

## THE UNFINISHED REVOLUTION

"These are the times that try men's souls." Thomas Paine addressed these words to the American people in the darkest hour of their struggle to be free—free to decide their destiny for themselves. Paine did not create the human love of freedom, which is a quality so basic in men that they cannot be truly described without referring to it. He gave it effective direction. What Paine did was to define the freedom the men of his time longed for in terms that they could understand. The idea of freedom, as stated by Paine, became a fire of determination in human hearts because it focused the will of the American revolutionists on the obstacles they had to overcome in order to gain the freedom they sought.

Thomas Paine was able, in 1776, to redefine freedom for American patriots, to give it a clear and distinguishable character and to mark out the steps which men could take to reach the goal. The present, like 1776, is a time that tries men's souls, but the task of defining freedom in the present is vastly different. The Enemy, for Paine, was easy to describe: the British Crown, its policies, its civil and military representatives. The fighting prose of *The Crisis* was exact, definitive and stirring. It left no doubts. The man who read Thomas Paine could take a position and do something about it—immediately. He could start at once to serve the cause of the new nation, and to oppose the British tyranny.

But who is the enemy today? What is freedom, and the means to freedom, in 1948? Millions in the United States, in Europe, in Asia, in Africa—everywhere on earth—are hungry to know the answer to this question. But all they hear is the clash of claims, the noise of words, the hollow sounding of outmoded war cries and the rattle of discarded slogans. Even Paine's initial challenge, "These are the times that try men's souls," would today meet with a general apathy, for "souls" has not the meaning in 1948 that it had in 1776. "Soul" today is a theological artifact, a poetic reference, not the name of man speaking to Man, in the unambiguous language of moral conviction. One who now uses

seriously the term soul rouses only half-forgotten religious memories in the average man, and gains the quietly superior smile of sophisticated people who regard the idea of the soul as a leftover from the Middle Ages.

Only a little reflection shows that there is today no common language of idealism. Men do not speak of having high purposes together in this the twentieth century, but only fears. Consider that Paine addressed the masses, but spoke little if at all in terms of fear. Yet those who go before the public nowadays refer, directly or indirectly, to little else. This is not remarkable. Paine spoke to souls, but contemporary leaders address themselves to human weaknesses and to the heavy distrusts of class and nation—prime attributes of "the mob." Speakers, today, are trained in "mob" psychology, and use deliberately the "techniques" of propaganda.

It takes no special faith in man to believe that underneath the protective shell of cynicism worn by most people of today, there is a secret hoping for the birth of unashamed idealism in human life. It is as though there were an unspoken cry, lodged in the throat of millions: "What shall we believe in?—What can we work for that will mean something and will last?"

There are answers, of course—too many answers, and too few of them credible. A thousand organizations—from the Youth-for-Christ movement to the world-government groups—claim to know the "right" answer. The trouble is, we have heard all these answers before. Nearly every speech on behalf of a "cause" sounds like an old phonograph record of a played-to-death popular tune. Sincerity of the speaker is not the issue; it is simply that we are tired of plans and projects which can be described by an uninterrupted flow of hackneyed phrases. Thought which can be expressed in pat and familiar terms, these days, is thought in disregard of facts.

We have, in short, no creative thought today; only formulas. We have no genuine religious

inspiration; only creeds. And we have no real science, in its highest sense, but only advanced technology. And finally, we see no uniformities of moral experience in terms of which a Thomas Paine could write the challenge of these times . . . . So, it is plain, while we need a Tom Paine for today, we need also something more. We have to come to grips with the moral realities of our lives, in order to have ears to hear what the Paines born to this generation may say.

There was another revolutionist, fearless, in his way, like Paine in his, who lived much earlier in human history. That man was Socrates. The Athens of Socrates resembled our own time in important respects. First of all, it was a time of decay in conventional beliefs. It was a time when many men mistook familiar opinions, standards and values for well established knowledge. And there was much corruption among the Athenians, much demagoguery and public pretense.

The Athenians, like ourselves, were a sophisticated people. They thought they knew—nearly everything. The revolution started by Socrates—and never finished—was in the idea of knowledge. Socrates was put to death by the Athenians because he made them uncomfortable and ashamed. He exposed their ignorance by asking questions. Socrates would take nothing for granted. This was subversive of complacency, so he had to die.

