VOLUME II, NO. 7
FEBRUARY 16, 1949

COMPREHENSIBLE ECONOMICS

ANYONE who sets out to obtain a modest competence in the field of economics, without wishing to become a specialist or theoretician, is likely to acquire considerable sympathy for the view that economics is a mysterious subject reserved for people with special capacities. There seems to be some justification for this reaction. If, for example, a reader turns to a volume like Friedrich Hayek's collection of essays, *Individualism and the Economic Order*, hoping to gain enlightenment, he will probably be impressed by the honesty and frequent common sense of the author, but remain puzzled as to what, exactly, are the first principles of economics.

Prof. Hayek, of course, is an opponent of economic planning. He is an intelligent critic of socialist theory and he marshals in this book what seem to be the important arguments to be considered. One notes, however, that he is much impressed by the economic illiteracy of the rest of mankind—a sentiment shared by most of his colleagues in the economic field. The usual explanation of the general indifference of people to economics is the intellectual laziness of the great majority, and no doubt there is truth in this, but something more, we think, is involved in the case of economic theory. Quite possibly, the determination of orthodox economists to rule out of consideration the moral factors in human life is *felt* rather than recognized intellectually by people who refuse to interest themselves in economics, and with this feeling for justification, they ignore the entire subject.

Prof. Hayek, for one, makes the exclusion of moral considerations fairly explicit. In a discussion of the proper way to make a comparison between capitalism and socialism, he says:

> . . . it would be wholly inconclusive if such a comparison were made between capitalism as it exists (or is supposed still to exist) and socialism as it might work under ideal assumptions—or between capitalism as it might be in its ideal form and socialism in some imperfect form. If the comparison is to be of any value for the question of principle, it has to be made on the assumption that either system is realized in the form which is most rational under the given conditions of human nature and external circumstances which must of course be accepted.

Serious economic science, in other words, can contemplate no serious variations in human nature. To have to anticipate a change in the motivations of a large number of people with respect to their economic ends and means would intrude an ethical "unknown" into the otherwise reliable calculations of economists. Prof. Hayek implies that a theoretical comparison between socialism and capitalism would require the ethical or moral tendencies of the compared societies to remain constant, and, academically speaking, he is doubtless right; but speaking unacademically, if human nature must remain as it is today, the comparison is hardly worth making. Any science which depends upon fixed amounts of good and evil in human relations is a science which ought to be abolished and entirely new methods of approach devised.

This leads to a familiar theme: the economic thinking of M. K. Gandhi. The Gandhian Plan, which derives from ethical principles, seems sound and wholly applicable to the problems of Indian society. It is sound enough, theoretically, but not exactly applicable in its present form to an industrial society like that of the United States. There should nevertheless be value in a study of the Gandhian economy, in both its theoretical and practical aspects, for the purpose of making comparisons between the sort of problem faced by Indians and that faced by Americans.

The important thing about the Gandhi movement is that people are working at it in many

parts of India, and they are making the Gandhian economy work. Is there, in the United States, a similar opportunity for working toward a practical economic solution? The Gandhians, it is true, live in a country where the Government is at least rhetorically sympathetic to what they are trying to do. But in America, there are other advantages, such as the vastly greater personal resources of individual citizens. It may not be too optimistic to say that in America, also, there are numerous people capable of the social idealism which the Gandhian movement represents in India. What is lacking here is the synthesis, the galvanic power of a great idea. As yet, the Americans are only feeling their way.

The economic solution for America, obviously, does not lie in the direction of the spinning wheel. But what the spinning wheel stood for, in Gandhi's thinking, may be of the greatest importance—and this needs to be clarified and rendered into American terms. The best way to begin will probably be to describe some of the features of the Gandhian economy. For this purpose we have two excellent pamphlets by S. N. Agarwal, the Principal of Seksaria College of Commerce, Wardha, C.P., India. The first is *The Gandhian Plan of Economic Development for India,* published during Gandhi's lifetime, and for which Gandhi wrote a brief foreword of approbation. The second is the *Gandhian Plan Reaffirmed,* which repeats the original thesis and presents answers to criticisms. (For copies of both these pamphlets, send two dollar bills to Padma Publications Ltd, 53-55 Lakshmi Bldg., Sir P.M. Road, Fort Bombay 1, India, or ask the Manas Publishing Company to order them through its Indian agents.) These pamphlets are an excellent introduction to Gandhi's thinking for the reason that Mr. Agarwal is well read in Western economic literature and uses European and American authorities to good effect. They contain a great and reforming idea, and a simple one. It is the sort of idea much needed by Americans, who are so used to ignoring the abyss which separates their professions from their practice.

