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HISTORY AND THE INDIVIDUAL

WHY do we long to know our history? Why, when the history of something, or somebody, remains unknown to us, do we feel deprived? History, one might say, presents that aspect of reality which can be understood only when it is strung out in time. It is the rational side of self-knowledge.

On first inspection, at any rate, history represents the plainly knowable content, the finite content, of human experience. A man may feel unable to say what he *is*; it is certain that he often feels more comfortable in saying what he has *been*. History has its mysteries, but they seem more manageable than the metaphysical mysteries of being. History is made up of things which have a beginning, a middle, and an end. You can describe, interpret, and in a sense *finish* an account of events. The account of being, supposing it to be at all possible, may perhaps be begun—"I think, therefore I am," is one such beginning—but it can hardly be finished. Historical knowledge is therefore a reassuring sort of knowledge providing surcease from the frightening portents which frame all the entries—false or real—to the infinity of being.

While both have crucial subdivisions, there are only two great theories of the meaning of history. One is that the meaning of history is to be discovered by getting out of history; the other is that all the meaning of history is *in* history. Human conviction and belief on the basis of these theories have endless consequences for politics and religion. Take for example the "vale of tears" conception of life on earth. We are here, this theory tells us, as a brief opportunity afforded us by the Creator in order to win, buy or otherwise gain, eternal life in the world beyond. There is only one significant transaction—Salvation. All else is vanity. This equation is written in many ways. The Zen Buddhists, for example, write it without the figure of the Creator. Instead of "pleasing God," the Zen votary seeks to *be* without engaging in the illusion of "becoming." He declares that the process of becoming is no contest and thus, paradoxically, becomes what he said had no need of becoming, since he was *That* in the first place. On this view, history is an enormous supererogatory act on the part of the Cosmos. We have no doubt that this is an over-simplification of Buddhist philosophy, but the curious indifference of even Zen experts to the processes of history—their apparent lack of *social* interest, which is the moral side of historicism—obliges the inquirer to make this judgment of at least the popular version of Zen. It disposes of history by saying that it is only a trap. The fact that the Buddha allowed himself to be trapped by history would suggest that its processes are something more than sheer illusion—otherwise, why would he have bothered? Fools, not wise men, enter meaningless enterprises.

Why should a man adopt a philosophy—or religion—which insists that the only purpose or meaning in the world (where history happens) is that it is the place from which he must escape into the region of "true reality"? The answer to this question is fairly easy to make. The world is a complicated affair. Understanding it for its own sake—as something more than a theatre set up as a convenient mechanism for our salvation—is extremely difficult. You have to work and think very hard to understand the world, and this, after all, is only a manner of speaking, since who among those who have thought very hard have understood the world? There is the possibility, in other words, that it is a vain project. So the men who tell us, with rousing voice and a light in their eyes, that we don't *need* to study the world, but only to practice the prescribed virtues (they give

out catalogs of these, and price lists) have always been able to gain large followings.

But the determination to understand the world remains a powerful motive in the lives of many men. Even though some of them tire, and join the other club, this motive keeps on animating people. It is a motive which acquires various intellectual justifications. For example, there is the doctrine that the natural world is performing an act of endless imitation of the timeless, archetypal world. This doctrine gives symbolism its justification and supports the inspiration men find in myth and allegory. The philosophic account of the meaning of the arts is a variation of this doctrine. The work of art is a moment in eternity, somehow suggesting the presence in the moment *of* eternity—it is there and yet it is not confined by the momentary identity of the moment. In this sense, art, like man, is a nexus between the finite and the infinite. If a man, this argument runs, could learn to understand *how* the infinite persists in the finite, without losing its infinity, he would know both the world and himself. So he studies the world as a scene filled with paradoxical instances of the reality that is beyond the world. He has to know the *whole* world; something left out would violate the unity of the indivisible.

Another approach to the study of the world comes from the assertion that there is no reality other than the world—that reality exists only in knowable confinements of itself—finite segments of the world. This is the scientific method turned into a philosophy. It is also a philosophy with a moral: The people who insist that there is a transcendental reality *outside* the world (God) or secretly immanent *in* the world, unchanged by its processes (Pantheism), are betrayers of the human intelligence. ("Religion is the opium of the people.") The good is to be realized here, not there. (There is no pie in the sky.) The study of history affords many impressive confirmations of this interpretation of religious institutions. ("God is always on the side of the big battalions.") In a world admitted to be finite (history is all there is), morals always becomes politics. ("The philosophers have only *interpreted* the world in various ways; the point, however, is to change it"—Marx.)