Yet, while Socrates announced himself the most ignorant of men, he had a greater faith in certain principles than any other Athenian. He lived a life ordered by reason and inspired by a kind of divinity which was not—and could not be—the property or idol of any organized church. His faith could not be communicated except by hard thinking; he had no emotional religion, but there was and is a sanctity in all he said.

The art of Socrates was to make men ask themselves what they believed in, and why. It followed that having examined their beliefs, men examined their actions, and so changed their lives. Socrates rehearsed no dogmas and composed no creeds. He left behind no ritual but the habit of

asking questions. His central faith was in the power of the individual to educate his conscience and be at peace with it. His career was a quest for knowledge, and as no man can seek and find knowledge without conveying it to others, Socrates was among the greatest educators.

Today, we need both the lucid social consciousness of a Paine and the acute judgment of a Socrates. How shall we get them?

The Socratic quest, it seems, has a prior claim. The patriots of '76 built upon the foundations of idealistic philosophy. The doctrine of the Rights of Man is the lineal descendant of the doctrine of the human soul as an integral being of moral character and intent. If we decide what we think man is, then we can decide the conditions of human freedom, and how to create them. And in such questions, there is no institutional authority, no outside oracle that can replace the voice of the human spirit. What is worth repeating in human history is the fruit of the independent thinking of this voice, from the first "heretic—one who thinks for himself—in the past, to the most recent martyr to dogmatic authority, whether of Church or State.

Let us, then, rediscover if we can the spirit of Socratic questioning, on every problem that confronts the human mind. And let us relate our findings with the common yearning for freedom that Paine served so well. Only thus can we restore the dignity of man. The "dignity of man" must acquire a larger meaning than any political phrase can contain. The dignity of man is not something that is conferred, allowed or "recognized," but something disclosed by each human being for himself.

## *Letter from* ENGLAND

LONDON—A problem of continuing importance here is that of getting people to work harder. It is the human factor in our economic crisis. Are higher wages or profits, shorter hours, and extending social services, sufficient incentives for labour and management alike? Are we sure that the riddle is purely an economic one? Ideology and slogan are irrelevant and unproductive. Do we know what wealth is; is it just money, or the products of land, mine, and factory? These are questions of vital importance just now. We are being forced to return to the teaching of John Ruskin, to believe with him that "There is no wealth but Life—Life, including all its powers of love, of joy, and of admiration." The survival of Western civilization, as we have known it, depends upon our finding the right answers. If our ultimate values are wrong, nothing can help us. "That country is the richest," added John Ruskin, "which nourishes the greatest number of noble and happy human beings."

The fact is that our lives can never be satisfactory unless their motive power is right. Modern civilization tends to make us insensitive to high purposes, and apathetic to noble aims. Prime Minister Atlee has declared that he will be no party to the corruption of moral values. In that sense, he speaks not as a politician. But, it has not been so clearly seen that, in the past quarter of a century, a new science of human behaviour has grown up. Governments now possess the knowledge and the means for exploiting mass emotions. Industrial and personal relationships have become a social technique. No question of changing ideals is involved. The passage from a democratic to a totalitarian way of life (or *vice versa*), in the view of sociologists, is merely one of changing one mode of satisfying social desires into another. It is all a problem of seeking to achieve the impossible—by propaganda compulsions and otherwise, "to re-arrange circumstances which arise out of the forces of human nature itself."

Nevertheless, here and there some economists are forced at times to see non-material motives at work in modern trends. Professor Karl Mannheim listed some of them in his *Diagnosis of Our Time* (London, 1943). To a certain extent, these considerations enter into much of the actual political thinking in this country today. They presuppose a permanence of moral values, a revival of what were thought to be old-fashioned ideals, and a community of purpose—an echo of the philosophical principles of immutability, periodicity, and identity. Summarizing them from Dr. Mannheim's work, these new

trends are (1) a movement from purely financial calculation towards thinking in terms of "organic welfare"; (2) in the sphere of working incentives, a move from purely financial recompense to the motive of Service; (3) in basic psychological needs, a move from an exaggerated craving for security or speculation, towards an integrated attitude in which basic security is combined with collective venture in social and cultural fields; and (4) a claim for a share in an education which "enables us adequately to understand the pattern of life in which we are called upon to live and act."

