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THE RELIGION OF FREE MEN

DESPITE the natural difficulties which surround any attempt to arrive at the convictions of men who may be said to have been "free," one thing is certain: Their ideas are likely to be those which may prosper in an atmosphere of unrestricted reason. No one can quarrel with the claim that a free man is a man who is determined to think for himself. This freedom of mind, moreover, is of greater importance than political freedom, in making a definition. It will be conceded, for example, that Socrates, whose liberty was curtailed by his Athenian judges, and whose life was ended by their decree, was nevertheless a freer man than those who condemned him.

There is a natural tendency on the part of Americans to think of themselves as "free," and, politically speaking, little doubt but that the institutions of the United States afford explicit recognition of the right of human beings to be free. An inquiry of this sort, then, may well begin with an examination of the "religion" of the men who shaped those institutions. Even if the religion or religions of the Founding Fathers suffer from obscurity, this obscurity may itself be of considerable significance, since the most easily defined religions are not necessarily the best. On the contrary, if true religion is an inward thing, the reverse may be true.

One clear contrast between the political leaders of the present and those of the period of the American Revolution lies in their respective relations to the religious orthodoxy of their times. Our present leaders seem to seek orthodoxy with eagerness—as an obligation, perhaps, of sound politics. The revolutionary leaders, despite political hazards, chose an opposite course. In *History and Social Intelligence*, published in 1926, Harry Elmer Barnes collected evidence to show that *"the majority of distinguished Americans in the generation of the Fathers were not even professing Christians."* Students of intellectual history have observed that the best single example of the ideas of the Founding Fathers is found in Robert Ingersoll, the great free-thinker who came a century later. In a sermon on Ingersoll, a Unitarian clergyman, Minot J. Savage, said: "His [Ingersoll's] ideas were very largely those of Voltaire, of Gibbon, of Hume, of Thomas Paine, of Thomas Jefferson, of Benjamin Franklin, and of a good many other of our prominent Revolutionary heroes." Back in 1831, a perturbed minister declared with dismay that most of the founders of our country were "infidels" and that *"of the first seven presidents not one of them had professed his belief in Christianity."*

"Christianity," of course, was much more rigorously defined in those days. A researcher might easily dig up quotations tending to reveal Christian sentiments among the Founding Fathers, but in the eighteenth century something more than a Christian sentiment was needed to indicate genuine "profession of faith." It almost seemed to this minister, whose sermon on the subject was published in the *Albany Daily Advertiser*, that God had been deliberately left out of the picture by the authors of the Constitution. He wrote:

> When the war was over and the victory over our enemies won, and the blessings and happiness of liberty and peace were secured, the Constitution was framed and God was neglected. He was not merely forgotten. He was absolutely voted out of the Constitution. The proceedings, as published by Thompson, the secretary, and the history of the day, show that the question was gravely debated whether God should be in the Constitution or not, and after a solemn debate he was deliberately voted out of it. . . . There is not only in the theory of our government no recognition of God's laws and sovereignty, but its practical operation, its administration, has been conformable to its theory. Those who have been called to administer the government have not been

men making any public profession of Christianity. Washington was a man of valor and wisdom. He was esteemed by the whole world as a great and good man but he was not a professing Christian.

George Washington is sometimes represented as having been a pious Episcopalian, since he attended an Episcopal church. His pastor, however, the Rev. James Abercrombie, is witness to the fact that Washington never received communion. Abercrombie frowned on this abstinence and preached a sermon to Washington, urging the danger of persons in high places setting a bad example. The result was that Washington stopped coming to church at all on Communion Sunday. Barnes cites from the early diplomatic history of the United States an interesting incident:

> In negotiating a treaty with Tripoli regarding the settlement of the piracy nuisance late in his second administration, Washington's representative hastened to reassure the Mohammedans by declaring that "the government of the United States is not in any sense founded upon the Christian religion." The treaty was sent to the Senate with the approval of John Adams. In 1896 an effort was made to insert in the Constitution a "Christian Amendment," which would specifically mention the name of Jesus. A speaker for the amendment deplored Washington's "atheistic" proclivities and pointed to the desperate condition of his army in the Jerseys, when the great commander, instead of ordering the Bible to be read to his regiments, ordered Tom Paine's *Crises* read aloud to his hungry and barefoot soldiers.

Jefferson, outspoken on the subject of religion, counseled his nephew: "Question with boldness even the existence of God; because, if there be one, he must more approve the homage of reason than of blindfolded fear." Adams candidly admitted his guilt of the "Arminian heresy," asking, "where do we find a precept in the gospel requiring ecclesiastical synods? convocations? councils? decrees? creeds? confessions? oaths? subscriptions? and a whole cartload of other trumpery that we find religion encumbered with in these days?)' Madison and Monroe shared Jefferson's views, on the whole, and Madison was responsible for a historic statement opposing any connection between church and state. Barnes concludes his discussion of the subject by remarking that "the three outstanding Fathers who were not presidents, namely, Hamilton, Marshall and Gouverneur Morris, were notable free-thinkers."