The central idea of the *Gandhian Plan* bears directly on Prof. Hayek's key-principle of conventional economic analysis. Hayek requires that human nature remain pretty much the same, while Gandhi is for simple living and high thinking. "I do not believe," Gandhi has observed, "that multiplication of wants, and machinery contributed to supply them is taking the world a single step nearer its goal." He says further: "I heartily detest this mad desire to destroy distance and time and to increase animal appetites and go to the ends of the earth in search of their satisfaction." Reading these lines, some may suppose that Mr. Gandhi wants them to abandon their automobiles and disconnect their washing machines. This is hardly true, and ignores the positive values of Gandhi's thesis. The point is developed by Mr. Agarwal:

> This idea of Gandhiji may appear to be ascetic and philosophical to those who are intoxicated with the "abundance'" of modern civilisation. But the truth of the matter is that Gandhi has gone to the very roots of the present economic chaos and political conflict and laid his finger on the basic cause of our ills. "Socialism and Communism," observes a distinguished English writer, "belong to the same circle of ideas as acquisitive capitalism." Both regard the possession of money and the things which money can buy as the supreme good. That is why Bertrand Russell is constrained to remark that, "if Socialism ever comes it is only likely to prove beneficent if non-economic goods are valued and consciously pursued." . . .
>
> The real wealth of a nation consists in its honest, cultured and unselfish men and women, and not in its palatial buildings, huge factories and multitudinous luxuries.

The Gandhian plan involves a measure of socialism, and the logic used to support this socialism seems to us impregnable to criticism. It will work for good, of course, only under the condition described by Mr. Russell. Being a higher ideal than acquisitive capitalism, this socialism requires another sort of human being

than those who are now making capitalism "work," after a fashion. A socialist failure is much worse than an imperfect capitalism for the reason that, as it seems to us, capitalism is a predatory system for a predatory people, while socialism, ostensibly a cure for the evils of capitalism, only makes predatory habits more vicious by hiding them under the cloak of Statism—unless, of course, a moral revolution is accomplished along with the social revolution. Gandhian socialism depends upon a moral revolution for its success.

Under the Gandhian Plan, the conception of the national economy develops around a balanced diet and minimum comforts for all. All economic planning will have this end in view. As some 90 per cent of the Indian people are engaged in agriculture and related industries, the plan devotes much attention to the development of the rural areas. The unit is the village. Land will be nationalized and the peasants freed of the enormous burden of debt which has been accumulating for generations. Village communities are to lease the land to the peasants under long-term arrangements, combining features of the village system of ancient India with more modern techniques of land-management. Each village will be in some measure a self-sustaining, self-governing democratic community. The importance of the village in Indian life may be understood from a passage by a Governor-General of India, Sir Charles Metcalf, written in 1830. He describes the villages as little republics having nearly everything within themselves:

> They seem to last where nothing else lasts.... The Union of the village communities, each one forming a separate little State in itself, has, I conceive, contributed more than any other cause to the preservation of the people of India through all revolutions and changes which they have suffered, and it is in a high degree conducive to their happiness and to the enjoyment of a great portion of freedom and independence. I wish, therefore, that the village constitutions may never be disturbed and I dread everything that has a tendency to break them up.

Wherever possible, consumer-goods will be manufactured locally by cottage industries and small cooperatives. Every attempt at "bigness" will be discouraged as thwarting the natural expression of individual capacities and creating artificialities of purpose, in both production and distribution, and leading to the numerous social evils of the modern industrial society. Gandhi is not opposed in principle to the machine, but to its misuse. "The spinning wheel itself," he has said, "is a piece of valuable machinery." Machines to lighten the labors of men living in cottages would be welcomed, provided the mechanization contributes to humanization, and not its opposite. On this question, Gandhi has written:

> Mechanization is good when the hands are too few for the work intended to be accomplished. It is an evil when there are more hands than required for the work, as is the case in India.... The problem with us is not how to find leisure for the teeming millions inhabiting our villages. The problem is how to utilize their idle hours, which are equal to the working days of six months of the year.

