VOLUME VI, NO. 26
JULY 1, 1953

AN UNPOPULAR ANALYSIS

IT seems probable that the bewilderments of modern liberal thinking, confronted by the growing threat of either communist reaction or communist revolution, are likely to increase with little or no relief, unless something like a radical revolution in liberal thinking itself takes place. Most liberals suppose, with a measure of justification, that they are unalterably "against" the totalitarian temper of communism or any sort of "omnipotent state," even though conservatives and "reactionaries," so-called, are often as suspicious of liberals as they are of communists. There can be no doubt that the liberal is clearly distinguished from the communist by his devotion to civil rights—the rights of the individual citizen to think freely, speak freely, and write freely concerning the things he regards as right or wrong with his society. The liberal is also determined to preserve the democratic mechanisms for political and social change, so that it will be possible to carry out the mandates of liberal thinking and social criticism. But the liberal of today is disapproved by both the communist left and the capitalist right, finding it necessary to walk a very narrow path to keep out of trouble—if, indeed, he can keep out of trouble at all and still remain a liberal.

One question, then, is this: Is the liberal overtaken by a malignant fate which has condemned him to impotence or compromise? Must he, as some have done, break out into praise of the Free Enterprise system as the only hope of maintaining democratic self-government; or, as some others have done, shut his eyes to the ruthless methods of modern communist states and declare for "scientific socialism" and "industrial democracy"?

There is, we think, another course. It is a course which will make the liberal wander far from the protecting fold of any institutional orthodoxy, whether of the Right or of the Left, and cause him to lose friends, also, in the diminishing liberal "Center." It is a course which will find him standing pretty much alone, subject to the critical clichés of nearly every familiar political position. The first step on this course is to examine the proposition that while Capitalism and Liberalism differ markedly in their social ethics and theories of progress, they have in common one all-important working assumption—that the possession of property is the highest good. They differ only on the question of who is to have title to property and control its use and disposition.

There will of course be objections to this assertion. However, it seems fairly plain that the driving energy of every political theory of our time revolves around the question of either property or power, or both, so that even if more important values are declared for, these latter are seen to be dependent upon the acquisition of property or power, and unattainable without them. While there are plenty of people to urge that the "true" values in life are "ethical" and "moral," only a very, very few of these are ever heard to object to the concentration of the liberal movement upon "material" objectives. The reason for their silence is plain indeed: for centuries defenders of a class structure in society, with all the privileges and most of the rights secured for those at the top, have cried out against the "materialism" of equalitarian social movements, hinting, when not insisting, that the equality of man offends against the "laws of God." To seem to return to this medieval apology for class oppression is psychologically impossible for practically all those nurtured on the liberal tradition.

Yet if there is something that needs to be said about liberal thinking on the subject of property, it would be foolish not to speak out—as foolish as it

would be for a liberal to refuse to make some criticism of the Free Enterprise system simply because the communists are sometimes heard to say the same thing. It is even conceivable that certain past societies which we of the West have as a matter of course condemned as unspeakably backward, nevertheless knew and practiced truths which we habitually ignore. We speak of societies in which the struggle for economic betterment was practically unknown—unknown, at least, as a "doctrine" and a theory of progress. Such old-fashioned words as "duty"—called *"dharma"* in India—are out of style today, since they have been so frequently used to distract the attention of people from the injustices they suffer at the hands of one or another ruling class. Yet duty or *dharma* may represent attitudes in life which are functional to the greatest happiness and feeling of fulfillment.

The keying of the liberal goal to some form of supposedly "ideal" property relations is not in the least remarkable, in consideration of the social and economic history of the West. As a matter of fact, no understanding of either liberalism or communism is possible without a strong historical sense of social causation in the past. The nobility and landed aristocracy of pre-revolutionary times used their privileged positions to live in a luxury that naturally inflamed the resentment of the impoverished masses. While a noble conception of liberty ensouled the great revolutions of the eighteenth century, the downfall of kings and princes was the means by which the great middle class, the bourgeoisie, became the property-owners and men of wealth in the new, democratic societies. These latter now enjoyed, through accumulation of economic power, the security and wealth which had formerly belonged to the aristocracy. The rising class of merchants and manufacturers developed their own philosophy to justify their preeminence in society, just as their predecessors in power, the feudal lords, had claimed that the hand of God had determined who should have possessions, and who should live in servitude. The barons and princes of commerce and manufacturing became just as arrogant, in their way, and just as self-righteous, as the hereditary rulers whom the revolution had overthrown. Meanwhile, the factory system had created a new kind of peasant—the modern proletariat—chained to his machine almost as securely as the serfs of the Middle Ages had been bound to the soil. Those who are skeptical of this comparison have only to read Samuel Hopkins Adams' *Sunrise to Sunset,* a novel of industrialism in the 1830's in the United States, to realize the sources of inspiration of modern revolt against the Free Enterprise system. At the end of his story, which is a pleasant romance in which right triumphs and truth and beauty win their just deserts, Mr. Adams prints the rules and regulations which governed the lives of the employees in a New England textile mill in the 1830's—the sort of mill, incidentally, which made the southern planters able to claim that the lot of Negro slaves in the South was idyllic by comparison!