Modernity in the idea of the meaning of history involves the broad assumption that the good things that may come out of the human struggle are to be realized *in* history, on earth, not somewhere else. This view we have regarded as the practical man's expression of ethical resolve. This is what we, who know what life is about, intend to do with history. We shall make life good, if not for ourselves, for posterity. There may be a God (but one doubts it), there may be an after-life (and one doubts that)—you see, we are not bigots with a specious certainty about such matters—but if there is no God, no immortality, we shall have done the right thing anyhow. Who would say that the good life on earth is not a proper thing to strive for, whatever the finalities which religion and philosophy leave undisclosed? At any rate, considering the human situation, the percentages are with us, the practical humanitarian men who will make the world better for all, regardless of metaphysical questions.

This is the modern outlook—an outlook which, we submit, is coming apart at the seams. It has great plausibility in the context of Western history, but it does not do for desperate men. Western man has only lately become desperate, so that his present condition is one of extreme bewilderment and of not knowing where to turn. He was so *sure* he was right.

What, philosophically, did Western man do? His most far-reaching achievement was to banish God from history. He did this with the club of aggressive materialism and the short-sword of technology. He did not use philosophical arguments—philosophy is for dreamers. He made objective demonstrations. God—who needs Him? he said. "I have managed without that hypothesis," La Place told Napoleon. Nature does all by herself, explained La Mettrie, glorying in the

splendor of biological regeneration. The early physicists pushed God back to the function of primal cause, letting mechanics take care of the real business of the universe. Anticipating the modern temper—or giving it an early birth—Francis Bacon jibed, "Final causes are like vestal virgins—consecrated to God, and barren."

Meanwhile, the world had been growing up, intellectually. The Florentines of the Renaissance rediscovered Greek philosophy as well as Greek science, and while Pythagorean doctrines gave Copernicus and Galileo their start in the founding of modern physics, the rebirth of philosophy was to give the theologians nothing but trouble. It was easy enough to repeat the story of the coming of Christ to a world that needed a powerful and good being to help it along, but a world in which men were beginning to *think* was an entirely different host. God's only begotten Son was now the Problem of the Incarnation. How do you get God into History without shearing away his omnipotence and his omnipresence, and all the other attributes of the Ineffable One? History is a finite affair, and how can an infinite being even become *aware* of finite goings-on, much less have a part in them? This is the problem of the theologians, and we leave it to them, since it seems quite insoluble unless they are willing to change their original premises by becoming pantheists—as, for example, Tillich seems to have done, and to a limited extent the Quakers.

Actually, for a generation or two the theologians have been waiting in the vestibule of the scientific debating hall, eavesdropping like poor country cousins, hoping to get a line on some new resources for getting God into history again. Whenever a decent sort of scientist admitted publicly that he didn't know everything, a low cheer would go up in the ante-room. God was coming back into his own! But this didn't get him back into history. Then, when the electron escaped from the clutches of the determinists—only because it was too small for the kind of causality we know about to work with electrons—the apologists of religion declared that free will had been restored to human beings. These are the theological arguments from scientific dilemmas, and they are not impressive.

The thing that makes it impossible to get God into history is His definitions. Definitions are devices of logic, so that if you are going to get the familiar sort of God into history, you have to abandon logic, and when you abandon logic, you lose your audience—the audience worth having, that is. This, basically, is why religion is at a standstill, these days. While there are those who feel that logic is a work of the devil, anyway, or a kind of snare invented by the materialists, most people cling to logic as necessary to the kind of understanding one man can communicate to another. Without logic you can believe anything, but who *wants* to believe anything? Being able to believe anything has the gratification of complete freedom, but it costs too much. With this kind of freedom, you never know what is really *worth* believing. So most of us try to remain logical while still seeking the kind of freedom logic will permit.

We said earlier that the idea that man is totally *in* history—is, so to speak, a creature of history—who must gain all the good that he can have from the historical process and its finite values, is an idea that works well enough so long as history seems to be going well. The Bolsheviks of 1918 felt better about their theory of history than the Communists of 1962. The Manifest Destiny boys of 1901 were a sound sort of True Believers compared to the uneasy champions of the American Century since 1950. Today, the Progressives are becoming suspicious of Progressivism, and the scholars who are afraid that they actually understand the Progressive kind of progress are writing books about post-historic man—about the time when the technological straitjacket will be perfect, and humans will be perfectly unfree. God is still logically outside of history and man is still logically inside it, while history itself has become a merciless, mindless

juggernaut. It follows that desperation is widespread.

Well, if the definitions of God keep him outside, what about man? God's definitions are rigid, mainly because "He" is an abstraction, but man is not an abstraction, and our philosophic definitions of him are so soft, so vague, so indecisive that they are hardly worth talking about. Maybe it would be better to work with man, than with God. Man, after all, is the being who is in trouble. God, by definition, can have no trouble.

What are our working definitions of man? We don't mean the tentative philosophical definitions, but the working definitions. If we admit the truth we shall say that they are the definitions by I. P. Pavlov, John B. Watson, and the Madison Avenue Epigoni. They are the theories of men who look at other men as "things"—finite products of history—who can be used for various purposes: (1) as a market for disposing of commodities which are incidentally supposed to make the buyers feel good; (2) as subjects in an experiment in utopian sociology (rigorously conducted by Commissars who know the political rules and all the correct scientific procedures; (3) as raw material for armies which are needed to defend one "thing" theory of man against a competing "thing" theory.