We are being driven by events, as they unfold, to the conclusion that the feeling after Brotherhood remains socially irrelevant as long as it remains an isolated personal experience. It is only when this emotion is integrated into a purpose which unifies action, feeling, and the spiritual will, on a community basis, that the random emotions of men and women of all classes and creeds can be transformed into a truly social function. Common sense demands such a transformation if the world is to move forward without violence.

## *REVIEW*

### WAR LITERATURE

Most of the significant novels having the war (or the period immediately preceding) as their scene present a single man or small group involved in the human struggle with good and evil. Ignazio Silone's trilogy, for example, gives us the effort of an Italian radical to arouse the peasants of Italy to an understanding of the issues of social revolution. *Fontamara*, the first book of the series, sets the stage with the picture of an Italian village under Mussolini. Fascism has created an essential distrust of man for man; the peasants suffer patiently, but they, too, have been corrupted. They suspect and often betray one another. They have lost that human solidarity without which oppression is simply debasing. This is the evil attacked by Spina, the leading character of *Bread and Wine*. Spina returns to Italy after a long absence to become a leader of his country's ineffectual underground. Slowly, Spina is forced to admit his failure. The Italian radicals accomplish nothing because they are too few and because they cannot make their ideals understood by the people. Socialist ideology is unreal to them, its theoretical structure without application to their daily lives. In an early climax of the book, Spina asks himself, Is my ethic of the people or of the party? A practical abyss separates the party program from the perceptions and needs of the Italian farmers.

In *Seed Beneath the Snow*, Spina redefines the Good. Instead of working for socialism, which conceives the good of man in terms of a revolutionary change in the structure of society, he devotes his life to restoring the primitive human values of friendship, faithfulness and kindness. With a few comrades, he lives among the peasants, as one of them, practicing the simple friendship that requires no social theory to explain its ways. This is the seed beneath the snow, this is the original human good which must exist before men can understand any political version of the good. Without trust and fellowship, social structure can never be more than organized barbarism.

For Silone, fascism is a moral infection, a leprous disintegration of human decency. He

describes its preliminary symptoms, shows how it spreads and rots the fibres of natural fraternity. Fear of its monstrous power turns men into hopeless cynics or cringing sycophants. Lone outposts against the disease are men like Spina, one or two among tens of thousands, who match their creative intelligence with the insidious fascist organization. Their failure is not a personal one, but rather of the people themselves, who have become passive agents of fascism by submission to its authority.

Enough has been written about the methods and controlling ideas of totalitarianism—whether Italian, German or Russian—to make it the prime symbol of a modern *terreur*. Fascism is modern diabolism; its peculiar horror is that it adds psychological tyranny to physical and political control. The war against fascism is thus a "holy war," but as a military undertaking it is as futile as any previous holy war of history. Freedom from psychological oppression is entirely different from the triumph over physical evil.

Silone is worth reading because he has discovered this truth. His character, Spina, is one of the few in modern literature who realize that there are new "fronts" to be discovered in the human struggle, that "socialism," "liberalism" and conventional "anti-fascism" are not enough.

*Castle on the Hill*, by Elizabeth Goudge, is to be recommended for the same reason. It is the story of two brothers, one of whom, Richard Birley, is the embodiment of England's heroic past, an RAF hero who dies while fighting, not, as he says, for the useless, aristocratic rich, but for . . . the gray-faced men in the streets, and the dirty children in the slums. For the factories and the built-up areas and the drunks in the pubs. For the millions of tired drab folk who hurtle backward and forward in the tubes. . . and the whole foul mess that is the England of today. . . .

I'm fighting in the faint hope that when this hell is over she'll get her face washed and her pants hitched up. It was I, and men like me, who let her down, and I wouldn't mind dying if she could be—what I want her to be.