We quote at random some of these rules:

> *Rule 1.* The Mill will be put into operation 10 minutes before sunrise at all seasons of the year. The gate {sluice gate providing water power} will be shut 10 minutes past sunset from the 20th of March to the 20th of September, at 30 minutes past 8 from the 20th of September to the 20th of March. Saturdays at sunset.
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> *Rule* 6. Any person employed for no certain length of time, will be required to give at least 4 weeks notice of their intention to leave (sickness excepted) or forfeit 4 weeks pay, unless by particular agreement.
>
> *Rule 15.* The hands will take breakfast, from the last of November to the last of March, before going to work—they will take supper from the 1st of May to the last of August, 30 minutes past 5 o'clock P.M.—from the 20th of September to the 20th of March between sundown and dark—25 minutes will be allowed for breakfast, 30 minutes for dinner, and 25 minutes for supper, and no more from the time the gate is shut till started again.

Mr. Adams adds these explanatory notes:

> The earliest start of the working day was about 4:15 A.M. The latest closing time was about four hours after sunset, in December, except in case of emergency orders when the gate might not be dropped before ten. There is a record case of a female weaver earning nearly thirty-seven dollars in one month. This was pointed to with pride by factory owners as a conclusive retort to labor agitators. The average wage of a skilled female weaver was about $3.50 a week; of a child under 10, about $1.25. An intelligent girl of six was considered competent to run a Baxter loom.
>
> Breakfast was served in the mill in all but four months—November to March; supper, the year round.
>
> The original notice in the form of a broadside for posting, from which this copy is made, is in the possession of the Slater Mill Museum at Slaterville, R.I.

Forty years later, Edward Bellamy, the great American socialist, found very little improvement in the conditions of the New England mills. Writing in the *Springfield* Union for July 3, 1873, he told of a crowd of children he saw wandering through a manufacturing town on Decoration Day:

> We saw them. . . squalid, bare-headed and bare-footed, ragged and meagre, some of them crippled for life either from birth or accident. We almost felt that it were better to be dead than so alive. And where had these boys and girls come from? Out of the mills which had given them a few hours to run about and see the show. Any day at noon you can see them in dingy flocks, hovering along the sidewalks between their boarding place and "the yard." Any morning you can see them piling into the early train to go to the neighboring villages to their tasks. The mere sight of them; so old and worn and miserable to look at, yet so young, is proof enough that a great wrong exists somewhere among us which is inflicting a vast amount of barbarity, a positive cruelty of monstrous proportions upon these children and others like them in New England. This premature labor dwarfs them in size, so that when sixteen or eighteen years old, they have the diminutive, puny aspect of a scant dozen years. It twists them into little knotty deformities out of which coming years will never untwist them. . . . Half-starved and overworked, cuffed and shoved about as though there were no room for them anywhere, they are considerably more in need than the omnibus and car horses of the protection of a society to prevent cruelty to animals. Ten, eleven, twelve hours a day in our mills, and sixteen to eighteen in other countries, is a heavier burden than any such young shoulders should carry....

Is it any wonder that canting talk about "duty" and being content with one's "station in life" should eventually be greeted with contemptuous jeers from the working man? Or any wonder that Bellamy in the United States, and Karl Marx in Europe, should have advocated socialism as the means to end all this exploitation and misery?

"But those conditions no longer exist!" we shall be told in shocked tones. Not here, perhaps, but such and worse conditions exist in South Africa, right now. And Arthur Morgan, not a man given to exaggeration, notes in an early chapter of his life of Bellamy (Columbia University Press, 1944*)* that some of the New England mill workers of the mid-nineteenth century were "far better housed than industrial workers today in many Southern mining towns."