In general, the Founding Fathers have been termed "Deists." While difficult to define, since all Deists have been individualists in religious thought—and there could not possibly have been a Deist "church"—Deism accepts the idea of Deity as a general Providence, but denies the superiority of any miraculous revelation over what may be learned by natural means. Something approaching an account of Deism was composed by John Toland toward the end of the seventeenth century, in the form of a book entitled, *Christianity Not Mysterious.* Toland held that what was true in Christianity was not mysterious, since it could be grasped by reason, and that what could not be grasped by reason was not true. Toland also argued that the New Testament usage of "mystery" meant not something incomprehensible, but, as with the ancients, a secret revealed to the initiated. The later meaning of mystery, as something beyond the reach of understanding, was, he argued, a corruption introduced by an unscrupulous priesthood.

Toland, it is worth noting, coined the term "pantheist" and wrote a book, *Pantheistikon,* in which he held that wise men had always taught both an inner and an outer doctrine. In another of his books, *Clidophorus,* meaning the "key-bearer," he speaks of this idea, adding an anecdote which illustrates his position:

While approving this response to the Lady, Toland believed that there was a way to make possible free communication by wise men of their convictions. He proposed:

> *Let all men freely speak what they think, without being ever branded or punished but for wicked practices, and leaving their speculative opinions to be confuted or approv'd by whoever pleases; then you*

are sure to hear the whole truth, and till then but very scantily, or obscurely, if at all.

Frederick Lange gives a further account of Toland's views in his *History of Materialism:*

> He [Toland] demands in this treatise [*Partheistikon*] the entire laying aside of revelations and of popular beliefs, and the construction of a religion which agrees with philosophy. His God is the universe; from which everything is born, into which everything returns. His cultus is that of truth, liberty, and health, the three things most highly prized by the wise man. His saints and fathers are the master-spirits and most excellent authors of all times, especially of classical antiquity; but even they form no authority to chain "the free spirit of mankind." The president cries in the Sokratic liturgy, "Swear by no master's word!" and the answer comes back to him from the congregation, "Not even by the word of Sokrates!"

Toland's mood was prophetic. *Pantheistikon* appeared in 1720, and seventy-seven years later, in Paris, after the full triumph of the French Revolution, the Society of Theophilanthropists pursued activities very like that described by Toland. At their meetings the Theophilanthropists sang humanitarian hymns and read from the ethical teachings of the Bible and from Chinese, Greek, and Hindu authors. The members gathered for these meetings in parish churches assigned to them by the Directory. They began by invoking the "Father of Nature" and "searched their consciences in Quaker-like silence." Thomas Paine addressed one of their meetings, seeing in the society "the seed out of which the natural religion of the future might grow."

In the United States, the Deist reverence for nature appeared in the opening sentence of the Declaration of Independence, in the reference to "the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God." There was, however, opposition. In the presidential campaign of 1800, much capital was made by the Federalists out of Jefferson's "notorious" free-thinking. Although Jefferson was so great an admirer of Jesus that he edited for his own use a version of the New Testament which left out all but the moral teachings of Jesus, he was nonetheless attacked by his political opponents as one who "hated Christ and his Church" and whose "daily speech is that of an infidel." A pamphleteer offering "Warning to Christians in the Ensuing Election" accused Jefferson of denying that "shells found on mountain-tops are proofs of the great flood," and predicted that "immorality" would flourish if Jefferson were elected. Timothy Dwight, president of Yale University, publicly anticipated the nationalization of Women under a Godless Jeffersonian regime, and so persuasive were these several warnings that, after Jefferson took office, "certain pious women in New England buried their Bibles in their gardens, for fear that he would at once send out janizaries to confiscate them."

But Jefferson did become president, the "freedom" of his religion notwithstanding. This was one of the greatest of the achievements of eighteenth-century liberalism and the American Revolution. Men of his views a few hundred years before were hunted, persecuted, and burned at the stake for their beliefs. One of these, Michael Servetus, suffered attack, imprisonment, and finally death over a slow fire of green boughs at the hands of John Calvin for daring to believe, with ancient pantheists, that "God is eternal, one and indivisible, and in Himself inscrutable, but making His being known in and through creation, so that not only is every living but every lifeless thing an aspect of Deity." An aspect of Servetus' heresy was the honor he did to Man. In the course of a theological correspondence with Calvin, he wrote to the Genevan reformer:

> All that men do, you say is done in sin, and is mixed with dregs that stink before God, and merit nothing but eternal death. But therein you blaspheme. Stripping us of all possible goodness, you do violence to the teaching of Christ and his Apostles, who ascribe perfection or the power of being perfect to us: "Be ye perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect" (Matt, v.48). You scout this celestial perfection, because you have never tested perfection of the kind yourself. . . . Thou reprobate and blasphemer, who calumniates" the works of the Spirit!