Gandhi has said: "If we could have electricity in every village home, I shall not mind villagers plying their implements and tools with electricity." What he opposes is the enrichment of a few industrialists operating large and highly mechanized plants, whose interest will soon turn, after saturation of the domestic market, toward foreign outlets for their products, thus creating in India the pattern of Western industrialism with all its potentialities for imperialism and war.

The idea of electrification brings up the question of public utilities and basic industries, which by no stretch of the imagination can be connected with a cottage industry or small community program. Power, mining, metallurgy and forestry, petroleum, machinery and machine tools, shipbuilding, locomotives, automobiles and aircraft, heavy chemicals and pharmaceuticals—the industries in all these fields would be state-owned under the Gandhian Plan. Such plants would be located by the government according to local employment needs and the availability of raw materials. On this subject, Mr. Agarwal writes:

> There will be adequate scope for private or cooperative enterprise and initiative in the organization of village industries which will supply in large measure the consumers' goods to the villages as well as the towns. But it is one of the cornerstones of this Plan that the basic and key industries shall be owned and managed by the State in the interests of the nation as a whole. The key industries are meant to be beneficial to the whole country and, as such, cannot and should not be left in private hands. The cottage industries, though not state-owned, will not provide much scope for the "vested interests." Hence under this Plan, there will scarcely be any chance for Indian or foreign capitalists to exploit India for their own selfish ends.

The Gandhian Plan is erected upon the fourfold foundation of simplicity in living standards, non-violence in human relations, the sanctity of human labor and the supremacy of human values. It involves a decentralized society supported by agriculture and village industries, supplemented by the necessary large-scale industries and public services to be owned and operated by the national government for the general welfare. The plan is not visionary, for it is already operating to a limited extent. It is founded on the radical and progressive transformation of human nature, and it *begins* with this transformation, instead of promising it as a hoped-for result of changes in the "system." It contains, therefore, the dynamic elements of individual motivation which have been largely lacking in previous revolutionary movements.

It is the approach in Gandhian economics which has importance for the West, and not the manner of adapting the Gandhian principles to the particular problems of India. Nor is the socialist part of the program an essential, at the outset, for India or any other country. The primary consideration is to think in terms of human need—the needs of whole human beings—instead of in terms of the production and marketing of commodities. Once this principle is established, the development of a plan can proceed, with emphasis on decentralized production, the preservation of a natural pattern of living, and the development of individual capacities. It is nonsense to suppose that a country where originality and inventiveness have been characteristic traits will be unable to rebuild its economy on the basis of human values, if the desirability of this objective can be seen and admitted by enough people of intelligence. While such an ideal may seem remote at the present time, a beginning can always be made, and the way to begin is to begin.

Letter from **South Africa**

NATAL.—What is the present situation in South Africa? Everyone knows that Dr. Malan is at the head of a Nationalist Government, which is reported to be anti-English, anti-African, anti-Jew, anti-Indian, but the important question is, will South Africa (that means, of course *white* South Africa) go Fascist?

No one can answer that question yet. It is true that an illiberal Government has replaced General Smuts, yet no one should suppose that Smuts was a devoted liberal. But this important thing should be said. Under Smuts, dictatorial though he was, no one was afraid of dictatorship. One felt that one could exercise the right to speak, write and persuade. One felt that the white man's desire to survive on a black continent would not be allowed to override all considerations of decency and justice. Although the causes of decency and justice did not make much forward progress, one felt at least that one could look forward.

Is it now certain that we shall begin to look backward and go backward? The answer is, not yet. For the present Nationalist Government is by no means unanimous in regard to the measures to be adopted to ensure survival. Some of its members say openly that nothing must be allowed to prevent or hinder the adoption of survival policies; but others are undoubtedly conscious of the duty which a decent white man must discharge to the millions of black people who live in the Union of South Africa. One cannot be certain that white South Africa will be ready to place more and more power in the hands of its extremists. Should the Government break on the survival issues, one could expect the more liberal Nationalist wing to coalesce with the less liberal Smuts wing; this has happened before. If it does happen again, we may expect to see a return to the *laissez faire* policies that have been characteristic of white government for the last half-century. If, however, the white electorate decides to support the extremists, we may expect to see the emergence of a white Fascist state; this will mean a drastic restriction of the rights of liberal white South Africans to speak, write, and use persuasion and an even more drastic restriction of the already restricted rights of non-whites, such as their rights to free movement, to enter certain employments, and to form associations for the protection of their interests.