But whether or not the poor are oppressed and exploited today as they were a hundred years ago, there can be no question about the crimes against them in the past—in the years when the communist revolt was born. No one has any business pursuing serious criticism of communism without literally soaking in the social history accompanying the early decades of the industrial revolution. The communists, after all, have only *imitated the ruling class they sought to displace*, for they, like the hated "capitalists," seek salvation in the possession of goods and power. The fact that the technology of distribution proposed by the communists does not work as they had hoped is a critical point against them, but it cannot alter the fact that, at the outset, their movement was powered by humanitarian ardor and the will to serve the material welfare of the dispossessed masses of all the world.

It is here, we think, that both the old-time "liberals" who believed in *laissez faire* and liberty

for everyone to acquire property, and the modern liberals who incline toward the Welfare State, with modifications of State power to provide for civil liberties, are vulnerable to the charge of too devoted a preoccupation with *property*. As Harold Laski remarked in *The Rise of Liberalism:*

> As an organized society, the liberal state, at bottom, had no defined objective save that of making wealth, no measurable criterion of function and status save ability to acquire it. If in England, for example, it sent an occasional poet, a rare man of science, an infrequent doctor, to the House of Lords, after the middle of the nineteenth century it doubled the size of that chamber by its elevation of businessmen to the peerage. And just as it reduced the medieval craftsman to the status of a factory "hand" or a tender of machines, so it assumed that a "successful" man was simply and literally one who had made a fortune. So obsessed had it become by its material achievements that it was unable to think of success in any other terms. . . .
>
> No doubt the liberal idea, as an idea, sought to transcend the environment by which it was begotten. No doubt, also, the urgency with which, as an idea, it was preached helped to mitigate the full consequences of the society it assisted to create. But as soon as liberalism, as a spirit informing the habits of institutions, sought to effect their fundamental transformation, it found that it was the prisoner of the end it had been destined to serve. For the men who served it did not believe in its claims apart from that end. . . . criticisms of their lives seemed to them, in their hour of success, simply the ignorant attacks of unsuccessful men. . . .

It would be difficult to find a more lucid or juster analysis of the economic liberalism of the nineteenth century. But what of the political liberalism of the twentieth century—the post-Marxian liberalism which still thinks in terms of property—not of property in terms of being free to acquire it, but of property assured in suitable amounts for all? Mr. Laski, like many other social moralists and critics of Capitalism, saw the solution in socialism—and so, we think, will all other reformers and revolutionists who share the assumption that property is the good from which all other blessings flow. Yet the Free Enterprisers have far less moral claim on our attention than the socialists, who, although concentrating on property, are at least interested in property for all, and not in property for a skilled or astute few.

What, then, is "wrong" with socialism or communism, if anything? So far as we can see, by endeavoring to make an ethical system out of the motive of acquisition, communism gives terrible rigidity to the process of acquiring goods, and its ethical background, suffering institutionalization, imparts the fanaticism of religion to the cause. Communism, as we know it, simply matures the errors of Capitalism, by attempting to cloak capitalist objectives with the sanctity of equalitarian doctrine.

The future of the human race does not depend upon economic equality. The future of the human race depends upon the selection of high purposes and the fulfillment of them—purposes which end in knowledge and in a way of life in which the economic factor is reduced to the small importance it should normally enjoy. This is not to deny that corrupt men have exaggerated the economic factor in their own lives, denying others even the bare means of survival, so that the rebellion of the masses has been quite naturally in economic terms. But the fact of this natural rebellion cannot justify changing the true ends of human life into economic ends—a transformation which effects a blighting distortion in human striving.

It is this transformation that modern liberals ought to study with all the energy at their command. For it is this transformation which they are reluctant to examine, for fear of being called "reactionaries," for fear of the charge of "selling out," since so often defense of the *status quo* is on grounds of opposing "materialism." Yet if Capitalism, Communism, and Liberalism are alike afflicted by the same delusion—the delusion that in property lies the highest good, the principal evil of life being in its mal-distribution—then who besides the liberals can hope to recover their vision and to formulate other and better aims for the labors of man?

Letter from
LEBANON

BEIRUT.—The catch-all-phrase that is used by the saviours of the world today is "help people to help themselves." This expression is supposed to convey the true meaning of democracy to the peoples living in the economically "underdeveloped countries." It is a phrase which satisfies both the giver of aid or assistance, no matter who he is, and the recipient.

The Middle East seems to be the land of experts and givers of aid. In Lebanon alone there are Point 4 and the French equivalent of Point 4, the British Middle East Office, many UN agencies—FAO, WHO, UNRWA, UNESCO, etc.—the missionary or former missionary groups with their educational institutions, and various projects, besides a large group of people who are just interested in the Middle Eastern people whether for private or commercial reasons. All these plus a fairly well organized communist cell system. These organizations are in the process of showing the Middle Eastern people how they can improve themselves.