The young flyer says in a few words what Michael Straight expanded into hundreds of pages in

*Make This the Last War* (a book published in America in 1943, and which may now be called the last will and testament of militant political liberalism). Richard is the *beau ideal* of the anti-fascist front, a handsome and uncomplicated hero who hates Evil and is fighting for the Common Man. Miss Goudge, however, is more interested in the other brother, Stephen, a troubled spirit whose devotion to Gandhian non-violence represents the author's search for a new definition of the good, and a new oral frontier. The reader feels Stephen's shame at his own inadequacy—at his painful sacrifice of tradition. The splendid past haunts him, while the future seems an unmitigated gray. His old world—and England's—is being destroyed. His brother is killed, and finally, the family castle is bombed into ruins. Only Stephen's ideal survives, but this ideal has gradually become the luminous reality of the story—all that is worthy of survival.

Both Spina and Stephen Birley discover the dilemma of modern man and try to make a forward step. Silone shields Spina's step from sneering criticism by surrounding it with rural simplicity. An extraordinary tenderness pervades the closing pages of *Seed Beneath the Snow*, as though Silone had pleaded "Do not mock at my ending; you must understand that there is nothing else to do for Italy—perhaps, nothing else to do for the rest of the world."

Miss Goudge shows the same tenderness for Stephen Birley. He is her untried hope. An aureole of goodness about Stephen and his friends hides from view the seamy ugliness of the twentieth century. When the sordid intrudes upon the story, it is at once coated with the glow of someone's quick benevolence. But if Silone and Miss Goudge color their tales with moral optimism, it is because they are unable to write books ending in ultimate human defeat. And their optimism, at least, is founded on something more than liberal slogans.

Spina and Birley are men alienated from the world by their compassion for the human beings which the world holds captive. Another sort of alienation is described in *Powerhouse*, by Alex Comfort. The "good" men in *Powerhouse* have no particular virtue save their resistance of the power of the State. They are untutored, unphilosophical

anarchists who lust after personal freedom, pursuing it with animal craft. Their words are the underdog's snarling rejection of a corrupt society, the defiant credo of men whose opinion of human nature is as low as the tyrants that rule them.

There is no moral movement in *Powerhouse*; only a declaration of disgust, a bitter indictment, and unclesing despair. It's "good" is an amoral primitivism which moves by the reflexes of anarchist dogma. Arthur Koestler's *Arrival and Departure* has no moral movement either, but its defeatism is more self-conscious. It ends with the return of a tired and more or less disillusioned radical to an espionage mission in Nazi territory. He goes back without enthusiasm—with little faith in the good he may do, but with less faith in anything else. Koestler's *Darkness at Noon* was a brilliant if partial diagnosis of the totalitarian evil; but *Arrival and Departure* briefly says, "No cure." Again, in *The Yogi and the Commissar*, Koestler lucidly describes the dilemma, but his analysis is that of a passive spectator; he finds no solution, can take no forward step.

*Command Decision*, an *Atlantic* serial by William Wister Haines (now a play on Broadway) takes place on the battlefield. Its theme is the same as Koestler's: the impotence of modern man. An American General, K. C. Dennis, takes personal responsibility for decimating losses to his bomber command in order to destroy the threat of Nazi jet propulsion factories. "Sentimental" civilian criticism of his sacrifice of scores of young flyers loses Dennis his command, but at the end, when he is leaving, he coverts his successor to the same costly program.

Dennis is the strong, selfless man in torment, a warped Prometheus of the twentieth century. In order to do good, like Prometheus, he must suffer evil; but, unlike Prometheus, the evil he suffers is that of having to inflict death upon both enemies and friends.

Mr. Haines shows us what a man of inflexible determination may accomplish after he has accepted—like a good "soldier"—the ruthlessness of war as a kind of cosmic necessity. The circumstance of war is simply given; the ordeal of Dennis neither

erases the evil nor explores its cause. While *Command Decision* generates the stabbing thrill of pain and provides the spectacle of its endurance by brave men, there is no expiation, no spiritual catharsis, at the end. The furies are not appeased. When the new command takes over, the same cycle of agony begins again.