A critical issue that may terminate this uncertainty is even now before the country. When the Cape Province, the Orange Free State, the Transvaal and Natal came together in the Union of South Africa, it was decided to retain the voting rights which the Cape Province allowed to certain non-whites, but not to extend them further. But in 1936 General Hertzog abolished this "common roll" privilege in the Cape Province, and instead gave the entire black population of the Union the right to elect three white representatives in Parliament. Needless to say these three white members voted invariably with the more liberal Smuts Party and not with the less liberal Nationalists. The Nationalists now wish to abolish this representation, and to substitute for it a number of non-white "councils" throughout the country, to which will be given limited powers to control strictly non-white affairs. But Mr. Havenga has said that he cannot agree that such a proposal should be made law by the bare majority that the Government now enjoys; he wants a two-thirds majority of Upper and Lower House sitting together, for he regards such a change as equivalent to (or at least as important as) a change in the Constitution.

On this issue the Government may split, and it remains to be seen if the country (the white electorate) will support the Nationalist extremists or a Havenga-Smuts coalition. We are all therefore, white and black, in a state of great uncertainty.

In the meantime there have been serious race riots in Durban, where Africans have been killing

Indians and burning their property. Superficially it would appear that this is due to exploitation of the Africans by the Indian commercial class. This is no doubt a valid explanation as far as it goes, but many of us fear that there is a deeper one, namely that the frustrated and resentful Africans, many hardly emerged from barbarism, are in fact venting their anger against the whole rigid and confining racial set-up by attacking the race-group least able to defend itself. All is now reported quiet, but we may be sure that nothing is quiet underneath, and that these racial riots are nothing but a symptom of the growing frustration and desperation of the lowest class of a pyramidal race-society, a class which sees no hope for its future in a state where the white man seems to be preparing to fortify his present dominant position with even greater determination.

SOUTH AFRICAN CORRESPONDENT

REVIEW
SOME RECENT MOVIES

MOVIE audiences going to see *An Act of Murder* (Universal-International, with Frederic March and Florence Eldridge) are probably supposed to do some serious thinking on the subject of "mercy killing." The story, which is slanted against mercy killing, unfolds the difficult moral decision confronting a tough-minded judge who finally decides to kill his wife because she is dying of a fatal and extremely painful disease. (He hoped to kill himself at the same time, but failed.) He is saved from conviction of murder by a clever young "liberal" lawyer—his ideological opponent in court, and in love with his daughter—who turns up evidence showing that the judge's wife took a lethal dose of pain-killing pills before the "accident" arranged by her husband. An autopsy shows that she died prior to the smashup, thus relieving him of the murder charge. So, the husband is adjudged technically innocent, but morally guilty, by reason of his motive, as the trial judge sententiously declares.

The moral intended is that judges should always consider the motives of the men brought before them for trial. Frederic March, who plays the mercy-killing judge, drives this idea home by admitting, at his trial, that he, while freed by the court, is nevertheless guilty of intent to kill. Then, by a parity of reasoning, he adds that there must be others who, while legally guilty, are morally innocent. He, in short, is a reformed character. He has learned that even prisoners at the bar are people, too.

An Act of Murder is a gripping drama, well executed by competent performers. Its power over the spectator, however, grows in part from the almost neurotic fear of death and of pain that characterizes modern civilization. This is one of the unquestioned premises of the film. The doctor, for example, knowing that the judge's wife must die, persuades her husband to hide the fact from her, so that she may have a few days or weeks more of "happiness." The argument of the doctor overcomes the judge's faltering opposition to deceiving his wife. But the same doctor, called to testify during the trial, refuses to condone the intention of the judge to put his wife out of her misery. Science, he argues, is making new discoveries every day, and at any moment a cure for a hitherto hopeless disease may be found. Apparently, the doctor takes the position that in a society unblessed by modern medicine, no reasonable objection to mercy killings could be found.

As presented, the issue of the story is between the legal concept of murder as a crime and the motive of the distraught husband who cannot bear to see his wife suffer an agonizing death. But a deeper problem would develop from an inquiry into the validity of the legal prohibition against murder. The arguments for and against mercy killing, in this picture, are either authoritarian or expedient with respect to the prevention of human suffering and the prolongation of life. Only in one scene is the passing wing of a philosophical principle allowed to flutter so that it can be heard—in the scene when the judge's daughter reminds him that he did not get his wife's permission to end her suffering by death. And even this question is not ultimate, for to be asked by another person to kill that person is far from being the same thing as having moral justification for doing the killing.