The other day I was rudely awakened by a 21-year-old Iranian student's interpretation of this idea of "helping others help themselves." He told the following story in all seriousness to a group of seven Middle Eastern university students and myself:

It seems that Ibrahim (the Iranian student) has a friend who had wanted to become a movie star. The friend is a very handsome fellow and he thought he would be able to play the part of Tarzan to perfection. "Now," Ibrahim said, "you know we have no movie industry in Iran, so my friend went to the forests of northern Iran to practice how to play the part of Tarzan. My friend is not rich and he soon ran out of money and had to return." I asked Ibrahim what he felt his friend should do. Ibrahim said, "There is nothing that he can do. He does not have enough money to go to Hollywood to study to become a movie star and we have no schools for this in our country. It is not my friend's fault that he can't become a movie star. I think the *Government* (italics mine) ought to give him money so that he could study to become a movie star."

In the ensuing discussion, six out of the seven Middle Easterners agreed with Ibrahim. They thought it was definitely the responsibility of the government to help Ibrahim's friend, or, for that matter, any person without the means of satisfying his desires and hopes.

This may sound like a rather exaggerated account of how these people feel movie stars should be created, but this same attitude is found again and again. A friend of mine who works in Jordan visited a group of villages in the northern part of that country. The villagers informed him that if only the government would give them a tractor and line the irrigation canals with cement, all their problems would be solved. In almost any discussion with Middle Easterners you will find that they feel the only drawback to future prosperity is the lack of money and machines which, they think, can easily be supplied or procured by the government.

Where and when this need of the Middle Eastern people for the paternalistic governments or patronizing institutions has arisen might prove an interesting topic for a Ph.D. thesis; and whether this situation is good or bad might serve as a basis for hours of philosophical discussion. However, the individual Middle Eastern governments and the foreign governments and private agencies that are operating in these countries can't go on forever being a grand rich uncle. Even the continued existence of a grab-bag full of tractors, cement, money and other material things would not necessarily provide individuals with moral and ethical values. Lining irrigation canals and becoming a movie star require more than giving money to the interested individuals. Accompanying the material gifts must be a spirit which recognizes the individual recipient as a person, for it is not the money or the cement which accomplishes the good end, but the person who uses it.

To emphasize my concern—the Middle East has far too many patronizing institutions and people who have grown dependent upon them.

CORRESPONDENT IN LEBANON

REVIEW
DO NOT A PRISON MAKE

IF, as David Riesman insists, the average westerner is becoming much more concerned about the psychological predicaments of disturbed and maladjusted individuals—perhaps because of a belated recognition that neurotics and criminals are not very different from ourselves—we can expect further advances in attitudes towards crime and punishment. We have from a local library two recent volumes dealing with the penological situation. The first book, *Inside*, is presented as the "only firsthand account ever published of a term in the federal women's penitentiary, written by an intelligent educated woman." The "educated woman" is Helen Bryan, daughter of a Presbyterian minister, who ran afoul of the House Un-American Activities Committee while Executive Secretary of "The Joint anti-Fascist Refugee Committee."

In 1945, when Miss Bryan was subpoenaed to produce a list of donors to the Refugee Committee, she considered that a matter of principle was involved, and declined. Quickly cited for "Contempt of Congress," she was sentenced to three months at Alderson, and the first thing of importance to be learned from *Inside* is obviously that "such things can happen in these United States" whenever a fanatical "un-American" fervor rules. As the introduction by Dr. Henry J. Cadbury makes clear, the real issue leading to Miss Bryan's imprisonment was not the obtaining of a list by an authorized Government agency; the President's War Relief Control Board and the Treasury Department had already been supplied with the records. What Miss Bryan refused to do was to submit them, *in addition*, to the House Committee on Un-American Activities. Dr. Cadbury's Preface considers what may be learned from Miss Bryan's experience:

> The author, in recording her prison life, writes in no tone of self-defense or self-pity. Indeed, she is not writing at all about the cause of her incarceration; yet her story will confirm for the reader the impression of her integrity and conscientious sensitivity to the highest loyalty which her friends have long recognized in her. The minor tragedy of a single victim in one relatively free country points up the dangers of the political use of legal processes. This policy has countless victims in other lands. We are reminded that it can happen here. Only a better balanced mood than the climate in which we are living today can prevent it.