*Command Decision* achieves only the circumscribed integrity of refusing to repeat the overworked formulas for world peace—"solutions" in which no one really believes, but which few dare to challenge. The hopelessness of the modern world may be hinted at, but never publicly declared. A tired and disillusioned war correspondent gives what explanation Mr. Haines thinks possible. The Army itself is not responsible for the agonizing dilemma confronting Dennis. The Army is the corporate receiver of a morally bankrupt world; only by military methods can the world go on at all. And once the process of war takes over, everyone is powerless except as an agent of that process:

Never before had Brockhurst [the war correspondent] so entirely comprehended that war is waste, that armies are beyond help.

They are conceived in the failure of human beings to help each other. He was one of those human beings. Like the rest, he could not help now. He could only wait until, in their own way, the armies had produced a peace in which men might try again. . .

The army was only the projected form of a deeper malignance. It had been created as a shield against a more highly developed tyranny than its own; it would survive by a superior ferocity.

The hero of *Command Decision* practices his short-term, good-soldier, morality with all his heart, but the human predicament calls for something more. War is not a cosmic intrusion of evil, not an Act of God. War is man-made; it is an accumulation of countless petty immoralities and the multiplying indifferences of many millions. But Dennis, as General, can only perfect the "superior ferocity" of his army, while as a human being he simply endures the result.

Instead of increasing the rational area of human life, Mr. Haines' story makes moral man helpless and

impotent in all directions except that of intolerable compromise. The ethics of this story is the ethics of a man who accepts not only imprisonment, but the moral ideas evolved by the prison world. Such a man is not only the victim of circumstances; he is also their creature.

Here, really, is the situation that must be isolated and questioned—stripped of its relieving "entertainment" and the intense melodrama that obscures the issue. What, exactly, is the individual man to do, when the world defines freedom as living in a citadel of steel, and measures social progress by a count of atom bombs?

Are the cowpath and peasant hearth of Silone the scene of human regeneration? Or is Gandhi's overt saintship to be the pattern for moral reform? Guerrilla anarchism speaks its rough contempt while intellectual analysis pauses at the crossroads to study the terrain. We should know, at least, that the present world disturbance is something more than a tough time in the eternal career of liberal democracy. Is mankind experiencing some sort of psychological death throes, or is something new—and better, perhaps—being born of a universal travail? These are questions to which literature, as yet, provides no answer.

## COMMENTARY

### MANAS

MANAS begins its existence as a weekly magazine with a single fundamental intent: to seek out, to examine and if possible, to help to establish the foundations for intelligent idealism under the conditions of human life in the twentieth century. The method the magazine will employ is that of rational inquiry.

The life of man—not his "existence," but his Life—is the life of the mind. Interest in the life of the mind does not imply disdain for immediate, practical problems. Good government, for instance, means a constant movement toward genuine self-government—government of all the people by all the people in terms of mutually accepted principles. The ideal social order will never be attained by force, no matter how judiciously administered, nor by whom. Cooperation is a principled attitude of mind before it is a social fact. Democracy operates collectively only to the extent that its meaning is understood individually, and this understanding is not possible without a reasoned grasp of the philosophic principles upon which the concept of self-government is founded.

MANAS will seek clearly defined principles as the basis for human conduct. It will follow this policy, regardless of the impatience of those who urge that "we have not time to think things through." The editorial contention of this paper is that the confusion and crisis of the modern world—its long-term moral apathy and its immediate desperation—are caused almost entirely by the failure of men to think things through. Though the editors be charged, as others before them, with an unnecessary and delaying concern with "principles"—"as if a woodsman were to consider the law of gravity before letting his axe fall"—this analysis, and diagnosis, will determine the content of MANAS and shape its policy.

MANAS affirms the proposition that if human history is to take a turn for the better, the change must begin with an epoch of deliberate reevaluation of moral ideas. Our social and creative intelligence must desert the forms of thought and belief which are tried but not true. Our "Way of Life"—American or otherwise—must become more than vociferous allegiance to contradictory bombast. Sociology must interrupt its fascinated study of the mechanisms of mediocrity. The religious community must raise its guilty head and recover from its preoccupation with the Depravity of Man.