Servetus was a martyr to Protestant fury. He died at the stake on October 27, 1553. A bare half-century later, on February 17, 1600, Giordano Bruno, Italian philosopher and pantheist, was led into a public square in Rome and burned to death for similar errors. Bruno had declared:

> The universe, then, is one, infinite, immovable. One, I say, is the absolute possibility, one the act, one the form or soul, one the matter or body, one the being. . . .Every production, of whatever sort it be, is an alteration, the substance ever remaining the same, for that is only one—one being, divine, immortal. Pythagoras was able to understand that, instead of fearing death, he need only contemplate change. All philosophers, commonly called physical, have perceived the same truth when they say that in respect of substance there is neither generation nor corruption, unless under these names we mean to signify alteration. Solomon understood this when he said that there was no new thing under the sun, but that which has been already. Understand, then, that all things are in the universe, and the universe in all things; we in that, that in us; and so all meet in one perfect unity. See, then, how vain a thing it is to torment the spirit with anxieties; see how impossible it is that there should be anything about us of which we ought to be fearful. For this unity is alone and stable, and ever remaineth. This One is eternal. Every appearance, every other thing is vanity, is as it were nothing; yea, all that is nothing which is outside of this One. Those philosophers who have found again their mistress Sophia, or Wisdom, have found this Unity. Verily and indeed wisdom, truth, and unity is the same.

Spinoza, before another century had passed, was to suffer, if not death, complete ostracism, by the Jewish community in Holland, again for the pantheistic heresy. "I hold," he said, "that God is the *immanent* not the *extraneous* cause of all things. I say, all is in God; all lives and moves in God. And this I maintain with the Apostle Paul, and perhaps with every one of the philosophers of antiquity, although in a way other than theirs. I might even venture to say that my view is the same as that entertained by the Hebrews of old, if so may be inferred from certain traditions, greatly altered and falsified though they be.

Why should we say that these have been free men? Largely because they stood for the highest sort of freedom in human life, sometimes dying for it as well, By thinking for themselves, they enriched themselves, and the world, which is greatly in their debt. The important thing about their religion is that it gave them the integrity of conviction which made their own independent conclusions of greater importance than anything else, and so gave an example of lives of principle to all who came after. We can hardly avoid the conclusion that the living quality of their pantheist thought was the source of this integrity and courage. They would submit to no insistent conformity, no outside ruler of mind or conscience. They were not criminals, yet they were treated far worse than common breakers of the law. They were gentle men, teachers, philosophers, devoted to their fellow men. But their religion had one common principle of self-reliance in thought and belief. They, more than any others—they, and the few who were like them—are the true authors of human freedom, wherever it is found.

From the ancient Stoics to the modern Einsteins and Schweitzers is a long course of two thousand years and more. There have been a few bright interludes of civilization and learning, and much longer periods of darkness along this path. But, throughout, the religion of free men changes very little, if at all, in its fundamental expression. It is the religion of men who cherish a secret divinity within, however they name it, and who live in the world, whatever it is like, without fear.

REVIEW
BELIEVERS AND AGNOSTICS

IF YOU are indifferent—as we are—to the Baptist position on Original Sin, or care little about how the Presbyterians now feel about infant damnation, you will not be especially interested in Simon & Schuster's large paper-back edition of Leo Rosten's "celebrated" *Look* articles on the major faiths of Americans—unless, that is, you want to read Bertrand Russell's answer to the question, "What is an Agnostic?" There is actually more to think about in what Russell says than in all the other answers ("What is a Lutheran?" "What is a Catholic?" etc.). By "think about," we mean what a six-year-old quoted by Jerome Nathanson meant in explaining his views on religion:

> Two six-year-olds were recently engaged in an earnest discussion of death. "When my mother dies," said the first, "she will go to heaven, and when I die I'll see her there."
>
> "I don't think so," the other remarked.
>
> "Oh, yes, I will. When I die an angel will come down to me. And when the angel brushes my cheek with its wing, then I'll go to heaven and see my mother."
>
> "Do you *really* think that?" the second boy asked.
>
> "Well, I don't really *think* it," came the rejoinder, "but I believe it."