Three months is not a long sentence, nor would it usually qualify anyone to write about the psychological condition of incarcerated women, but Miss Bryan's book is in no sense pretentious. She simply recounts her feelings and experiences during those three months, and while expressing appreciation for the excellent caliber of the female officers in charge, her book clearly demonstrates that very few inmates are in any sense being "rehabilitated" by their prison experience. The majority of the girls Miss Bryan came to know were simply held in moral suspension for the time of their sentences—after which they would return to precisely the same situations and problems they faced before. Everyone is going to attempt to solve his or her personal problem as best he can, and to be removed from the opportunity to work on it is hardly conducive to a solution. At this point, someone may ask us, "What would you suggest? Would you let high-priced prostitutes, forgers, and accomplices in bank holdups, continue their activities uninterruptedly?" Just possibly, this *might* not be such a bad idea after all. Is it really better for "The Law" to take care of troublesome or unwanted individuals, or for citizens to have to learn—the hard way, admittedly—to take care of themselves? This, we believe, is a serious question, and while we do not presume to know the answer, there is some doubt as to whether penal institutions, no matter how enlightened, embody the answer either.

The second book on our desk is an amazing collection of case histories compiled by "The Court of Last Resort," a voluntary citizens' organization supplying the title for Erle Stanley Gardner's volume. Mr. Gardner, many will be interested to learn, does not simply make criminal

intrigue his stock in trade via fiction thrillers. As a practicing attorney of many years, Gardner early became interested in unaccountable miscarriages of justice, and, finally, in company with a Robin Hood-like band of friends, formed an agency through which men who were sentenced or condemned on inconclusive evidence could have their cases publicized. Helped by *Argosy* magazine, and with the whole-hearted cooperation of Harry Steeger, *Argosy's* publisher, a plan was formed for conducting thorough investigations of noticeably questionable cases. Readers of *Argosy*, becoming sympathetic to the plight of men serving long sentences on unconvincing evidence, or waiting execution on death row in instances where "due process of law" had moved too summarily, would deluge their state officials with letters. Public opinion, the true "court of last resort" as Steeger and Gardner saw it, could and sometimes *did* secure further investigation in cases where all legal means had failed.

The "court's" record is impressive, while Gardner's book provides a series of shocks as the evidence in each questionable case is assembled, proving conclusively that many innocent men can easily be executed each year due to malfunctioning of legal agencies. We are particularly interested, just now, however, in Mr. Gardner's opinions concerning penal institutions in general. (Incidentally, we feel so great an appreciation for his expression of opinions that we may even buy another one of the author's pot-boilers some day. Greater love hath no MANAS editor, since our only recollection of Mr. Gardner heretofore revolves around something called "The Case of the Empty Tin," a work of art which left its mark upon our memory chiefly in terms of *its* emptiness.)

What Gardner says in the concluding chapters of *The Court of Last Resort* has been said before, but the repetition is particularly compelling when taken in conjunction with the woeful injustices he reports. Though Mr. Gardner has no standing grudge against prison officials, and has no substitute for the penal system to suggest, he voices some startling conclusions, as, for instance, when he says that "the collective public feels that penitentiaries are the places criminals go to. Actually penitentiaries are the places criminals come from." He explains:

> A wayward boy is declared delinquent; then he's convicted of crime and given probation; he's convicted again and sent to prison; then he gets out. That's the history of most professional criminals.
>
> Society had five or six chances at him, and did nothing except turn him into a professional criminal.
>
> Perhaps it wasn't society's fault. Then again, perhaps it was. The man undoubtedly had a responsibility to make something of himself and failed, but after society stepped into the picture and took charge of him for ten or fifteen years it would seem that it also failed.
>
> In his prison suit of clothes, with a prison haircut, and at the most a twenty-dollar bill in his pocket, the released inmate is called upon to find a job. He can't give references. If he tells the truth he loses the job. If he lies he has to lie artistically, and, having obtained a job under false representations, he has to keep on lying in order to make his original representations good.

Mr. Gardner has been in and out of many of the most important prisons of America, following up the "questionable" cases investigated by The Court of Last Resort, and his further observations on the failings of the prevailing system are based upon observation and experience:

> A man can't progress without hope. Take hope away from any individual and you turn him into a sullen, caged beast, waiting only for an opportunity to strike back.
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> Some people say, "What do we care how a man reacts? Take hope away from him. Take everything away from him. Treat him as a caged beast because that's what he is."
>
> Those people don't understand the prison problem.
>
> You take a prison holding fifty or sixty life prisoners who have absolutely no hope of being paroled or of getting out by any legitimate means, and you have men who are going to make trouble no matter what happens. Furthermore, they're

deteriorating with every year they live. They have lost hope, and as a result they're desperate, surly beasts.

They're supposed to be powerless. Theoretically they are; actually they aren't.

