature can be said to have the attributes of a work of art. A musical metaphor is more applicable perhaps than a pictorial one. A symphony is made up of a very large number of musical notes, these notes are welded into musical phrases, the phrases into themes, the themes into movements. The symphony has unity, and unity is achieved by bringing together these component, distinguishable, and even conflicting parts, in such a way that there is brought about a resolution of opposites, a general harmony out of particular discords.

COMMENTARY
THE SPHERE OF LIFE

THE article, "Our Human Plight," by Richard Groff, which appeared in MANAS for Sept. 24, has brought approval from a number of readers, one of whom hopes to read it over a local radio station. Another reader (and contributor), Dr. Frederick Franck, who wrote the "Letter from Lambarene" (MANAS, July 30), makes this comment:

> Richard Groff seems to point to our basic tragedy when he writes: "It is a monstrous thing for any nation to poison the air, water, soil, human beings, animals and plants of the entire earth, even to threatening genetic integrity of unborn generations."
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> No wonder the not yet completely dehumanized mind and heart of man cannot encompass this disastrous folly. The crux of the matter is that each explosion of a bomb, cleaner or dirtier, in any test area anywhere on earth, is the most monstrous sin against the "biosphere," the entire layer of living things which covers the earth. And against the very Earth itself, which in the most literal sense is our Mother.
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> This sin is unforgivable in the most real biological and genetic sense. Even where no human being comes to immediately assessable harm, the crime against all sentient and non-sentient beings loads us collectively with a guilt of such magnitude that the end of our whole human world would be justified by one single "test" explosion. "Who speaks for man?" Richard Groff exclaims. *De profundis,* I add: "Who speaks for all of earthly life which human ignorance drags down into the abyss?"
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> What accounts for our apathy? Is it perhaps a reflex of the mind which rejects the ultimate disaster, a reflex analogous to the reflex which makes us vomit an irritant before it reaches the stomach?
>
> New York FREDERICK FRANCK

This expression of reverence for life, for all the world, human and non-human, probably bespeaks the deepening hunger of men for an existence of natural serenity, pursued in horror of any man-made violent disturbance of the living earth. Years ago, Edmond Taylor wrote similarly of the bomb tests, in *Richer By Asia* (1947):

> If India had been in a position to speak with authority—as I believe that she will be able to do before long—at the time of the American atomic warfare tests at Bikini atoll, we would have heard, not only through the Indian press but from the official diplomatic sounding boards of the world, a message of great importance to us. We would have learned that without quite committing a social crime, we were following in the pattern of crime, and were guilty of national blasphemy,... against the dignity of man and the harmony of nature. . . . The Indians would have told us that our blasphemy, like the Nazi ones, arose from an idolatrous worship of the techniques of science divorced from any ethical goals, that the manmade cataclysm of Bikini was a black mass of physics as the German experiments were a black mass of medicine, that it was a mob-insurrection against the pantheist sense of citizenship in nature, which we share with the Hindus in our hearts, but consider a childish foible.

In his pamphlet, *Conservation Is Not Enough,* Joseph Wood Krutch presses the argument further:

> Might it not be that man's success as an organism is genuinely successful so long, but only so long, as it does not threaten the extinction of everything not useful to him and absolutely controlled by him? . . . If by chance that criterion is valid, then either one of two things is likely to happen. Either outraged nature will violently reassert herself and some catastrophe . . . will demonstrate the hollowness of man's supposed success or man himself will learn in time to set a reasonable limit to his ambitions and accept his position as that of the most highly evolved of living creatures, but not one which entitles him to assume that no others have a right to live unless they contribute to his material welfare?

There is persuasive moral power in this sort of thinking. If people generally would flood the letter columns of the newspapers and magazines with such expressions, the revulsion now felt by the few might be spread to the many, and actually affect the course of events.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves

YOUR CHILD IS WHAT HE EATS is not a dull book, and it contains hardly anything which thoughtful parents will wish to debate, however much the transcendentalists among us may take issue with the implications of the title. The author, Dr. Harold D. Lynch, is a Fellow of the American Academy of Pediatrics, with twenty-seven years of distinguished service in this field. Recently he has been especially interested in what he feels to be the neglected relationship between psychology and "feeding." Also, Dr. Lynch thinks that basic education is in order for school nurses and teachers as well as parents in respect to the excessive attention given to "vitamins." Although Dr. Lynch has no startling arguments to contribute, he feels that we often fail to round out the picture of basic food needs. He says in his preface:

> Some of our most tenaciously held feeding practices are justified and popularized by the yardstick of "controlled" experimental data. For many, many decades, nutrition has been considered the domain of the laboratory sciences. The acknowledged literature—commercial as well as medical—confines the subject pretty well to biochemical studies of physical growth.
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> Human nutrition is not an exact science and, furthermore, its scope is not limited to that portion of the subject which lends itself to study by controlled laboratory methods. The problems of human nutrition are largely those of human behavior and the biochemistry of physical growth is only a part of a broad field. The biochemistry of human behavior and its relationship to nutrition has not yet been explored. We have been looking mostly at one side of the coin.