Today, as in every period of history, the hope of the future lies with intelligent minorities—the undismayed few who are always found on the fronts of the human struggle, whose natural work is with the growing tips of the social organism. It is to these minorities, their supporters, everywhere, and to individuals looking for common cause with their fellows, that MANAS makes its appeal.

The editors of MANAS believe that in the United States and elsewhere are to be found the nuclear beginnings of a durable moral and social philosophy. MANAS will attempt to make these beginnings explicit. No fixed synthesis of doctrine or program will be sought, but such community of purpose as already exists will be explored and made known.

The great need of our time is the development of practical ethical conviction—a necessity for the moral life of both individuals and society as a whole. Theology, as the source of ethical conviction, is demonstrably barren, while the sciences are rather branches of engineering than fields of basic inquiry. Further, today's problems are neither theological nor scientific; they are *human* problems, and need to be conceived and addressed in human terms. "Human," however, is itself an equivocal term. For purposes of clarity as well as of conviction, MANAS has adopted and starts out with the platonic principle, that "thinking is the soul talking to itself." The fact of human egoity, of man's intellectual and moral nature, as given in experience, is the substance of the editorial position of this magazine. Neither religious dogma nor scientific theory will affect the independence of this position, although both scientific and religious ideas will receive considerable attention.

The magazine will examine afresh the age-old questions of human conduct, of moral ideas and social relations; its ideal is the forging of an instrument of common intercourse for men of good will. Its name, MANAS, signifying "mind" or "the thinker," derives from a root to be found in many languages, ancient and modern.

Although MANAS is published in America, it will seek a home not in one land alone, but wherever thought endeavors to be free, and wherever the human mind strives for fuller expression and deeper understanding.

## CHILDREN ... and Ourselves

THIS column is not a "survey." Its argument, which will take some time to state fully, is that there are really only two theories of education, and that for a very long time our whole civilization has been employing the wrong one. By "education" we do not mean simply techniques of grade school and university instruction, but the whole matter of how we regard the person to be educated, whether he be small child or adult. The education of our children and our education of ourselves are one and the same thing, for the common ideas which our civilization exhibits *as to what the human being is* are the roots of our "education," as well as our literature, our art, our motion pictures and our government. The average man and the average child grow and learn—or fail to grow and learn—together.

Each child comes into an environment of ideas characteristic of our age, and these are the real factors in his mental training, whether fully expressed in his formal instruction or not. In our time it is believed, as once it was in the Middle Ages, that each man is a creature. We no longer, in the mind of the average man, it is true, are creatures of God, but creatures we remain. Heredity, Environment, the Cosmic Process, the State—all these are the new deities. They have created us, or to them we owe our being, and beyond the limits imposed by them upon us we must not think to venture. Our lives are circumscribed by a creature complex, and the desire in this column will be to explore the possibility that this—our basic attitude toward man himself—is erroneous.

It is high time that this possibility be thoroughly explored, for it is each day becoming more apparent that the hour of choice is upon us. We have either to acquire more faith in ourselves or we have to accept the world as it is. And when we, all of the people, come fully to accept the world as it is, the voyage of human evolution will

have ended. There is a spark in man, the spark of questing for a higher life. This spark will go out unless some new ground for faith in man's ability to live a higher life is discovered. This is the missing link in education, but more important, it is the missing link between ourselves and our aspirations. We cannot believe in "democracy," in "world government," or in a final brotherhood among men unless we have a view of man's nature which will support all the fine things we say we expect of it. We have no such view.

If we continue to believe that we are creatures, Fascism, or some other form of Statism will prevail. The moving forces for "creatures" are a desire for self-protection and fear. These are the forces of Fascism, whether expressed in Germany, Russia, in the United States, or in any form of authoritarian religion. There is only one weapon with which to fight the various approaches of Fascism and that is the psychological armor of fearlessness. That weapon is the only really worthwhile gift we can present to our children. Like the mythical sword of King Arthur, it seems to be buried in a rock. The work of education is to find something solid enough to stand on in the process of drawing the sword free. Socrates affords one unblighted historical example of a man who was big enough to swing that sword—and enough of an educator to lend it to children. His tactic consisted in two things: questioning, and the inevitable unsettling of all the contemporary Gods, whether of church or state, which followed. His behavior needs to be duplicated, not by one or two persons so that they in turn may become legends like Socrates, but by every human being who essays to "teach" a child—whether as formal instructor or parent.