This hard core of desperate prisoners, who have no hope of legitimate release, have only one hope—that of illegitimate release.

This group of criminals is *ipso facto* the toughest group in the prison, otherwise they wouldn't have been confined "without hope of parole."

Take this group of men and mix them with a couple of thousand less hard-boiled prisoners, and before very long a change takes place. The naive, impressionable, first-term inmate isn't going to reform the hard-boiled lifer. It doesn't work that way. It's the other way around. The hard-boiled lifer changes the first-termer into a vicious criminal.

There isn't any simple, easy answer to our prison problem. Everything we do becomes a two-edged sword. Everything we do to punish the prisoner winds up by having an edge that punishes society.

And declaring men habitual criminals and sending them up for life isn't the pat solution some people hoped it would be.

Both the book *The Court of Last Resort* and the organization of the same name justify admiration. In addition, Mr. Gardner evidences a capacity for humor to offset the sense of stark horror one feels from becoming mentally involved in the lives of men who have been unjustly condemned.

COMMENTARY
A TIME FOR COURAGE

THIS space was to have been devoted to an account of the gratifying response from readers to our June 3 editorial, which asked cooperation in the sending of clothing packages and books to South Africa. However, a letter from Dr. Albert Einstein to a public school teacher, just made public, seems of such great importance that perhaps neither our readers nor our African friends will mind waiting until next week for news of the package plan.

The teacher, William Frauenglass, of New York, who faces loss of his job for refusing to testify before the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee, had written to Dr. Einstein for a statement on such procedures. The great physicist replied in part (as reported in an AP dispatch printed in the Pasadena *Star-News* for June 12)*:*

> The reactionary politicians have managed to instill suspicion of all intellectual efforts into the public by dangling before their eyes a danger from without.
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> Having succeeded so far, they are now proceeding to suppress the freedom of teaching and to deprive of their positions all those who do not prove submissive, *i.e.*, to starve them.
>
> Every intellectual who is called before one of the committees ought to refuse to testify, *i.e.*, he must be prepared for jail and economic ruin, in short, for the sacrifice of his personal welfare in the interest of the cultural welfare of his country. . . .
>
> This refusal to testify must be based on the assertion that it is shameful for a blameless citizen to submit to such an inquisition and that this kind of inquisition violates the spirit of the Constitution.
>
> If enough people are ready to take this grave step, they will be successful. If not, then the intellectuals of this country deserve nothing better than the slavery which is intended for them.

Once again, Dr. Einstein has spoken out his convictions without notice of what may be the reaction against him. In 1940, he presented the first Conference on Science, Religion, and Philosophy with a paper in which he declared that the idea of a personal God is the chief source of conflict between science and religion, and called upon modern theologians to abandon this unphilosophical notion. The result was a rain of angry criticism from the clergy. Now Dr. Einstein has invited similar condemnation from another wing of partisan opinion, for his letter to the teacher contained a postscript: "This letter need not be considered confidential."

We may remind ourselves that Dr. Einstein was an eyewitness of the methods used by the Nazis to destroy the morale of German scholars and intellectuals—methods far too closely paralleled by the loyalty oaths and probes now so popular in the United States.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves

LAST week a "guest contributor" argued that there are definite mental differences between young boys and young girls—"reading-readiness," for instance, is reached, on the average, more rapidly by the females of the species than the males. On the basis of this conclusion, then, our contributor, an elementary school teacher, inquires how first-grade experience can be made more worthwhile, since at this time intellectual capacities are so hard either to judge or to stimulate, especially in a coeducational classroom. In harmony with the philosophy of many Progressives, this teacher found herself wishing that such pupils might have some basic contact with productive activities and animal husbandry through farm experience—but, she asked, what can be done along this line in crowded city areas?

We await suggestions from our readers; meanwhile, the following correlative ideas come to mind: Both East Indians and American Indians have introduced their children to useful work in support of the village economy at the "pre-reading" age. Why shouldn't Progressives implement the same policy in elementary schools? After all, the school is a community—a very important one for the child. Yet even when teachers introduce the children to make-believe grocery stores and fruit markets, teach them to make change and to acquire an idea of comparative values of foodstuffs and other commodities, much of the work necessary for keeping the schoolroom going is performed by a janitor.

Gandhi would never have allowed this. He would have maintained that the child who sweeps the floors of the classroom, empties waste baskets, washes windows, varnishes woodwork and keeps things in order generally will feel an organic relatedness to the school. Possibly it is but the egocentric predicament which allows so many to think that janitorial duties are either unattractive to our youngsters or beneath their dignity. It would not be surprising to discover that, whenever an experiment along the line of "organic work" is attempted, most children take to the work with eagerness, with a definite desire to become efficient.