On the subject of vitamins, Dr. Lynch has some cautionary words. Parents, he thinks, are often swept away by the popular belief that a solid diet, selected in part by the child's instinctive demands, can be *bettered* by a standard regimen plus vitamin pills:

> The development of vitamins has been one of the glamorous stories in the history of nutrition. This very glamour has been the source of a great deal of misunderstanding about them.
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> In the earlier days of the vitamin era the known vitamins were obtained from their natural sources and were given largely in the form of cod liver oil and orange juice. Today most of the vitamins are synthetic, concentrated and can be given out of a dropper.
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> At this juncture it should be made clear that dosing the child with vitamins does not affect his need for a diet well balanced in protein, fat and carbohydrate. Vitamins out of the bottle are not substitutes for these basic foodstuffs. Let us not forget in our enthusiasm for newer things that vitamins occur in nature and very likely are present in adequate amounts in the natural foods of a well-balanced diet.

The trend of Dr. Lynch's view suggests the need for more individual responsibility to be taken by parents. Even the full acceptance of "self-demand" theories of feeding needs revision to fit individual cases—and it is necessary, he says, to realize that "most individuals need some sort of routine." Both the baby and the mother can benefit from an attempt to create a minimal order in respect to feeding, but the *degree* of regularity should be determined by each parent for each child; statistical surveys will help little. As Lynch points out, we are not only affected by the general cultural leaning towards standardized science: we are also misled by the fact that humans can not be satisfactorily fed in the manner which suffices for livestock. For instance, almost all literature distributed by schools, health agencies, and physicians emphasizes only the biochemical properties of foods (chiefly milk) plus vitamins. But to urge that each child should get as much as a quart of milk a day is in many cases to invite disturbance or even illness; the ability of the individual child to digest milk varies greatly, and varies, in part, because of many complex emotional factors which affect the digestive apparatus. In the same manner, Dr. Lynch feels—on the basis of records of some 25,000 children—that "it is unfortunate that children have to be compared to their agemates. A child's individual schedule of development sometimes does not

coincide with the average. Standardization has become a fetish; we standardize automobiles and other objects and have the same urge to make children conform to a pattern."

In his closing chapter, Dr. Lynch sums up for the family mother:

> A look at the family circle at mealtime gives perspective to the task of feeding children in our society. In order to appreciate the mother's role let us take as an example, a large family of children ranging in ages from infancy to adolescence. The mother of such a family faces a complex variety of nutritional problems every day.
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> Her young infant requires about five feedings daily. The toddler can't and won't be interested in more than two of the family's three meals. The young school child should have perhaps four meals and his adolescent brother demands at least five. The mother must fit this hodgepodge of requirements into the framework of our traditional three meal routine. In addition, it is necessary for her to try to make the meal a pleasant family gathering.
>
> Can any executive—male, that is—match the depth of this responsibility and the size of this problem in human relations?

We imagine that the best preparation for meeting the complexities involved in feeding a family is to cultivate the art of relaxation. When a parent worries about the amount a child should eat—according to a nutritional table—she carries an air of tension with her through the kitchen and to the table. As Dr. Lynch points out, children from two to six often eat very little. They may also fail to gain much weight or height, but this is not because they do not eat more. Instead, the reverse is now known to be the case: they don't eat more because they are not then in a growing period, and attempts to stuff them with food will often cause some psychological block in respect to adequate eating when the next growing period begins.

While Dr. Lynch feels that some order and discipline are beneficial at meal times, he most emphatically does not think that the child should be required to eat certain foods against his inclination. A child who actively dislikes vegetables can just as well derive the needed mineral and vitamin benefits from fruit, growing into an appreciation for vegetables at a later date. In other words, Dr. Lynch's view is that parents can "take it easy" about methods of feeding and still be thoroughly intelligent in respect to nutritional problems. We need to be reminded that tribes of extremely healthy natives throughout the world are governed in feeding by two things--natural instincts or cravings, and the plenitude of certain kinds of food in season. The perfectly balanced diet (each meal balanced in itself) can actually be much more monotonous than a diet based upon whatever of good food appeals most in season.