There is, in other words, nothing in this picture to explain why murder is necessarily a bad thing; or, to be more specific, why it should be morally wrong for one individual to put an end to the life of another individual for that other's supposed "own good." With all its display of judicial order, humanity, medical sagacity, conjugal love and liberal reformism, the picture, from one point of view, is merely a documentary of the unimaginative materialism of the time. This may be said without disagreeing in the least with the objective conclusion reached at the end—that it is wrong to mercy-kill. The materialism is not in

the conclusion, but in the way in which the conclusion is reached.

One may have greater respect for a man who mercy-kills on principle than for a society which refuses to sanction his action on authoritarian grounds. A man who believes it is wrong to kill simply because tradition and the penal code condemn it is a man who will reverse his position and kill quite willingly when the penal code requires it—when, that is, he is conscripted for war. Such a man may be a "good" man, as the saying goes, but he is certainly an unprincipled man in relation to the taking of human life. A man should have a reason for killing or not killing which is more important to him than what the penal code has to say about the matter. He should have this reason of his own because the penal code, at best, is only a crystallized consensus of the moral attitudes of the people. If the people—and every individual is one of "the people"—will respond to no other moral stimulus than the laws of the social contract, they are inviting and progressively instituting an authoritarian order to rule their lives. And when the popular arts—such as the movies—reflect only authoritarian rules for the restraint of killing, the authoritarian *psychology* is already well on the way to being established.

This method of stripping the rounded story of *An Act of Murder* to its skeletal structure may make harsh-sounding criticism, seeming to be inconsistent with the humane mood of the picture and its "progressive" spirit. But after the picture is over, it is still pertinent to ask: Why is it wrong to kill? One answer would be that it is wrong to kill for the reason that a human being is a moral agent engaged in a spiritual Odyssey of its own—a pilgrimage of soul concerning which we all have much to learn. We, for example, are persuaded that no one knows enough about human life and death—to be able to decide upon the circumstances under which it is a service to the human soul to destroy the body which it inhabits. It is a wrong, we think, to take the life of another man's body; he—the soul—may need that body for the work he has to do, and we are not wise enough to know what that work is, nor what it may entail.

As we understand history, not only the laws against killing but the entire philosophy of democracy is based upon reasoning of this sort. The worth of the individual, the rights of the individual—these, and all the other verities of the liberal tradition, including civil and religious liberties—derive, ultimately, from some sort of recognition of the reality of the human soul as a moral being, as a more-than-physical being.

This criticism of *An Act of Murder,* and, by implication, of the typical thinking in America on the subject of euthanasia, is not a criticism which insists upon agreement with the foregoing credo. It is simply that intellectual honesty demands, if this credo be rejected, that it be rejected openly and honestly, and not from behind a facade of sentimentality which wants to be "moral" without understanding what morality is.

The film version of *Command Decision* accompanied *An Act of Murder* on our night at the movies—and it was practically a "night," taking four hours to see both features and the news. William Wister Haines' war story (reviewed in the first issue of MANAS) makes a splendid melodrama, but the sole moral perspective provided by the author is neatly excised from the star-spangled Gable opus. The world-weary and war-weary correspondent, Brockhurst, who in the book is made to speak against the inanity and hideousness of war, is now only a conscientious servant of the people who wants to get the "whole" story for his paper. This is the sort of mutilation that goes on all the time in modern thought—the suppression of the unpleasant question, the editing out of the last puny element that might cause a person to think for himself.

COMMENTARY
A TIME FOR ACTION

AS most people know, President Truman in his address to Congress in January asked for a universal military training law. The act now in force is not this, but a selective service act like that under which men were drafted into the armed forces during the war. While the difference between the two types of conscription may seem academic to young men who are drafted, the difference in principle may be considerable. The present law is essentially war-emergency legislation, passed by Congress under heavy psychological pressure from military quarters. It does not constitute the precedent of peacetime military training for the United States, although it is certainly a step in this direction. In the opinion of some Washington observers, this act was sought by the nation's military spokesmen, not from any great sense of need for more men in military training, but as part of a drive to increase the dominance of military authority in the affairs of the country.

According to the *Conscription News*, published weekly in Washington by the National Council Against Conscription, the President's request for a military training act is "the signal for an all-out drive by the Army to extend the draft into a permanent compulsory training law." It is said, further, that if the drive fails, there will be no further attempt made to establish peacetime military training in the United States.