As a child so trained in the earliest classes reaches the higher grades of elementary school, he will naturally be more careful of school property; in fact, he will probably be willing to continue to play some part in necessary "menial" activities. Of course, as a child grows older, less time is needed to perform such tasks adequately, and much more time remains for purely mental pursuits. Meanwhile, the careless spilling of ink, writing on walls, perpetual breaking of chalk and the chewing of erasers might conceivably be lessened in such a background, and it seems to us that progressive education should logically begin in this basic way.

This seems a good time and place, then, to recall some passages from Margueritte Harmon Bro's novel for young people, *Su Mei's Golden Year,* which dramatizes the founding of a school in China. The young "unfortunates" in this story who suffered the lack of expensive modern buildings were not, perhaps, altogether unfortunate. For they had opportunity for a sort of learning *our* children are usually denied—the chance to feel needed by the school, and thus encouragement to view the process of learning as a rather sacred and sacrificial thing. For the parents, too, the new school was a wondrously exciting prospect and, since no television was available, it was clear they would continue to follow the progress of their children's lessons with respect:

> The first matter of business was getting ready for the school. To be sure crops had to be planted and tended. When it came to repairing the old temple, men took turns staying home from their fields for one day in order to help mix the mud and straw for rebuilding the crumbling walls. Then the whitewashing required a great deal of time and effort. This was a job at which younger boys could help.

> Finally the building was ready. But there were no tables and seats. Lumber was scarce and expensive. During the long years of fighting the hills had been denuded of what few trees there were and it had been impossible to bring logs, sawed or unsawed, from the west. Carpenters promised some lumber by fall, but in the meantime here was a building without desks or seats. Then Dwan-twei decreed, "Each child shall bring his own stool from home, and for desks we will make them of good baked mud. During the war, when all the great schools had to flee to the far west, it was necessary for students to make all their own equipment, and often they had to hold classes in caves!"
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> So the boys and girls set to work to prepare bricklike slabs of mud baked in the sun, and then to mortar them together with more mud in such fashion as to make usable tables. As they worked together Dwan-twei told of the trek of the universities.
>
> The day in late July when school was ready to be opened was probably the most happily exciting day in the memory of the village. Now there was a chance for the children of the Wang village to discover that learning is life's most important pursuit. Does not goodness itself depend on wisdom and is not wisdom to be found in the words of the sages whose conclusions are written down in books? Not a child in the village but respected the printed word. If a child in walking down the road found any stray scrap of paper bearing written characters he quickly picked it up because it would not be respectful to have the symbols of wisdom trodden underfoot.

To return for a moment to the discussion of last week: for those who were somewhat startled by the assertion of definite mental differences between boys and girls, we suggest a reading of Dr. Lynn White's *Educating Our Daughters.* Dr. White establishes that the *denial* of all psychological differences between the sexes is fully as much a hindrance to the development of a balanced maturity in women as is the acceptance of stereotypes of behavior for the sexes. The medieval university, he shows, went altogether too far in one extreme, but we, as a reaction, have tended to lean excessively in the opposite direction. Apart from Dr. White's arguments, which should be read in the context he provides, there is another general consideration in his support—that is, there are few Leonardo da Vincis among us, and for anyone to become adept in some phase of human endeavor means that he must concentrate first upon development of the talents and propensities most natural to him. The girl who tries to compete in a man's world and at the same time fit herself to *complement* the man's world, seldom is able to conclude both tasks successfully, just as we, if harboring desires to become writers, artists and musicians all at the same time, will have difficulty in acquiring adequate skill in any one of the three fields of expression.

No doubt the modern tendency to eliminate rigid notions of "proper" endeavors for each of the sexes is a good thing. But, as Dr. White points out, while men and women need to include the same ingredients in their lives, it is not natural for men and women to pursue the same objects at identical times in their lives. School, perhaps, may be most rewarding for women before and after a middle span of family-raising years.

FRONTIERS

"The Universe On Our Hands"

ACCORDING to Shailer Mathews, former head of the Chicago University Divinity School, the question, "Do you believe in God?" does not require an answer; what it requires is an education. Increasingly, this attitude is becoming manifest in modern Christian circles. The glib claim of "belief in God" may help to rank a man on the side of ordinary respectability, but it can hardly serve as an indication of his thoughtfulness. Quite conceivably, denial of a belief in God is better evidence of thoughtfulness than any sort of habitual acceptance of conventional religious ideas.