FRONTIERS
Back to the Wall

THERE is some evidence, as Werner Jaeger, the classical scholar, has pointed out, that in the *Republic* Plato had reached the conclusion that the historical state of his time was irreclaimably corrupt. Jaeger thinks that the *Republic* represents the abandonment of politics:

> Thus the subordination of all individuals to it (the Idea of the Good, to which the "Ideal State" of the *Republic* is devoted}, the reconversion of emancipated persons into true "citizens," is after all only another way of expressing the historical fact that morality had finally separated itself from politics and from the laws or customs of the historical state; and that henceforth the independent conscience of the individual is the supreme court even for public questions.

This is an interesting view of the man whose work has been a model, in one way or another, for practically every political reformer or revolutionary since. Jaeger seems quite sure of his view:

> Plato's demand that philosophers shall be kings, which he maintained unabated right to the end, means that the state is to be rendered ethical through and through. It shows that the persons who stood highest in the intellectual scale had already abandoned the actual ship of state, for a state like Plato's could not have come alive in his own time, and perhaps not at any time.

If there is anything characteristic of our own time, it is that the trend Jaeger finds represented in Plato—"the persons who stood highest in the intellectual scale had already abandoned the actual ship of state"—is finding renewed expression. Among European writers, for example, Ignazio Silone is surely one of the best. Silone was for years a political radical, yet since 1950 he has not been associated with any political group. His trilogy, *Fontamara, Bread and Wine,* and *Seed Beneath the Snow,* tells the story of a disillusionment by radical politics, but without disillusionment by man. Silone's latest book, *The Secret of Luca,* makes a New York *Times* (Sept. 2) reviewer say: "Silone's god of revolutionary action has failed and in place of protest something deeper is sought." This reviewer, Herbert Mitgang, suggests that Silone has joined "those European novelists and playwrights using the anti-hero as a protagonist." He continues:

> The technique enables the author to back his central character against a wall and then to insist upon the reasons for his negative behavior. This comes as a surprise, at first, to the reader accustomed to the idea of having man fight back, to triumph, to die nobly. From the character "K" in Kafka's *The Trial* (the father of these post-war resigned men) to the driftwood man in Camus' *The Stranger* and Beckett's "Godot" characters on the stage, there is a positive message hidden beneath the surface action of the story.

This positive message is indeed "hidden" in most such works, but we suspect that it comes out in Silone more explicitly than in some of the others mentioned. The message is perhaps that human beings must find new ways to reach to the good. Politics is not the way. Today, the conventional paths of righteousness lead through thickets where one invariably gets lost. You cannot reach the castle. You will never be found "not guilty" if you trust in "the powers that be." These writers, despite their minor key, seem to be heralds of a non-political revolution.

A book by another Italian, Carlo Levi's *Words Are Stones,* exhibits the same symptoms, although at another level. After talking with Sicilian peasants, he reports (as quoted in another New York *Times* review, Sept. 13):

> . . . all of them [were] convinced that they were pawns in a complex and insidious plan to save the landowners from land reform, while at the same time crushing the force of the peasants' resistance by dividing them up, pitting the new peasant owners against the land-hungry laborers, discouraging both and confining them in endless bondage. They feel wretched and abandoned, surrounded by hostile powers and maneuverings, confined in their own ancient and impervious diffidence and in the desolate patience of fatigue. . . . Is it fated, perhaps, that things should remain forever in the same state of crystallized ferocity and that the peasant must always struggle against feudal lords, heroes of the sea, administrative lawyers?

Mr. Levi, no doubt, writes of a conflict that has been going on for centuries. The plight of the

Sicilian peasants is nothing new. What is of interest is that Carlo Levi has chosen this theme—a continuation, in fact, of the content of the book which made him famous, *Christ Stopped at Eboli.*

Such writers are explaining that the traditional methods of helping the oppressed are not working well, or at all, these days.

They are saying in their novels and essays what Jayaprakash Narayan is saying in his addresses in India—what Plato said more than two thousand years ago—that morality has left the state. And Narayan is insisting, as Plato insisted, that the state must be "rendered ethical through and through."

Turning to what are regarded as more "progressive" lands, we find certain ominous symptoms which bear out the claim by Narayan that parliamentary democracy is no longer democratic. James Reston, the New York *Times* Washington corespondent, makes the current discussion of war over Quemoy and Matsu illustrate "how completely the people of the United States and their representatives in Congress have entrusted the war-making power to a few officials in the executive branch of the Government." (*Times,* Sept. 4.) A generation ago, he points out, Woodrow Wilson complained that no President could implement an effective foreign policy because of the restraints exercised by the Senate. But—

> Today, precisely the opposite is the case. The Senate and the House of Representatives have handed to the President the power to defend Quemoy and Matsu if he likes, and to use atomic weapons there at his discretion.