Socrates believed in the soul. Not the soul of Catholic theology, but the free soul—that in the heart of man which is never young nor old, but the center of experiences innumerable. Socrates held that men need not fear, for the ultimate fear is after all only death, and men cannot die. Rather, he said, they live again and again, meeting through



natural affinity in future lives on earth their own rewards and punishments. As long, perhaps, as we believe that *we* can die, so long will our highest aspirations fail to be given the courage to live. We cannot treat other human beings as "equals" if both they and ourselves are creatures, for creatures are never equal. One is always the dominated, and the other the dominator. We cannot take other human beings seriously unless we envision for them, as for ourselves, a serious individual destiny. And creatures perform antics, they do not build destinies. We cannot be fair to other men or to our children if we think that we may be possessed or that they may be possessed. Yet as creatures we believe that these attitudes are natural, and our culture indicates many results of that belief. We believe in, and we teach our children to believe in:

1. Possessiveness
2. Fear
3. Sensualism

These three need to be investigated. They are faces of the rock in which the sword is stuck.

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### **THE BOMB**

Scientists tell us, "There is no defense against the atom bomb." They ought to tell us, "There is no defense against fear of the atom bomb." Statesmen tell us, "Our only defense against the atom bomb is to have more of them than any one else, and to drop them first." The truth is that no nation can possibly "win" a war fought with atom bombs. Whatever the final line-up of power after the war, every nation—assuming that some survive—will be worse off than it was before the bombs were dropped. An atom bomb is politically "useful" only until it is dropped. Its value is in the fear it can inspire before that fatal moment. Against an absolutely fearless people, it would be useless both before and after—utterly useless, that is.

## *FRONTIERS*

### Is it "Moral Education"?

EVERYONE is familiar with the current arguments for teaching religion in the public schools of the United States. The young, it is said, are being "paganized" by secular education. Juvenile delinquency is spreading beyond the control of law enforcement agencies, and the decreasing influence of home-life demands that public agencies assume a larger part in the moral education of American youth. Good citizenship is not possible without religion, and the schools, which have the obligation of teaching citizenship, must transmit the cultural heritage of religious ideas as the foundation of social and moral responsibility.

These are the most plausible, the least sectarian, reasons favoring courses in religion in the public school system, or given in support of the "released time" program, under which public school children are turned over en masse to private religious agencies for a regular period of instruction during the school week.

Quite apart from the dubious legality of such plans, the question remains: Is it possible for the "morals" to be taught, under the conditions provided? The need for moral education is not at issue in these proposals, which are being rushed before American legislators as though everyone knew and agreed that the Churches are the proper agencies to teach children the difference between right and wrong. But is this the fact? Can the Churches themselves come to real agreement on the essential ingredients of moral education?

Few parents have thought about this question. If many had, the campaign of the powerful religious denominations to use the schools for instruction in religion would now be meeting widespread questioning instead of "tolerant" acceptance by the great majority. Individuals who give serious consideration to the problem of moral education know from first-hand experience that sectarian organizations do not

acquire competence in teaching moral values simply because tradition and custom have identified these organizations as "religious."

Moral behavior is conscious and voluntary action for what is seen to be good; and intelligent morality depends upon a continuous effort to discover what is really good. An hour's "exposure" of school children to scriptural indoctrination once a week, either by a professional teacher or under the auspices of a convert-seeking Christian sect, can hardly serve the purpose of true religion. This sort of instruction is worse than none, for it is a mechanized, organizational substitute for the ennobling emotion and refining thought that children should come to recognize as the moral influence in their lives.

The assumption that the soul-needs of our children can be met by giving a few large religious sects authority to teach religion in, or through, the public schools is far more convicting of moral ignorance than the statistics of juvenile delinquency. These proposals also convict their sponsors of historical ignorance, for no one with knowledge of the long and painful struggle that freed the American public schools from sectarian control could wish to return to the prejudice-producing systems of the past—no one, that is, who honestly wants moral education for American youth.