So far, the situation is encouraging. According to the National Council's release:

> We have a real chance to win, judging not only by the absence of great applause with which Congress greeted the President's UMT proposal, but judging also by Congressional resentment at being hoodwinked by a trumped-up war scare to get passed a Selective Service Act which is not being used.
>
> We need, of course, to begin immediately a renewed effort, including newspaper publicity, research for new facts, new literature, and above all, mobilization of people across the country.

This statement speaks for itself. The address of the National Council is 1013 Eighteenth Street, N.W. Washington 6, D.C. MANAS does not often urge particular acts of citizenship upon its readers, being more concerned with the framework of human attitudes for which effective political action proceeds. In this case, however, the occasion is important, the cause worthy, and the issue impartially humanitarian. The National Council is glad to make suggestions to any who may write in their questions as to what may be done.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves

[By now, we have no doubt, numerous MANAS readers, especially those with children, will have become as enthusiastic Ewald admirers as the editors of this department. Writers possessing Carl Ewald's understanding of the unfolding moral nature of the child are extremely rare, and we regard our coming across the collection of Ewald stories in the *Woollcott Reader* as a discovery of considerable importance. We conclude our series of selections with this third episode in the life of Mr. Ewald's "little boy," adding the promise that if we ever find more stories of similar excellence, we shall make every effort to share them with our readers. Meanwhile, a note of particular appreciation is owing to Charles Scribner's Sons, publishers, for granting us permission to reprint these extracts from their book.]

THERE is a battle royal and a great hullabaloo among the children in the courtyard.

I hear them shouting "Jew!" and I go to the window and see my little boy in the front rank of the bandits, screaming, fighting with clenched fists and without his cap.

I sit down quietly to my work again, certain that he will appear before long and ease his heart.

And he comes directly after.

He stands still, as is his way, by my side and says nothing. I steal a glance at him: he is greatly excited and proud and glad, like one who has fearlessly done his duty.

"What fun you've been having down there!"

"Oh," he says, modestly, "it was only a Jew boy whom we were licking."

I jump up so quickly that I upset my chair:

"A Jew boy? Were you licking him? What had he done?"

"Nothing.

His voice is not very certain, for I look so queer.

And that is only the beginning. For now I snatch my hat and run out of the door as fast as I can and shout:

"Come . . . come . . . we must find him and beg his pardon!"

My little boy hurries after me. He does not understand a word of it, but he is terribly in earnest. We look in the courtyard, we shout and call. We rush into the street and round the corner, so eager are we to come up with him. Breathlessly, we ask three passersby if they have not seen a poor, ill-used Jew boy.

All in vain: the Jew boy and all his persecutors are blown away into space.

So we go and sit up in my room again, the laboratory where our soul is crystallized out of the big events of our little life. My forehead is wrinkled and I drum disconsolately with my fingers on the table. The boy has both his hands in his pockets and does not take his eyes from my face.

"Well," I say, decidedly, "There is nothing more to be done. I hope you will meet that Jew boy one day, so that you can give him your hand and ask him to forgive you. You must tell him that you did that only because you were stupid. But if, another time, anyone does him any harm, I hope you will help him and lick the other one as long as you can stir a limb."

I can see by my little boy's face that he is ready to do what I wish. For he is still a mercenary, who does not ask under which flag, so long as there is a battle and booty to follow. It is my duty to train him to be a brave recruit, who will defend his fair mother-land, and so I continue:

"Let me tell you, the Jews are by way of being quite wonderful people. You remember David, about whom Dirty reads at school: he was a Jew boy. And the Child Jesus, Whom everybody worships and loves, although He died two thousand years ago: He was a little Jew also."

My little boy stands with his arms on my knee and I go on with my story.

The old Hebrews rise before our eyes in all their splendour and power, quite different from Dirty's Balslev. They ride on their camels in coats of many colours and with long beards: Moses and Joseph and his brethren and Samson and David and Saul. We hear wonderful stories. The walls of Jericho fall at the sound of the trumpet.

"And what next?" says my little boy, using the expression which he employed when he was much smaller and which still comes to his lips whenever he is carried away.

We hear of the destruction of Jerusalem and how the Jews took their little boys by the hand and wandered from place to place, scoffed at, despised and ill-treated. How they were allowed to own neither house nor land, but could only be merchants, and how the Christian robbers took all the money which they had got together. How, nevertheless, they remained true to their God and kept up their old sacred customs in the midst of the strangers who hated and persecuted them.

The whole day is devoted to the Jews.