The "thing" theories do not have to be all nastily exploitative or consciously Machiavellian, as the above would suggest. There are also benevolent "thing" theories of respectable academic origin. The point, however, is that these theories are of absolutely no value to the individual who feels the despair of a time of common desperation. We repeat here a portion of the passage quoted last week from Clyde Curran in the *Journal of Humanistic Psychology:*

> An individual caught within the grip of social disintegration—a person struggling to maintain a hold on that diminishing area of life he may call stable—will find little help in principles and conclusions that analyze the over-all crisis which gives rise to his sense of anxiety. Even if the analysis is correct, the suggested cures are so remote from the individual's control they offer little or no help. The promise that some day an over-all plan will be devised and executed that will tighten the growing abyss between the individual and the social is virtually no promise at all. The hope that the lot of the individual will improve when the impersonal forces that shape his destiny are better understood and controlled, is not convincing. The knowledge that the present time is a period when the security required for a healthy life is put in jeopardy by social change appears to be having somewhat the same effect upon the present generation as a sick person's realization that he is dying of cancer. The discovery and popularization of the fact that man is a cultural being—that he owes a debt to history for being born into a culture where the tools, ideas and beliefs he makes use of, have undergone a long stage of development—only adds to contemporary Western man's conviction that he cannot even call his "soul" his own.

With Mr. Curran's help, we have reached the juncture in the relationship between man and his history where a fresh point needs to be made. Mr. Curran also makes the point for us, by setting up alternative views of this relationship:

> If it is true that "Man lives in history and social change is change in the nature of Man," then what Man is—his nature—is determined by history. The life of an individual, then, taking the inside-the-experience-of-a-single-person viewpoint makes sense to himself and others only in relation to the historic process. If, on the other hand, the theories of social historians and anthropologists are recognized as more or less arbitrary ways of ordering ideas for the sake of compiling and transmitting knowledge, there is the possibility that the generalization, "Man lives in history and social change is change in the nature of Man," omits some of the essential characteristics of man as man—the person as a person. Granting the feasibility of this assumption, it is possible to conceive of an individual or a sizeable number of individuals transcending history—that is, during certain moments of their lives having significant experiences which are non-historical. If this is a tenable possibility, then the question of whether or not an individual might and does go against the cultural tide is worth considering.
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> What implications follow if it is assumed that . . . anthropological theories leave out an essential

> element of experience—an element that at certain times and in certain ways is not conditioned by history? . . . While social scientists center their attention upon the problems of Man, it might be that an indeterminate number of individuals are in no way affected by this problem. If this is so, is it not wise, in addition to scrutinizing knowledge in its historic setting, . . . to study the way individuals transcend history? It may be that the whole cultural world of Western man can collapse, yet some, perhaps many, individuals, will remain strong and healthy.

Put into more traditional terms, Mr. Curran's point is (by implication, if not directly) that the classical idea of the human individual as a moral free agent, entitled to right of free expression of ideas and to freedom of conscience and religion, is more than an "ideal"—it may be the very principle of health for human beings. It will not do to say "we know all that." We do not know it. We have allowed the grain of our culture to grow against this idea of the individual. We have fostered institutions and processes which continually endanger the free individual, prejudice the community against him, and which have turned the struggle to preserve civil liberties into a last-ditch contest with the "necessities" of state-craft. In the name of survival as a herd, we are systematically stamping out individuality.

Here we are, a breed that has survived a couple of ice-ages, no one knows how many Great Floods, the Black Plague, and the Holy Inquisition, and we are now so fearful of a passing political phase called "Communism" that we are ready to blow up the world in the name of a freedom that has been decaying for lack of use for several generations!

The open society is a society which leaves room for everyone to have a life outside of history—a spiritual life, some people call it. We shall never get an open society without developing profound convictions concerning the side of human beings which is not in history, is not a product of history, and is the only factor which can illuminate the way out of the traps, bogs, and box canyons of history. If we do not set about creating an open society, we shall before long find ourselves living in a community which systematically makes martyrs of its most healthy representatives—the individuals who get their impulse to authentic freedom from trans-historical sources.

Letter from **AFRICA**

ABIDJAN.—I've just had lunch with a Judge of the Supreme Court of Cote d'Ivoire, and his charming fiancee, in his home. It's true that his lips are thick, his nose squashed, his skin black. In fact, he is a perfect picture of that anthropological category, the Forest Negro, he who was certainly the major victim, and possibly even the creator, of chattel slavery.

He called for me in a black Citroen sedan, glass partition between front and rear seats, driven by a black chauffeur in blue and white uniform and cap, and wearing white gloves. He served French champagne for lunch, and tended, in the excitement of conversation, to forget the little bell at his plate and to shout at the white-smocked servant, who sometimes forgot himself and shouted back. Nobody seemed to notice.