This bit of dialogue is part of Mr. Nathanson's discussion of what the sixty-four million Americans who don't go to church believe, and his article, like Mr. Russell's, has the distinction of representing actual thought, although this writer hardly intends to suggest that staying away from church will of itself make a man thoughtful.

Agnostics, according to Mr. Russell, are not atheists, although they may be strongly inclined in this direction. An atheist, Russell points out, shares with the Christian one kind of certainty that the agnostic refuses to assume: that it is possible to *know* whether or not there is a God. On the question of whether or not man "has a soul," Russell says:

> This question has no precise meaning unless we are given a definition of the word "soul." I suppose what is meant is roughly, something nonmaterial which persists throughout a person's life and even, for those who believe in immortality, throughout all future time. If this is what is meant, an agnostic is not likely to believe that man has a soul. But I must hasten to add that this does not mean that an agnostic must be a materialist. Many agnostics (including myself) are quite as doubtful of the body as they are of the soul, but this is a long story taking one into difficult metaphysics.

One could wish Mr. Russell had noted that "God" is even more fuzzily conceived in modern times than "soul," so that expressions about belief in God are equally impossible to evaluate. On all these questions, however, and concerning the related matter of possible "spiritual existence" and "spiritual beings," the opinions of Thomas H. Huxley—who coined the word "agnostic," and who therefore may be taken as a rather good authority on its meaning —had this to say:

> Looking at the matter from the most rigidly scientific viewpoint, the assumption that, amidst the myriads of worlds scattered through endless space, there can be no intelligence, as much greater than man's as his is greater than a black beetle's; no being endowed with powers of influencing the course of nature as much greater than his, as his is greater than a snail's seems to me not merely baseless, but impertinent. Without stepping beyond the analogy of that which is known, it is easy to people the cosmos with entities, in ascending scale, until we reach something practically indistinguishable from omnipotence, omnipresence, and omniscience.

The foregoing, taken from a collection of Huxley's essays entitled *Science and Christian Tradition,* is amply representative of the free-ranging spirit of agnostic thought. The following, also from Huxley, is an instance of the reasoning by which agnostics reject most of the traditional claims of religion:

> We are told that the Gospels contain a true revelation of the spiritual world—a proposition which, in one sense of the word "spiritual," I should not think it necessary to dispute. But, when it is taken to signify that everything we are told about the world of spirits in these books is infallibly true that we are bound to accept the demonology which constitutes an inseparable part of their teaching; and to profess belief in a Supernaturalism as gross as that of any primitive people —it is at any rate permissible to ask why? Science may be unable to define the limits of possibility, but it cannot escape from the moral obligation to weigh the evidence in favor of any

> alleged wonderful occurrence, and I have endeavored to show that the evidence for the Gadarene miracle is altogether worthless. We have three, partially discrepant, versions of a story, about the primitive form, the origin, and the authority for which we know absolutely nothing. But the evidence in favour of the Gadarene miracle is as good as that for any other.

Fortunately, this line of criticism of unthinking belief is ably continued by Mr. Russell, and we may be grateful to *Look* for having put it into print. One of his most forceful arguments is in reply to a question which asks how mankind will be able to oppose "base and cruel passions," if religious principles are abandoned. Russell begins by remarking that he finds "no evidence in history that religion has opposed these passions." Continuing, he shows that dogmatic belief has a record of justifying cruel persecutions. "Kindliness and tolerance only prevail in proportion as dogmatic belief decays." He adds:

> In so far as Christianity has become less persecuting, this is mainly due to the work of freethinkers who have made dogmatists rather less dogmatic. If they were as dogmatic now as in former times, they would still think it right to burn heretics at the stake. The spirit of tolerance which some Christians regard as essentially Christian is, in fact, a product of the temper which allows doubt and is suspicious of absolute certainties. I think that anybody who surveys past history in an impartial manner will be driven to the conclusion that religion has caused more suffering than it has prevented.

An agnostic, Russell feels, cannot be called a Christian, since although he may hold ethical beliefs in common with liberal Christians, to allow moral qualities which are universal to be labeled "Christian" seems an unfair restriction. "Apart from other objections to it, it seems rude to Jews, Buddhists, Mohammedans and other non-Christians, who, so far as history shows, have been at least as apt as Christians to practice the virtues which some Christians arrogantly claim as distinctive of their own religion."

Jerome Nathanson's thoughtful apologetic for the unchurched repeats in more "moderate" terms some of the themes presented by Russell. Since non-church-goers constitute some forty percent of the population, there was reason enough for something to be said about their beliefs. Many who belong to no church, he points out, "have taken the hard rather than the easy road, for they have withstood great pressure in order to stay out of groups it is so easy to join, and for which high approval from neighbors and community is given."