We look at old books on the shelves which I love best to read and which are written by a Jew with a wonderful name, which a little boy can't remember at all. We learn that the most famous man now living in Denmark is a Jew.

"Come," I say and give my hand to my little boy. "Let us go." And we go to a place we know of, far away behind the hedge, where we lie on our backs and look up at the blue sky and talk together sensibly, as two gentlemen should.

And, when evening comes and Mother sits down at the piano and sings the song which Father loves above all other songs, it appears that the words were written by one Jew and the melody composed by another.

My little boy is hot and red when he falls to sleep that night. He turns restlessly in bed and talks in his sleep.

"He is a little feverish," says his mother.

And I bend down and kiss his forehead and answer, calmly:

"That is not surprising. Today I have vaccinated him against the meanest of all mean and vulgar diseases."

FRONTIERS
Psychiatry and Religion

THE argument about psychiatry and psychoanalysis is taking intelligible shape. Monsignor Fulton J. Sheen's public attack on psychoanalysis, whatever its intrinsic merits, has at least had the effect of smoking out opinion on both sides, and of eliciting several attempts to show that psychoanalysis and the Christian religion need not be in conflict at all. The major issue, so far as published statements are concerned, may be set by using the words of Brock Chisolm, the psychiatrist Director-General of the World Health Organization, and of Msgr. Sheen of the Roman Catholic Church.

Taking the psychiatric argument first, we quote from an address in which Dr. Chisolm speaks of "the desperate need of the world for better human relations." Decisions of incalculable importance for human welfare, he says, are now being made by persons with little or no knowledge of "the emotional relationship between the people of the world." His address is an appeal for intensive study of this relationship—"on which the very existence of the race depends." Fortunately, he does not stop with this declaration, but gives the psychiatric explanation of why present human relations are such a miserable failure. It is this explanation which has made the analysts and psychiatrists a target for theological criticism. He says:

> It may be claimed that all that is needed is the universal application of the ancient injunction to "love thy neighbor as thyself," which derives from the deep gregarious instinct of man and has been promulgated by most of the great religions. . . The catch in this old and widely supported injunction. . . . is in the last two words. . . . very few people indeed can love themselves in a healthy natural way which tolerantly accepts all their own human urges as normal and inevitable aspects of the healthy functioning man or woman. Most of us, by being civilized too early or too forcibly, have been driven to believe that our natural human urges are "bad," "not nice," "wicked," "sinful," or whatever the local equivalent may be. This is the dreadfully damaging concept of "original sin," which really only states that babies are not born civilized according to the local customs of the natives. ... Unfortunately, this is not understood by most children; they have been convicted of sin, believe they are "bad," and consequently deeply despise, distrust and even hate themselves. The anxiety engendered motivates the projection of these feelings of despising, distrust and hate on to other people, the neighbors, though usually distinguishable from oneself by some recognizable difference of race, color, creed, economic status, and politics.
>
> The consequent aggressive feelings against such people are experienced as virtuous. It appears that a system which imposes an early belief in one's own sinfulness, or unacceptability in one's natural state, with its consequent inferiority feelings and anxiety, must be harmful to interhuman relationships and to the ability of the human race to survive in the kind of a world this has become. *(Science,* Jan. 14.)

Msgr. Sheen, as spokesman for "a system which imposes an early belief in one's own sinfulness," has this to say:

> Psychiatry will make greater strides at that moment when it admits a moral as well as a mechanistic universe and begins to see that the denial of guilt is the greatest cause of morbidity in certain types of patients; that the self-centered are always the self-disrupted; that excessive self-expression is self-depression, and that what religion calls a sinner is in the psychiatric order a man who is a problem to himself. . . . What some patients need is not to analyze their attitudes but to confess their guilt; what they need is not sublimation but forgiveness. Relief comes not from having their sins explained away but from having them absolved; and in some cases at least the solution that must not be outlawed is that of the Great Physician Who first told the man his sins were forgiven and then told him to take up his bed and walk. *(Journal* of the American Medical Association, Aug. 23, 1947.)

Without stopping to sharpen the conflicting points for the purpose of bringing these arguments into head-on collision, it seems fairly evident that the important factors in this controversy are (1) the nature of man, (2) the nature and origin of evil, and (3) the effect of idea-systems on human

nature. The emphasis of Msgr. Sheen is upon the sinfulness of man, following logically from the dogma of Original Sin, and the value of the psycho-emotional purge of confession, leading to absolution. The partisan of orthodox Christianity would naturally reject the psychiatric critique of the Christian idea-system, and instead of being willing to recognize the morally debilitating effect of belief in the inherent "sinfulness" of man, will simply charge off the evidence presented by the psychiatrist to the sinfulness itself, which sinfulness is encouraged by psychiatric heresies.