This authority was granted the President by vote of the House on Jan. 25, 1955, with Senate approval three days later. Typical, says Mr. Reston, of the rising power of the executive was the dispatch of marines to Lebanon on the personal order of the President. "The pattern," he says, "is now clear; in the Middle East, as in the Far East, Congress has left it to the President to fight or retreat as he sees fit." Moreover—

> Nowadays, Secretary of State Dulles can commit the United States to oppose aggression right up against the southern border of the Soviet Union along the whole breadth of the Middle East, and the President can send the Seventh Fleet within artillery range of the China Coast, and scarcely a question is raised by the Congress, the press or the people.
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> The situation today on the Nationalist-held offshore islands of China is not only that the President can personally commit the nation to war against the Communists, but that even the President's hand may be forced by the decisions or actions of another government. . . .
>
> The Administration's policy is to "keep 'em guessing," which is fair enough for the Communists but also applies to the American people. Perhaps this is the price of world leadership, but it establishes new procedures for a democracy. For the power to make war now lies with a few men, some of them here in the quiet executive, some in Newport, R.I., some in Peiping, and some in Taipei.

What are we to say about this? Well, we can't say that the President is a power-hungry man eager for war. Circumstances have forced this assumption of power on the Executive. If you are going to have a war, you had better have the initiative, or stay out of it altogether. In modern war, nuclear or not, minutes may mean the difference between victory and defeat. Congress does not especially fret about its loss of control over the war-making power for the reason that a war which had to wait for Congress to declare it would probably be lost before the Congress could convene.

The technique of war is so demanding that all such decisions must be entrusted, as Mr. Reston says, to "a few men"—men who are in a position to act immediately, according to their best judgment. Obviously, the self-determination of peoples, in respect to war, now belongs to the past, along with the horse and buggy and other primitive devices made obsolete by modern technology. So, if the morality of the democratic state depends upon the capacity of the people to make their own decisions, morality has left the democratic state. The morality now rests in the persons of a few leaders.

This, apparently, is the best we can do.

So writers, having to search for a new home for morality, are occupying themselves with the discouragements of the status quo. They are backing

their central characters against a wall and insisting upon the reasons for their "negative" behavior.

But surely, someone will say, there is a sane political course for the United States to follow. Now and then you see such a course defined. Helen Mears, in an article in the October *Progressive,* makes a nonpartisan analysis of the foreign policy of the United States, ending with some recommendations:

> The first thing we can do is to recognize that a policy of "Peace Through Strength" is a contradiction in terms—or, to put it bluntly, double-talk. It is based on the acceptance of the cold war as the inflexibly basic situation in foreign policy deals—with no prospect of constructive changes likely to be made. In a war, whether hot or cold, policies inevitably will be designed to further strategic and military aims, instead of working to solve the problems which lead to unrest and revolution, or resolving conflicts of interest which lead to war. As long as hundreds of billions are poured into the creation and maintenance of widespread military bastions and as long as hundreds of millions are spent to help "friendly" governments around the world build up their military forces, any economies that any administration makes will be in the area of economic development and welfare, both at home and abroad. There is no point in deceiving ourselves that our government will work in good faith to relax tensions, or work for disarmament, as long as the basic assumption of its policy-making remains the idea that its chief job is to combat communism, even if it means war. And this is especially true now since it is only too clear that the term "communism" is broadly applied to cover any situation of which our government disapproves.
>
> What we need today are some political leaders with courage enough to challenge the destructive direction our foreign policy is taking, and to assert the principles and aims which could get us back on course. Considering the climate of opinion which has been created in our country during these postwar years of incessant cold war propaganda, it will take dedication and great courage for any political leader to come to grips with the basic issue. However, such a leader might be greatly rewarded. When the leadership of both parties moves away from the deep desires of the people, the people move away from that leadership. The courageous leader might find himself swept into office by the outraged rebellion of the rank-and-file Democrats and Republicans, and independents who know in their hearts and heads that you cannot get peace, or advance human welfare and democracy, by tottering provocatively and—with luck, forever—on the brink of war.

This seems a reasonable expression of hope for peace through conventional political channels, although it calls for some pretty unconventional behavior on the part of some pretty conventional people—"rank-and-file" Democrats and Republicans. But if we should be fortunate in this way, the problem defined by Mr. Reston will remain. In short, the creative energies of human beings with vision are unlikely to go into politics. They are much more likely to go into a restless effort to find some other way of making the moral decisions of individual human beings decisive in their lives.

We are not the captives of evil men. The state has not become a menace to individual freedom and morality because tyrants have seized the reins of power. We are hemmed in by a technically impressive but absolutely amoral process—the modes of life created by modern industry. This process dominates us and it dominates our leaders. It is the external symbol of some more profound reality which is the "wall" against which we are backed. It seems certain that we shall go from "crisis" to "crisis" until we learn how to walk away from the wall.