Moral education is a job for parents, not for the churches, which lost the moral leadership of the people generations ago. Let the churches show by example that they are something more than mere shrines of conventionality; let the scores of Christian sects in the United States decide among themselves what real morality and religion mean; and, having done this, let them obtain agreement from Buddhists, Moslems, atheists, humanists and free-thinkers. Nothing less than a religion of all mankind can qualify for teaching in the *public* schools.

In other words, a religion which cannot win its way without compulsion—and government

authority in teaching religion *is* compulsion—is not a religion at all, but only another form of dictatorship. And of the various sorts of dictatorship, the religious is the worst.

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### Why Get Well?

More than half the people who consult doctors today seem to have no serious physical ills—but are psychologically or emotionally upset, with minor bodily symptoms. Medical authorities tell us these patients—millions of them—need psychotherapy, but they add that there are only 4,000 psychiatrists in the United States, with hardly 1,000 of them engaged in psychotherapy. It is said that "we could easily absorb 20,000 to 30,000 analytically trained psychiatrists" to deal with the psychic disorders of the population.

What, really, is "psychic disorder"? What does it come from? The familiar answer is that our mental and emotional ills result from the "tension" and "strain" of modern life. Which is another way of saying, as Emerson did, that "Things are in the saddle and ride mankind."

A few hundred years ago, the anguished and disturbed mind was given to a priest to treat. Now it is the psychoanalyst, or psychiatric counselor. Both have theories of the soul and its salvation, and both are rather expensive in the long run. The difference between them is that the priest has a theology of supposedly divine origin to guide him, while the psychiatrist has only generation-old theories and clinical experience. The deeper need of the mentally disturbed, however, is not touched in this competition between doctors of divinity and the devotees of Freud. Nor is it dealt with by the obviously justified demand for an increase in the number of psychotherapists. The important question is whether either priest or psychiatrist is able to demonstrate that there is anything in the pattern of modern life except frustration and partial recovery for the mentally ill.

There is something basically wrong with a society that boasts "a specialist for every emergency," and then develops far more emergencies than there are specialists, and more rapidly than the specialists can be trained. There is something pathetically inadequate about the way in which the average man habitually listens to some "respected authority" instead of doing his thinking for himself. Fortunately, an occasional heretic priest, and some psychiatrists, have said that self-reliant thinking is the only way to mental health. But of course, these are not "popular" authorities.

## THE REAL ISSUE

The real issue is not in the threatening imminence of another war, but in the deep-seated belief that only organization can save us from it. Nationalists everywhere are obsessed by the idea that a tremendous military organization—a mass army in peacetime—is necessary to prevent attack. Internationalists are equally convinced that a world-organization with more power than any one nation can alone safeguard the peace. The motives of these two—the nationalists and the internationalists—are in direct moral conflict, but both have succumbed to the same delusion. Both imagine that *their* organization will secrete a magic essence that will make them different from any previous organization. The nationalist dreams of an army that will train for and plan the annihilation of entire continents of men, while loving and preserving "peace." The internationalist organizer expects the name and form of world government to transform the present international shambles into a world of social ideals.

All history informs us of the futility of depending on organization for either security or progress. The history of great religious inspiration is the history of men who broke with and defied religious organizations. Every chapter in the history of political freedom begins with a revolt against organized authority. Yet, today, the hopes of the world are almost invariably expressed in terms of the "power" of organization. This is the sacred fetish of the twentieth century—the idol of civilized barbarism, worshipped, and feared by mechanized man.

When the spirit of human hope—the animating impulse of every great revolution—conceives its future in terms of organization, that spirit is itself afflicted with an inner decay. It will recover only when the psychology of human organizations—involving "patriotism," "national honor," "class consciousness," and other familiar ideas—begins to be understood. Until then,

national states will continue to demand mighty armaments, and internationalists will continue to insist that "strengthening" the United Nations is our "only hope."

Calling upon the United Nations to create the conditions for international security is like expecting the betatron or some similar atom-building device to resurrect Hiroshima and Nagasaki. No organization can create either peace or the conditions of peace; peace is a by-product of the processes of a morally stable human society, and there is no way to get peace except by finding out what these processes are and how to establish them.