Why don't they go to church?

> Many [Mr. Nathanson answers] stay away from a church because of the denominational rivalries and bickering. Some dislike formal, elaborate rituals. And some (though they do not know it) follow the example of the noblest man our land has produced, Abraham Lincoln, who made this startling and little-known statement of his faith when he declared that he had never united himself to any church because he found difficulty in giving his assent, without mental reservations, to the long complicated statements of Christian doctrine which characterized their articles of belief and confessions of faith. "When any church will inscribe over its altar as its sole qualifications for membership the Savior's condensed statement of the substance of both the law and the gospel, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbor as thyself'—that church will I join with all my heart and all my soul."

Both Russell and Nathanson contend that personal morality is not dependent upon organized religion. There is no indication that absence of religious training makes for a life of crime; in fact, studies of Sunday School graduates reveal a surprisingly high percentage of dishonesty among them. Toward the end of his article, Mr. Nathanson points out that the common assumption that Americans are represented by the "three faiths" of Catholicism, Protestantism and Judaism is a gross error—that the more than a third of the population who belong to no church live as individuals, and "*no one* speaks for them." This is easily and too often forgotten.

COMMENTARY
TOWARD GENERAL UNDERSTANDING

SOME ten years ago, Robert Maynard Hutchins, then President of the University of Chicago, delivered a lecture on "The Administrator" which was widely quoted and is still remembered for its pithy utterance. Last September, speaking before the American College of Hospital Administrators, Mr. Hutchins returned to this subject, and in one portion of his address told what he now thinks ought to have been done at Chicago. He said:

> The impossible size of American universities and the lamentable extremes to which specialization has been carried lead me to believe that I should have proposed the reorganization of the University of Chicago on the lines of Oxford and Cambridge. The University should have been reconstituted into a federation of colleges, each representing among its students and teachers the major fields of learning. These colleges should have begun their work with the junior year, resting on the foundation of the College of the University, which terminated its work at the end of the sophomore year. That college was intended to be the equivalent of the humanistic gymnasium or the *lycée* or the British public school. The change would have meant that basic liberal education would have been followed by compulsory communication with the representatives of disciplines other than one's own throughout the whole educational process, and, in the case of teachers, throughout their lives.
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> Such colleges, with 250 students and 25 faculty members, would be of manageable size. Each one could have an administrative officer who could be expected to lead the way to improvements both numerous and lasting. The University as a whole should not have a permanent, full-time head. The ceremonial, representative functions of the university president could be performed, as at Oxford and Cambridge, by a temporary official.

While this, doubtless, is no answer to the enormous growth of the university population, it is certainly an answer to the problem of maintaining quality in higher education—an answer found also, it seems, by those who planned the branches of the University of California at Goleta and Riverside. (See "Children . . . and Ourselves.")

"Smaller classes," however, are only a part of the reform proposed by Mr. Hutchins. His primary interest is in overcoming the limitations of the "departmental system," under which the specialized teacher "becomes immune to ideas that might illumine his labors. He cannot talk to those outside his specialty, because they cannot understand him, and he cannot understand them."

Once again, Mr. Hutchins directs attention to the fundamental objective of educational undertakings—the creation of an environment in which general understanding is not only possible, but likely to develop.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves
THE UNIVERSITY—BIG PROBLEMS

WE undertake a series of discussions of "the university" in the belief that a great deal is currently happening to and in our higher institutions of learning which will markedly affect the mores and culture of America. Also, there is little doubt but that every parent has opinions as to what colleges and universities are doing that they "should not" do —or what is not being done which "should," presumably, be managed.

The most spectacular thing that has happened to the modern university has nothing to do with educational theory, but is simply a projection of a rising population curve into the age-level of college students. In 1945, for instance, the *total* college population of California was something like 62,000. By 1954, the enrollments in public *junior colleges alone* had reached the surprising sum of 61,000, with the University of California, a state institution, housing 35,000, state colleges another 35,000, and private institutions 37,000. Statisticians estimate that by 1965 the total college population of California will be approximately 325,000 young people, as opposed to 62,000 in 1945. While the population of California, in general, is increasing more rapidly than that of any other state—and more rapidly than in any other English-speaking portion of the globe the rate of birth increase is spectacular everywhere and is now making itself felt at the late teen-age level.

An article entitled, "36 Million Babies," appearing in the British monthly, *Encounter,* for September, summarizes the implications of population increase for the schools:

> The public school system is already bursting, and college enrollments will also swell to much larger numbers than can be adequately accommodated. A college education is now on its way to becoming the norm: in 1954, the total student body in the colleges increased by one tenth over the preceding year—and this in spite of the fact that the entering freshmen born in 1937, represented the smallest cohort of 17-year-olds that this country will see in many decades. The number of boys and girls of college age will grow enormously in the next years, and the proportion of these that will want to matriculate will apparently also continue to increase. One estimate puts the college population of the United States in 1975 at about 10 million: the consequences for scholastic standards are incalculable but ominous.