Not long ago, Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick, perhaps the most famous Protestant pastor in the United States, spoke at Pomona College in California on the modern idea of God. His address may be taken as a practical "progress report" on religious thinking in the Western world. Compared to certain Eastern attitudes, his thinking may seem to some to be undeveloped and subject to serious contradictions, yet when set beside the dominant themes in Christian expression of a century ago, Dr. Fosdick's clear declarations amount to some sort of "millennium."

According to a press report, the famous Baptist began by saying:

> The ideas of God are many, varied, and often grotesque, so that debate between theism and atheism is commonly futile, lacking any antecedent clarification of the concept of God; what the atheist denies may not be at all what the theist affirms. . . .
>
> I once asked . . . a youth to describe the God he did not believe in, and when he had finished, I assured him that I no more believed in that God than he did.
>
> "So far as such a deity is concerned," I said, "we both are atheists; but we still have the universe on our hands—what do you really think about it?" And as I probed his mind I found that he was no atheist at all.

Concerning his own thinking, Dr. Fosdick said:

> When asked what my idea of God is, my preliminary answer commonly is that I have none—so fearful am I that the questioner will picture an idea of God as a receptacle, a cup into which the truth about deity can be poured. On the contrary, any idea we humans can have about God is only the near end of an infinite roadway, concerning which we assert that, if followed far enough, THAT road would lead to the truth.
>
> It is a roadway unimaginably longer than our minds can travel, but concerning whose direction we are confident.
>
> Only the dear recognition of this fact can save us from the follies of anthropomorphism.

The approach here offered to the problem seems so good that we are reluctant to add anything at all—or would be, if Dr. Fosdick had stopped there himself. However, he continues with some historical analysis. The God who presided over the Newtonian universe the "world machine"—was some sort of divine watchmaker who had built the universe, set it going, and then retired from the scene to watch it operate. The over-all effect of Darwinism, so far as religious thinking was concerned, he went on, brought God back into the picture as an immanent power in nature, "progressively working out emergent developments." Today, some scientists, Dr. Einstein among them, find their idea of deity represented in "rational cosmic intelligence." Continuing to use the image of a "roadway," Dr. Fosdick remarks:

> He [Einstein] uses intelligence as a roadway leading out to the truth about ultimate reality, but he will not use the rest of personality. As he sees it, "rational cosmic intelligence" is concerned with order; it involves no ethical purposes, is interested in no moral values, is indifferent to the welfare and destiny of persons, is a stranger to any qualities of character such as justice or goodwill.

Dr. Fosdick, however, is willing to add to rational intelligence other qualities to symbolize deity, which he suggests by the expressions "immanent God, unseen Friend, invisible Companion, indwelling presence." With unusual candor, the pastor admits that this conception of God—"God as within the cosmic process and

within human life, accentuates rather than solves the ancient problem of evil":

> How account for all the outrageous horror, brutal cruelty, merciless suffering, abysmal sin, if an intelligent and righteous deity rules creation? How escape the dilemma that if God is all-powerful, He cannot be all-good, and if He is all-good, He cannot be all-powerful? As long as man believes in God he will wrestle with that problem.

But how, we should like to ask Dr. Fosdick, can a God who is intelligent and righteous escape being personal? And if God is personal, how can he escape being "anthropomorphic"?

We see no special reason for concluding that intelligence is a limiting symbol for or aspect of "personality." Why can't there be impersonal as well as personal intelligence—a moral law without a moral law-giver? Why not grant the possibility that intelligence and a law of ethical balance are intrinsic in the consciousness-aspect of the universe—the region of nature inhabited by man? Why must these things be traced to a great "Being"? The dilemma of all-powerful and all-good God versus omnipresent Evil would then no longer exist—or would not exist in such metaphysically insoluble terms.

Dr. Fosdick proposes what seems to us an escape from this dilemma, but does not use it himself. He speaks of "personalities—Jesus Christ above all—in whom the divine is unveiled." This is surely a fair suggestion, although the placing of Jesus "above all" is probably an unnecessary conceit for Christians to indulge. If he would allow Jesus to rank with Buddha, Krishna, and possibly add Pythagoras, Plato, and Lao-tse to the illustrious company in which the qualities of godship become manifest, what need would there be for a wholly undefinable yet all-good and all-powerful "Person" behind the scene? The ancient idea of moral law, *Ananke* among the Greeks, *Tao* for the Taoists, *Karma* for the Buddhists, and Compensation for the Emersonians—surely this would save us from the dilemma created by a personal God, while the great men in whom moral genius has been revealed might stand as examples of the potentialities which lie hidden in all men.