The apartment, on the first floor of a stone house obviously built for the tropics, was open to the breezes and cooled by a slow-moving ceiling fan. It was more comfortable by far than my air-conditioned hotel room, and gave nothing like the same shock when one went out. After a while, friendship established, he took off his coat, revealing blood-red suspenders. Though I could make no such splendid revelations, I took off my coat also.

He spent almost ten months of 1957 in the United States, but he likes Americans anyway. This is a testimony to his essential humanity and to his understanding. *"Vraiment,"* he admitted, *"j'ai souffert."* It wasn't so bad in Washington, D.C. He was the guest of the French Ambassador, who took him out to supper and put him aboard the Greyhound bus for Richmond. "I took the seat of my choice," he recalled, "and talked for a time to the friendly white man beside me. But at the border of Virginia the driver stopped and ordered me to the back with the other Blacks. They knew where to sit. But I did, too. I said, 'O.K.,' and went back."

This was the beginning of a series of adventures: Richmond, Atlanta, Birmingham, New Orleans, Houston, Los Angeles. I said to my friend, "But what about the Mississippi River? The Grand Canyon? The Painted Desert? Hollywood? The Golden Gate?" He was a bit vague about these features of America. Other events seem to have been more vivid.

In Richmond, in the middle of the night, he felt cold and followed other passengers from the front of the bus to get a cup of coffee. "A Negro lady pulled at my sleeve as I got up," he says, "and whispered: 'You're crazy! You can't do that!' She was right. I couldn't." People in the back of the bus tended to carry their own warming fluids: Whisky appeared from several inside pockets, and he was offered some. Humanity from any source is warming.

In New Orleans he got into a taxi, driven by a white man, and asked to be taken to Tulane University. "Tulane?" said the driver. "You must mean Dillard." But he insisted, and after an argument was driven and deposited opposite the gate. "As I went in to deliver my lecture I saw the driver sitting there, watching to see what would happen to me."

Approaching Los Angeles, he sat in the rear of the bus and played peek-a-boo through his laced fingers with a little blonde girl up the aisle, bored by the ride, whose mother refused to let her come back and see him. In the early morning, adventuring back while her mother slept, she climbed into his lap and was discovered after some time by a chastened parent, happily asleep. "But she was a nice lady," the Judge says. "At the Los Angeles depot she said, 'I can't talk to you now, but won't you come to my house for tea? Here is the address.' " Beverly Hills, too, he recalls. (Do Beverly Hills people really ride buses?)

The Judge showed me his memory-books: pages and pages of brief, signed notes from friends met all over the world: Tulane, a Quaker Seminar in Denmark, sociologists at almost any great American University you want to name, and one of the daughters of Chief Justice Warren. You can feel how he treasures these contacts, how objectively he analyzes the Black-White problem. "This will be solved in the U.S.," he says, "by influences from the outside. Chief among these is the shame Americans are beginning to feel as they get acquainted with the world and with ideas different from their own." Meanwhile, in one world this man sits in the lonely eminence of the Supreme Bench, deciding the major criminal and civil cases of a nation. In another world he sits in the back of a bus.

ROVING CORRESPONDENT

REVIEW
"THE CUCKOO'S NEST

KEN KESEY'S novel set in a mental institution was recommended to MANAS by a man whose experiences qualify him as an excellent critic—since he was once himself a patient and has served in later years as a therapist. The full title, *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest,* correctly suggests the largely unmarked means by which some mental patients eventually overcome their own illusions without conventional psychiatric aid. The teller of the story, a huge, half-Indian inmate, is moved to self-regeneration by the addition to his ward of the most exuberant man ever to find his way into the hospital. The love of life is reawakened in the Chief; at first hesitantly, then with transcendent courage, he moves out of the fog of mental illness, though not without involvement in a genuine tragedy.

Of particular interest is Mr. Kesey's way of showing that the "insane" often enjoy peculiar perceptiveness, and of a sort seldom encountered in individuals enmeshed in the ordinary patterns of living. The Chief, for example, believes that most of the power in the world resides in one great "Combine" stretching from the connivances of international politics to the brittle administration of a ward by a neurotic head nurse. When the Chief and his true therapist, the irrepressible, lusting-for-life McMurphy, participate in a fishing trip outside the hospital walls, the Chief notes the many ways in which the "Combine', manages to snuff out individuality:

> All up the coast I could see the signs of what the Combine had accomplished since I was last through this country, things like, for example—a *train* stopping at a station and laying a string of full-grown men in mirrored suits and machined hats, laying them like a hatch of identical insects, half-life things coming pht-pht-pht out of the last car, then hooting its electric whistle and moving on down the spoiled land to deposit another hatch.
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> Or things like five thousand houses punched out identical by a machine and strung across the hills outside of town, so fresh from the factory they're still linked together like sausages, a sign saying NEST IN THE WEST HOMES—NO DOWN PAYMENT FOR VETS, a playground down the hill from the houses, behind a checker-wire fence and another sign that read ST. LUKE'S SCHOOL FOR BOYS—there were five thousand kids in green corduroy pants and white shirts under green pullover sweaters playing crack-the-whip across an acre of crushed gravel. The line popped and twisted and jerked like a snake, and every crack popped a little kid off the end, sent him rolling up against the fence like a tumbleweed. Every crack. And it was always the same little kid, over and over.
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> All that five thousand kids lived in those five thousand houses, owned by those guys that got off the train. The houses looked so much alike that time and time again, the kids went home by mistake to different houses and different families. Nobody ever noticed. They ate and went to bed. The only one they noticed was the little kid at the end of the whip. He'd always be so scuffed and bruised that he'd show up out of place wherever he went. He wasn't able to open up and laugh either. It's a hard thing to laugh if you can feel the pressure of those beams coming from every new car that passes, or every new house you pass.

The Chief had not spoken a word for almost twenty years, so strong was his desire for a retreat to some internal place where the Combine couldn't reach him. He was also taken to be deaf, since he had not responded either to verbal orders or to conversation. But McMurphy, who is willing to pay whatever price is asked for flaunting hospital authority in the interests of individual expression, makes the break-through, and the Chief tells McMurphy the story of his early life. His father was both the hereditary and actual leader of a tribe of Indians living in the Columbia River gorge. Though a number of men from the tribe had demonstrated their intelligence and capacity by entering business or the professions in the white man's world, the tribe as a whole preferred to live in the ancestral manner. But of course encroachments from the outside were bound to come. Opportunists seeking to control Indian land because of rumors that the government would establish a vast hydroelectric plant near the site of the village, used the threat of eventual government take-over, offering tempting amounts

of money to the more Americanized among the Indians. In this conversation the Chief describes how these acquisitive activities eventually destroyed his father:

> "Everybody worked on him because he was big, and wouldn't give in, and did like he pleased. Everybody worked on him just the way they're working on you."
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> 'They who, Chief?" he asked in a soft voice, suddenly serious.
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> "The Combine. It worked on him for years. He was big enough to fight it for a while. It wanted us to live in inspected houses. It wanted to take the falls. It was even in the tribe, and they worked on him. In the town they beat him up in the alleys and cut his hair short once. Oh, the Combine's big—big. He fought it a long time till my mother made him too little to fight any more and he gave up."
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> McMurphy didn't say anything for a long time after that. Then he raised up on his elbow and looked at me again, and asked why they beat him up in the alleys, and I told him that they wanted to make him see what he had in store for him only worse if he didn't sign the papers giving everything to the government.
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> "What did they want him to give the government?"
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> "Everything. The tribe, the village, the falls . .
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> "Now I remember; you're talking about the falls where the Indians used to spear salmon—long time ago. Yeah. But the way I remember it the tribe got paid some huge amount."
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> "That's what they said to him. He said, What can you pay for the way a man lives? He said, What can you pay for what a man is? They didn't understand. Not even the tribe. They stood out in front of our door all holding those checks and they wanted him to tell them what to do now. They kept asking him to invest for them, or tell them where to go, or to buy a farm. But he was too little anymore. And he was too drunk, too. The Combine had whipped him. It beats everybody. It'll beat you too. They can't have somebody as big as Papa running around unless he's one of them. You can see that."
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> "He finally just drank," I whispered. I didn't seem to be able to stop talking, not till I finished telling what I thought was all of it. "And the last I see him he's blind in the cedars from drinking and every time I see him put the bottle to his mouth he don't suck out of it, it sucks out of him, and we had to cart him out of the cedars, in a pickup, to a place in Portland to die. I'm not saying they kill. They didn't kill him. They did something else."

If the Chief thought that within the walls of a mental institution he would escape from fear of the Combine that had ruined his father, he soon found that he was mistaken. Politics and various kinds and degrees of calculated ambition were there, too. The Combine came right into the hospital. Just as the majority of men and women outside were motivated by fear, so were those within. Shock treatments and the eventual possibility of a lobotomy were the unspoken threats, and it was only McMurphy, the man unafraid, who was able to help anyone toward genuine rehabilitation. The tremendous physique of the Chief had dwindled in his own eyes to childlike dimensions, but it was McMurphy who realized that he could be "made big" again.

COMMENTARY
RELIGION AND THE SCHOOLS

THE dismay expressed by practically all the governors of the states at the Supreme Court decision outlawing the reading of prayers to children in the public schools (see Frontiers) is depressing evidence of indifference to a great moral struggle in American history—the struggle to free the schools of sectarian domination. The governors, apparently, care more about the support they hope to get from the sectarian element in their present-day constituency than about the great principle of freedom of conscience.