MANAS readers may agree that scholarly institutions need some kind of a drastic shake-up, anyway. But however you look at it, the accommodation of millions of new persons is a part of the problem of the future.

Not even America is equipped, either by way of public funds sufficient to house classes and students, or by way of adequately trained instructors, to meet this overwhelming tide of youth. It will be apparently necessary to adopt a recommendation made years ago by President Eliot of Harvard—that, in order to keep the citizenry happy, each child should be automatically granted a college degree at birth—either that, or install stringent entrance exams and nurture a different conception of the higher learning.

An address before the Washington-based American Council on Education by Harvard Professor Douglas Bush indicates that this latter possibility will be given serious attention. He remarked, in part:

> In the first place, I see no reason why the flood of students should be allowed to pour into college, why automatic graduation from high school should qualify anyone for admission. We ought to recognize, and make people in general recognize, that a desire for economic or social advantage, or for merely four years of idle diversion, is not enough. Under such pressure as is coming surely the state universities have the strength to set up bars and select their student body, instead of admitting all who choose to walk in the front door and then, with much trouble and expense, trying to get rid of some through the back door. Doubtless such a change would require a campaign of enlightenment and persuasion, but legislators have an alert ear for the cry of economy, and the public must be convinced that higher

> education, or what passes for that, is neither a birthright nor a necessary badge of responsibility, and that useful and happy lives can be led without a college degree or even without membership in a fraternity or sorority. As things are we have an army of misfits, who lower educational standards and increase expense, and no branch of a university staff has grown more rapidly of late years than the psychiatric squad.
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> . . . Imagine a European university teaching the rudiments of expression! If high-school graduates are illiterate they have no business in college. For a long time, and for a variety of reasons, we have had slackness all along the line; somehow, some time, strictness and discipline have got to begin.

The population increase is not the only factor indicating drastic changes in university organization and practical educational theory. Many of our universities have become closely linked to a national program of military preparedness; large grants are provided for work in atomic physics, and for technical research in all fields related to military needs. Also, the students of America, regardless of technical aptitude, have for fifteen years or so been involved in drafts for military service. Many have now completed their G.I. Bill of Rights education; returning from the war, these veterans, marrying and raising families while studying, have altered college mores considerably. Aside from those who simply "go along for the ride," the returning G.I.'s seem to have been a rather serious lot, to have demanded more from their courses than their predecessors, and applied themselves with greater determination.

The recent remarks of President S. B. Gould of Antioch College in regard to the effects of population growth are also applicable to the challenge of military training and its disruption of many academic habits. President Gould's sentiments seem an excellent point of departure for further discussion of university transformation. He said:

> I am convinced that the tremendous and terrifying problems which suddenly face higher education in America are fortunate: they make it mandatory for us to examine what we are doing—to reassess our educational philosophy; to adopt new methods and adapt old ones; to find new resources in teachers, facilities, and financing; and in general to raise hob with the status quo. . . .
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> Changes . . . are necessary and important, and they will come. But they are on the plateaus of adventure. . . .
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> It seems to me that this is the time for experimentation, for practical research. . . . We have a few years of grace before the full impact of population trends, technological advances, and social changes will be upon us. After that it will be a mad scramble to keep up. . . . In such an atmosphere of crisis we shall merely compound the errors and omissions of the past. But careful study now, properly guided and supported, will lead us to soundly conceived solutions and positive action.

That a number of university officials and instructors are anxious to improve the quality of teaching—even if this calls for an increase in the budget for each student—is attested by a welcome trend in the direction of smaller classrooms and more seminars. This in spite of the fact that the simplest way to deal with an influx of numbers would be to increase the size of lecture halls in all new buildings. In the University of California, the two campuses recently added at Riverside and Goleta are designed to provide a regular classroom capacity of twenty-five or thirty students! Such planning, though sometimes nullified in practice by a still unpredictable number of enrollments, reflects a serious intent to improve teaching. Throughout the country, similar determinations are being encouraged by the writings of liberal university presidents such as Yale's President Griswold, Kenyon College's President Chalmers, and "emeritus" Presidents like Robert Hutchins and Stringfellow Barr. Proponents of better opportunity for individual instruction, as is offered by Oxford University's "Readings" courses, are making themselves heard in faculty meetings, and programs like the Santa Barbara "Tutorial" (see MANAS for April 29, 1953) are symbolic of progress in this direction. Perhaps we are making a belated discovery that there is no such thing as educating youth "in the

mass," that the most important sort of learning is the sort which draws out from the student his own powers of independent judgment. As was remarked in a recent committee report to a faculty conference, "a pre-existent idealism may wither in the face of the size of the university or of the vast mechanical operations by which the university's work is carried on. Large lecture classes and factual or memory-recall examinations may tend to stifle any penchant for independent thought that the student may once have possessed."