The advocate of psychoanalytical techniques, in turn, seems to have virtually no concept of evil at all. The psychiatric theory of man is an empirical superstructure raised upon a biological foundation. The psychiatrist is still continuing the nineteenth-century war between religion and science, but without any genuine perception of the source of the sacerdotal influence which he tries, now openly, now covertly, to oppose. The dogmatic religionist, therefore, has an advantage in the controversy. If astute, he is far more of a "practical" psychologist than the disciple of Freud, for he knows that his dogmas touch the nerves of human weakness and moral indecision. He has a formula which *seems* to be the right one for the unthinking, bewildered and fearful individual. He does not deny the immediate reality of conscience in the subjective life of the average individual—he does not, that is, attempt to explain the moral sense by calling it a cultural overlay of conditionings. Instead, he uses the moral sense of the religious believer to gain acceptance for his sacerdotal institution, on the theory that this institution can compensate for the personal inadequacy—the "sinfulness"—which the believer has been taught to identify with himself. But there is no need to elaborate on this explanation of religious psychology. Dostoevsky's chapter on the Grand Inquisitor in *The Brothers Karamazov* has already presented it in irrefutable form.

The failure of the psychiatrist or psychoanalyst to admit the problem of evil in realistic terms arms the religionist against him. While he may be the equal of the dogmatist in the realm of techniques—the analyst's couch equals the confessional, both producing the psychic reaction of catharsis, or pseudo-catharsis, according to what one thinks about it—he is wholly and deliberately an ignoramus in the field of metaphysics. He treats theological perversions of great metaphysical ideas as mere inventions without meaning.

A clever article in *Commonweal* for Oct. 22, 1948, illustrates this point. The writer, Karl Stern, a Catholic psychiatrist, recalls an encounter with a patient during his student days:

> He was a Russian Jew afflicted with a psychosis. Apart from his psychotic symptoms, which I have forgotten, he was deeply religious and talked a good deal about the Messiah. Our teacher in psychiatry was a charming, very cultured professor who belonged to a school of thought in psychiatry which thinks it is able to explain everything in terms of localization in various areas of the brain. After our patient had been presented in conference, the professor called him back once more from the door and said: "Incidentally, that idea about the Messiah, that is nonsense . . . forget about it!"

Few psychiatrists of the present day would be as naive as this, but the point is well taken. The actual content of religious ideas is usually regarded by clinical workers as made up of either illusions or delusions. Quite possibly, it is this attitude which, in some psychiatrists, makes possible a sentimental hope of conciliation between the psychiatric and theological positions. The writer quoted above, for example, presents Freud as a great humanist thinker and artist whose methods were more akin to "Shakespeare and Tolstoy than to the thinking of those who hold a mechanistic outlook on man." Dr. Stern should reread Dr. Freud's treatise on religion, *The Future of an Illusion.*

Another psychiatrist with hopes of linking the forces of psychiatry and religion is Dr. Sol W. Ginsburg, whose pamphlet, *Man's Place in God's World,* has lately been published by the Jewish

Institute of Religion, Hebrew Union College, Cincinnati, Ohio. Dr. Ginsburg seems to admit the Freudian thesis that religion is illusion, but answers that, illusion or not, we need religious faith. His contribution to the unity of psychiatry and religion is accomplished by delivering religion, bound hand and foot, to the psychiatric camp. He writes:

> In the hostile world in which we live, we need so much to further constructive forces making for the good way of life. Religion and psychology share this task with the rest of thinking man. The Marxists condemn religion because it is the opium of the masses; if one is in pain, as in our world today, and probably may be tomorrow, may *we not venture an opiate while awaiting the far-away cure of the ills of man?* [Italics added.]

It must be a sickly faith which so eagerly publishes the faint encouragement of being acknowledged as an opiate which human beings can't do without.

So far, the award for candor and intellectual honesty—or clarity—among psychiatrists must go to men like Brock Chisolm and Harry Stack Sullivan, both of whom speak their minds publicly without regard for the prejudices or animosities of the dominant social institutions of the day. Very few, psychiatrists or not, have the courage to do this.