Perhaps the talk of a constitutional amendment to make public prayer in the public schools legal is only a bit of window-dressing by the governors in these days of timid and conforming "leaders." It is hard to believe that the governors do not "know better." No one with any acquaintance with history can fail to remember that the hostility of one Christian sect for another was the chief obstacle to free public education. As E. P. Cubberley says in *Public Education in The United States:* "Excepting the battle for the abolition of slavery, perhaps no question has ever been before the American people for settlement which has caused so much feeling or aroused such bitter antagonism."

Of course, there is a great difference between the embattled sectarianism of the nineteenth century, out of which this struggle arose, and the bland, generalizing prayer which the Supreme Court found unconstitutional in 1962. If a comparison were to be made, the orthodoxy now demanded by those who are outraged by the high court's ruling would resemble much more closely the superficial conformity required by the Roman emperors during the days of the Christian martyrs than it would the militant Protestant rivalries of the last century. American sectarians of that period were angrily determined upon Salvation *their* way, and the ways were many.

Today, after a hundred years, the dither in favor of religion in the schools seems to come from the longing for a reassuring public image of the United States as a country on the Right Side. There was more integrity in the sectarian rantings of the nineteenth century.

If the people who represent an interest in religion in this country really cared about the progress of the Christian faith, they would do their best to eliminate all aspects of official sponsorship. They would declare that the "public relations" techniques of the image-makers are no more than a weak substitute for honest conviction, amounting to a confession of failure.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves
A COURAGEOUS VALEDICTORY

FROM rock-bound Maine to sunny California comes the news of an educational controversy stirred by an eighteen-year-old valedictorian. At June Commencement, Russell Salsbury, graduating student of Stevens Academy of Blue Hill, composed his valedictory address on the subject of disarmament, and, while supporters of the Peace Movement of all grades and degrees would have no difficulty in appreciating the speech, the Stevens principal objected to the text and denied Salsbury opportunity to present it. *This* valedictory, according to the patriotic principal, contained "half-baked views and could and would do the school harm."

Fortunately—or else this unusual baccalaureate address would never have reached the newspapers—not all Maine schools are so rock-bound as Stevens Academy. When news of the denial circulated among young people in the vicinity the result was an invitation from near-by Coburn Classical Institute, where the address *was* given. The challenge in Mr. Salsbury's speech is adequately illustrated by two paragraphs which dare suggest that America share something like an equal responsibility with Russia for the chronic brink-of-war situation. The young man said:

> The Russians believe that America is bent on world conquest and would stop at nothing to defeat Russia. We believe the same to be true of the Russians, when in reality each side would like nothing better than to end the arms race so that it might use the money to improve its own country and to compete in more peaceful areas.
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> It is our duty as the leading nation of the Western World to prove to the Russians that we want peace, not say that we want peace, but prove it. . . . Ignorance breeds fear, fear breeds distrust, and distrust breeds war. So long as each side is ignorant of the real motives of the other side, we will continue to walk on the brink of war.

This plain statement reflects not only the distressing aspects of the current international situation, but also intimates the possibility of a truly international ideal of peace. Five sentences from an address by David Mitrany at a conference of internationally-minded schools should be encouraging to Russell Salsbury and his supporters:

> We live in a time of unrestrained nationalism, of intolerant ideologies, in a state of international crisis as permanent as Lenin's permanent revolution. It must seem therefore strangely rash to say that our time also holds the prospect of a world at peace. Yet I believe that to be so. Crises have disturbed the world before, many times and in many ways. But a *true* international outlook is now alive and general for the first time in history.

No mention was made as to whether Salsbury has pacifist affiliations or gained his convictions entirely from original thinking. But the evidence of the past two years makes it clear that what used to be called the "views of the peace movement" are springing up spontaneously in many hitherto unlikely places—and especially among young persons in their 20's. This sort of "grass roots pacifism" provides some justification for another statement of Prof. Mitrany's:

> I believe this prospect of a world at peace to be now possible. . . . For the first time we see signs of a *sense of world community* of an international responsibility for local conditions everywhere. . . . The acceptance of a new idea in the minds of men reaches deeper, and more durably, than any formal pact or constitution.

It is difficult to guess what bothered Russell Salsbury's principal the most—the analysis provided in the first part of the speech, or the following specific proposals:

> (1) Stop all nuclear tests underground, underwater, in the atmosphere and in outer space.
>
> (2) Stop all production of nuclear weapons and delivery systems.
>
> (3) Disarm all bases on foreign soil of nuclear weapons and delivery systems.
>
> (4) Disarm and mothball all Polaris submarines.

Well, the Salsbury affair seems to have been a very good thing for the community, since it was hard to avoid discussion, with Salsbury preparing four different drafts from the same point of view in the hope of having one accepted. When his last draft was turned down, and prior to the Coburn Classical Institute's invitation, the salutatorian of Stevens Academy refused to give his address as a protest against the principal's decision, and another participant in the Stevens program declined for similar reasons.