Though far from inclined to economic determinism as a philosophy, we wonder if the fairly decent salaries now paid to professors have not played a useful role in the revitalization of educational theories in the colleges. A great scholar doesn't, we understand, think about money at all, but it is just possible that intelligent men seeking a career may now respond to their natural preference for teaching because poverty is no longer asked of them in the event that they make such a choice.

So, as an amelioration of the "big numbers" problem, we note an increasing determination to see that success in "the higher learning" be equated, as it should be, with quality of thought rather than number of degrees granted.

FRONTIERS

Culture and World Community

[Practically all editors—and MANAS editors are no exception—regard the familiar mimeographed "release" with a certain disdain, even suspicion, and tend to deal with it with carelessness. From experience, however, we have learned to examine the "releases" from UNESCO—United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization—with both interest and respect. Readers will recall the appearance of such material in MANAS during recent months, an entire article being presented in "Children . . . and Ourselves" in the Oct. 19 issue. The present contribution, by M. Jean d'Ormesson, Deputy Secretary General of the International Council for Philosophy and Humanistic Studies, was offered to MANAS for exclusive publication, and is gladly published, as telling one story of Unesco's efforts to break down nationalist and cultural prejudice, and as reflecting a spirit of world fraternity which should make thoughtless critics of this agency reconsider their opinions. "Culture and World Community" is an extract from a longer study which has appeared in *Unesco Chronicle.*]

IT is no new thing for individual civilizations to come to realize that they are not the only ones in the world—that other cultures exist. Following the work of Spengler and Toynbee, and of numbers of orientalists, sociologists and anthropologists, no one today would any longer entertain the notion of a culture confined to a particular section of mankind or to a single region, with the alien forms of the civilizations beyond those limits dismissed as superstitious or anachronisms. What has gone forever is, of course, not the eternally subsisting possibility of opting for a particular variety of belief or tradition but the exclusive "rightness" claimed dogmatically for the traditional culture.

Unesco was bound to concern itself with the multitudinous problems raised in our day at once by the legitimate diversity of cultures and by the exigencies of their mutual relations. A committee recently met in Paris under the auspices of the International Council for Philosophy and Humanistic Studies (ICPHS) and with Unesco's assistance, to examine the possibilities of broadening the teaching of the "humanities."

The whole question was of singular delicacy. Of all subjects for study, Man remains the most elusive. There is a constant temptation to try to arrive at a knowledge of mankind by inference from oneself, and man is thought of more readily as a competitor or an associate than as an object of scientific study. Objective interest in the art, religions and customs of civilizations other than one's own is often complicated by a certain competitive reaction or an assumption of superiority. The colonial expansion of the West, while on occasion it provided facilities for objective and disinterested study of other cultures, was all too often accompanied by the growth of a tendency—born either of uneasiness or self-satisfaction, of narrow-mindedness or of suspicion—to depreciate "lower" or dangerous cultures. Race prejudice, obviously, did nothing to improve matters.

An attempt had also to be made to appreciate the often commendable motives of those whose task it was to propagate and teach the traditional cultures. Accretions to a culture cannot be regarded as on the same footing as the acquisitions of science. Science (in the sense of the natural sciences) is by nature permanently receptive of new ideas. It is on the look-out for the new and the revolutionary. It is happy to see old theories exploded: the introduction of new elements involves a process of recasting the framework of knowledge which gets rid of the old and automatically superseded elements. Culture on the other hand is a specific combination of selected ingredients to which nothing can be added by technical advances. It is elective, and any extraneous addition disrupts its unity, alters it and robs it of some of its originality, tending to weaken its structure and mar its characteristics. Science presupposes change while culture means fidelity to a particular concept of man.

For long the West was rejected by the cultured Chinese, and Western thought was

viewed with suspicion and hostility by the Hindu pandit or cultured Arab. And even between the Eastern cultures themselves examples occurred of reserve and hostility between the various religions, beliefs and traditions. However, it is indisputable that the East, more often than the West, has inclined to assimilate extraneous humanisms. It is no exaggeration to say that Western culture has in many cases been assimilated by the Eastern humanism. This assimilation may indeed have taken place solely because with the Western culture there went techniques essential for the modern world and which, in a certain sense, are the absolute opposite of humanism of any sort. But whatever the motives and, ultimately, the long-term outcome of that assimilation, the fact is that for the present more than one oriental scholar draws simultaneously upon two or more cultures. It is above all the West which has gaps to fill and which must broaden its views.