From one point of view, this country could be said to have divided itself into two camps—not, certainly, Republican and Democrat, nor even right-wing and left-wing, but rather into (1) those who are genuinely in favor of education concerning world issues and (2) those who are determinedly opposed to it. Irving Brant, who recently toured the country to sample political opinion, comments in the May 28 *New Republic:*

> Everywhere I heard that the United States was in fearful danger from something called "the Communist Conspiracy." Over and over again one hears denunciations of the income tax protests against foreign aid, invectives against organized labor, outcries against the federal budget, condemnation of centralized government, criticism of welfare legislation. All of these seem to be connected with "the Communist Conspiracy." But of Communism itself, its principles, its objectives, its political status, its specific domestic program, its actual subversive activities—hardly one word. To learn what is meant by Communism, among those who constantly proclaim themselves to be anti-Communists, one should naturally go to their most articulate spokesmen. These are, shall we say, the John Birch Society at the lowest level of intelligence and the *National Review* in the higher altitude of right-wing sophistication. As often happens in such cases, these two groups don't like each other. They are rivals and mutual critics rather than cooperators. But in two respects they are as alike as two yokes in one egg. They both regard internal Communism as a deadly menace to the United States, and from neither of them can you get the slightest inkling of what this menace consists of in the actual field of Communism.
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> The Extreme Right no doubt regards government intervention against extreme concentration of wealth as Communistic. If it is, American Communism goes back a long way. Read the words of James Madison, "father of the Constitution," in the Philadelphia *National Gazette* of January 13, 1792, calling for "the silent operation of laws, which, without violating the rights of property, reduce extreme wealth towards a state of mediocrity, and raise extreme indigence towards a state of comfort.

The education which helps to create empathy for all peoples around the world—and especially for those less fortunate than ourselves—is not the sort that can be provided by a textbook. Basically, it is an attitude of mind. For this reason, young people like Russell Salsbury can make contributions which are just as significant as those of Prof. Mitrany or Mr. Brant.

FRONTIERS

Notes on Religion

MONDAY, June 25, 1962, was, according to most newspaper editorialists and every politician and birchosymp who could get the ear of a reporter or lean a lip near a microphone, "The day Hell broke loose." On that day the United States Supreme Court handed down two decisions that rocked the wrathful and the righteous. One was that the California state law that makes drug addiction a criminal offense violates the constitutional protection against "cruel and unusual punishment," in that it makes a crime of a condition that is, in itself, an illness.

The second decision—the one that really shook the rafters of what many would have us believe is the Church of State—ruled that an official prayer to be read each morning by the children of New York State Public Schools was in violation of the First Amendment which is our guarantee to freedom of worship, or non-worship, as the case may be. Realizing that he and his colleagues—only one dissented—would be placed on the defensive, Associate Justice Black who gave the majority opinion said that the men who wrote the First Amendment into the Constitution were opposed to neither religion nor prayer, but that "they knew rather that it was written to quiet well justified fears which nearly all of them felt arising out of an awareness that governments of the past had shackled men's tongues to make them speak only the religious thoughts that government wanted them to and to pray only to the God the government wanted them to pray to."

While the New York State prayer can on a first reading seem innocuous, it can become something else from a second or third reading interspersed with some thought. The prayer is: "Almighty God, we acknowledge our dependence upon thee, and we beg thy blessings upon us, our parents, our teachers, and our country." If the prayer had asked for compassion and relief for those suffering from famine and political oppression abroad, and from poverty and discrimination at home, it would have at least implanted in the minds of the young the rudiments of a Christianity we claim as our heritage and choose to believe is the tap root of our destiny. It might not even have been unseemly to have asked the God whose Son was known as "The Prince of Peace" for peace on earth and good will toward all men. Obviously, our founding fathers must have anticipated just what their First Amendment to the Constitution blocked in 1962—a dependence on an Official God who could be relied upon to bless all our un-Christian tendencies.

The Hell of it is—and I use this word advisedly—that in an affluent society with large unaffluent minorities, existing in a world flawed with poverty-stricken old nations and penniless new nations, our most dangerous rival is just as materialistic as we are and perhaps twice as opportunistic, being atheistic to boot, and thus not plagued as we are by survivals of Christian morality and ethics. It has gotten so that we daren't, publicly at least, risk a decent prayer in the old Christian tradition. Let me offer an example that shows why it is so easy for the John Birchers and other champions of our "official" Christianity to say the churches are raddled with "Communism." The remarks of the guardians of the new faith will be in parenthesis.

"Oh God, whose Son walked among us here on earth, teaching us charity, compassion and humbleness (bleeding-heart stuff—pinko) as he healed the sick (socialized medicine), fed the hungry in the miracle of the fish and loaves (welfare state), turned his other cheek and yet forgave the man who struck him (collaborationist, comsymp, co-exister), gave example to the poor and meek that they would inherit the earth (creeping socialism), and died upon the cross between two thieves (fellow traveler) in order that we who humbly follow in his steps may find redemption and peace everlasting, we beseech you

. . . (sirens, tommy guns, and the big push button—if words were wishes)."

It isn't strange that our present use of Christianity is pitifully vulnerable to satire today. In the May *Esquire*, Malcolm Muggeridge, the British humorist, has an article, "The First Church of Christ Economist." As I read him I couldn't help but feel he was being more realistic than irreverent in a quite basic sense. Good satire is simply the truth dressed in outrageous bangles. Here is Mr. Muggeridge:

> It is often remarked that we are in desperate need of a new religion to counter the spread of Marxist communism. Christianity, of course, still exists, and functions, with differing degrees of zeal, through a wide variety of Christian Churches. Its weakness, however, in competition with Marxist communism, lies in certain basic propositions of its founder, which, however ingeniously they may be interpreted, run directly counter to prevailing trends. Thus, for instance, how is it possible to explain away an observation like "Blessed are the poor" when the whole dynamic of our society is in the opposite direction? Imagine a senator seeking re-election on the basis of such a slogan! He would inevitably be ignominiously defeated. No senator, to do that august assembly justice, would ever make so foolish and elementary a miscalculation. What the electorate expects, and gets, from its elected representatives are promises of ever more amenities and an ever expanding standard of life, not panegyrics on the blessedness of poverty.
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> Again, our economists, men held in high repute among us, recommend conspicuous consumption as a necessary condition of our social survival. How can we, at one and the same time follow their guidance and uphold the principles of the Sermon on the Mount? St. Francis of Assisi and other Christian luminaries quite evidently knew little about the Affluent Society, and cared less. Short of canonizing John Maynard Keynes, it is difficult to see how his concept of a continuously expanding economy can be fitted into the Christian canon. "Drink more water" and "Eat more dry crusts" would be unappealing slogans for a sales-promotion campaign. Dust and ashes are not commodities which embellish a television commercial. Between Madison Avenue and Gethsemane there would seem to be a wide and impassable gulf.

In the following paragraph Mr. Muggeridge makes it seem that when the communist missionaries came to our shores they were only trying to sell us what we have been trying to sell the rest of the world for years. The Communist Manifesto was but a printer's dummy for an affluent Sears Roebuck catalog, Russian style:

> In contemporary circumstances, that is to say, Christianity can only go on existing as a religion so long as it is not practiced. It may be urged that this is no new development, and that those who direct the affairs of the Christian Churches have, through the centuries, become expert at preaching what neither they themselves nor the more eminent and well-endowed members of their flock have any intention of practicing. This may well be so; but the churches have not hitherto had to contend with the rivalry and bitter enmity of an ideology which, however gross and cruel in other respects, does at least unreservedly and wholeheartedly recommend the material prosperity which all are being exhorted to require. Mr. Khrushchev is under no necessity to hedge round his promises of more and more of everything for everyone with halfhearted asides about the vanity of riches and the unsatisfactoriness of fleshly satisfaction. In summoning his people to partake of the abundance of the mid-twentieth century, he can emulate the inelegant but hearty invitation of Timon of Athens to his guests: "Uncover, dogs, and lap!" The Marxist train is unashamedly a gravy train.

In outlining the structure of "The First Church of Christ Economist," Muggeridge lays the bangles on heavy, but they are not really so bizarre. Since sound banking has become pretty much deified, it isn't strange for ministers to become Tellers, with God the Great Teller. Bankruptcy is inspired consumption that can be likened only to the older vows of poverty and a state of Grace. Practically everything in the old Christian ritual is reversed. At communion the Arch-teller would place a coin in the communicant's hand and pronounce the sacred words, "This is my money. Spend this in remembrance of me."

Muggeridge's own conversion to "The First Church of Christ Economist" came about when the rich over-abundance of our society poured from the magazines and TV:

> A mood of deep despair and hopelessness settled upon me. I felt a positive revulsion from all these appurtenances of affluence so elegantly and alluringly spread out before me, and longed to find myself, like St. Francis, naked on the naked earth. And yet, I reflected, it is this very abundance on which the hopes and desires of all mankind are fixed. The Brahmin by the Ganges, naked savages in the remote swamps of the Upper Nile, Australian aboriginals and Borneo head-hunters are all as captivated by the vision of affluence as football-pool punters in Twickenham, comrade Muzhiks in Magnetogorsk, and hot-dog sellers in Tulsa, Oklahoma. For the first time in human history everyone wants the same thing, and this was it. Was I, then, to stand aside? Suddenly my mood changed to one of exaltation. Onward Bingo soldiers marching as to war, with the winning number going on before. I had become a Christian Economist.

To start an article with a serious Supreme Court decision ruling against the use of an official prayer in public schools and then turn to a satire on the plight of our current Christianity may seem, as the British say, "a bit over the fence." I think not, however. Humor, or satire, may at times be the highest court man has. In it the common law of reason suddenly becomes blithely sure of itself. Illuminated by the ridiculous, we laugh at the fools we were and are spared having to call the fools by name.

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