The dangers of a "hybrid" humanism

The committee which met in Paris in June 1955 first agreed on an essential point—that it was desirable that each civilization should have a fairly broad acquaintance with world culture as a whole. Either culture means nothing at all or it must, in our day, cease to be purely regional.

It then remained to consider whether this theoretically desirable broadening of purview was in practice possible. From the outset, the committee was anxious to remove one uncertainty. Extending the perimeter of the classical humanities cannot and must not be confused with the creation of a "hybrid" humanism representing a synthesis of the existing humanities. Trying to combine the learning of two different traditions in a single amalgam involves a risk of disrupting and losing both. In no case should knowledge about the civilizations external to a particular traditional culture be acquired at the price of warping or mutilating that culture itself.

Another difficulty lay in the over-crowding of educational programmes. With a schedule of studies already so overloaded as to alarm parents and even teachers, where could space and time be found for new subjects?

It was with these considerations in mind that the committee declared itself in favour of instruction in the outlines of the "exotic" civilizations. It found, further, that this teaching should (*a*) be graduated; (*b*) start at a very early stage; (**c**) do nothing to dissociate the children from the culture of their own environment; *(d)* be made to fit naturally into the traditional pattern of schooling and take the form of informal talks rather than didactic lectures.

The ideal way of imparting such instruction is through the medium of folk and fairy tales, legends, tales of travel and lives of great men. This enables two contradictory requirements—a foreign flavor and familiarity—to be met and reconciled. Fortunately, the civilizations of the East are particularly rich in literature of this type. It is for Western education to make the most of the abundance thus offered and to use the treasures that are to be found, even for very young children, in the Indian Mahabharata and Ramayana or the Arabic Sinbad the Sailor and the Arabian Nights.

Broadening the cultural background of adolescents

But, however great the importance of starting children on the right lines, the committee concentrated above all on the adolescent sector—the 12-18 age group, representing the stage of education lying between the primary school and the university.

It is between those ages that the pupil is taught about the latest advances in modern science and technology. The teaching of the humanities has lagged behind. This is particularly so in the West, and even in the East no general picture of mankind as a whole is ever presented.

The committee was unanimous in considering that "his background instruction in general culture between the ages of 12 and 18 should furnish

every pupil with a minimum notion of mankind as a whole."

Cautiously and even hesitantly, the committee made a list of the regions of whose civilizations and cultures every pupil should, in its view, have some notion—Greece and Rome, Europe in the various stages of its development, Egypt, Western Asia, Mesopotamia, Iran, the Americas, India, China, Central Asia, South-East Asia, the South Sea Islands and Africa.

In principle, there is no question of creating new courses but of adjusting existing ones. The object is to draw attention to the existence of these civilizations and to the part they played in history. Literature, history, geography, art and art history, are especially suitable for conveying these ideas without overloading the curriculum. Modern teaching aids—gramophone records, wireless, films—will be of considerable assistance to the teacher. They should not, however, lead to any omission of direct contact with the literary works of exotic civilizations. It is this contact above all which remains the goal to be reached. It alone can beget familiarity, understanding and sympathy.

Training of teachers and teaching material

Lastly, two particular problems arose for the committee's consideration. First the training of teachers. If pupils between the ages of 12 and 18 are to learn something about pre-Colombian America or the civilization of Central Asia, their teachers or prospective teachers must know a good deal about these subjects. This brings us back to the problem of specialized instruction; the instruction given to the teacher must be excellent in order that the general culture reaching his pupils through him may be good.

The second problem is that of making the necessary information, texts and translations available both to teachers and to pupils. Here Unesco's contribution should, and can, be considerable. More particularly, access to the "History of the Scientific and Cultural Development of Mankind"' compiled by Unesco may be invaluable. Of the utmost usefulness, too, are the translation and distribution of the chief classics of the various cultures.

The foregoing is a brief summary of the work of the committee of experts convened by the International Council for Philosophy and Humanistic Studies. Much still remains to be done. In the sphere of the humanities nothing is ever permanently achieved or preserved. Hardly is the problem of better mutual acquaintance between the civilizations of East and West outlined, than we find ourselves faced with the further urgent question, of the place and role of the humanities as a whole in the education and civilization of today.

Once the cultures of East and West have learnt to know each other better, they will still have to make a common stand against the invader—technology, the machine whose looming bulk and prestige threaten them all alike. What would be the use of comparing the teachings of Francis of Assisi and the Buddha, if charity were to lose all meaning in a mechanized world?

But that is another story. . . .

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