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THE LOGIC OF DISARMAMENT

AMERICAN and European diplomats have for some time, to all appearances, been engaged in the extra-ordinary feat of promoting both armament and disarmament at the same time. To the average man it is not at all clear which they really want, and whether the world is moving toward war or peace. But to the statesmen the paradox is only apparent. We are arming, they explain, in order to disarm; the one is a means to the other. Unless the Russians see—the explanation goes on—that we can and do arm to the hilt, they will not be interested in disarmament.

This theory was recently outlined by Carlos P. Romulo, the Philippines UN delegate, and it has since been echoed by others. In Mr. Romulo's view it is lopsidedness of power that invites war. If the Russians are vastly superior in armaments to the West, they will tend to use them. This was what brought on World War II: Germany was strong while England and France were weak. If then the West can be as strong in armaments as the Soviet, the necessary balance of power will have been re-established, and the Russians will not attack.

There is only one thing wrong with this view, and that is that, historically speaking, it is not correct. Its interpretation of the origin of World War II is questionable, and it overlooks the contrary evidence of World War I. There is just as much chance of war, and possibly more, if both sides are fully armed, as there is if only one side is armed. The tinderbox is then full, and both sides are in a position to touch it off. Sidney B. Fay in his great history of the First World War showed that preparedness and the armament race were among the primary causes of that war. It is also far from certain that the Second World War would have been prevented even if England and France had been militarily strong. Would not Hitler have interpreted their arming as a threat against him? In place of the supposed provocation to "aggression" there would have been the provocation to "defense." And even had Hitler been deterred temporarily, an armament race in modern times has not been stopped or reversed short of war.

This is even more likely to be true today—now that the cost of preparedness has become almost prohibitive. It is extremely unlikely that a state of full preparedness can be maintained very long today without war. It is not possible to sit on present weapons very long because, first, they become obsolete too quickly, and, second, the cost of maintaining them and replacing them becomes an intolerable and senseless burden. Popular sentiment, which flares up under propaganda and cannot encompass the subtleties of diplomats, sooner or later demands a showdown, and this sentiment will be exploited for either war or peace by those with political ends to serve. If there is any sizable sentiment for peace, the war group must then, to counter, push harder in the other direction.

The more realistic persons in Washington and elsewhere are doubtless aware of this and understand that preparedness by its very nature more and more means preparedness for war and not for peace. It is a "one-shot" type of proposition which cannot be kept up very long. During the past two years, possibly because of the recognition of this, there has been a steady and noticeable drift toward the idea of a "preventive war"—that is, toward the idea that war must come eventually, and the West may have to choose the time and place. Such an idea would not be popular, and so it must be hidden while officially the very persons who accept it continue to talk about preparedness as a means to peace. Whether or not we were, as Harry Elmer Barnes and other historians now think, "deceived" into

the second World War, it is all too apparent that we will not get into the third one unless we are "deceived" into it. Every step in the direction of war must then adroitly be presented as a step toward peace.

While this preventive war idea gains ground, the public is befuddled with the thought that if we become strong, Russia will not attack, overlooking the fact that if we become strong and Russia continues to gain ground by other means, it is we who may attack or provoke the Russians to attack. The dangerous analogy between Hitler's Germany and present-day Russia obscures the basic fact that Russia's most powerful weapons are not arms at all, but ideological and economic ones. Militarily preparedness becomes a distraction, taking our eyes off the main ways in which Russian interests are advancing and which cannot be countered successfully by armaments.

When Vishinsky said "We will win by our ideas," this was no empty boast. But it has been lost sight of by the State Department's conclusion that the Korean War means Russia is ready to embark on aggressive wars whenever and wherever military vacuums exist. Russia is more interested in ideological and revolutionary vacuums. If the Korean experience were typical (and not the result of peculiar local factors) Russia would have attacked long ago in Iran and Yugoslavia. But, unlike Hitler, Russia can afford to wait. It can, on the one hand, try to capture the revolutionary and nationalist sentiment in Asia, and, on the other; hope that the West will break its own back economically in Europe.

The essential fact today is that for the past five years American policy has been increasingly dominated by military thinking which shows an amazing inability to understand why Russia will not and does not have to (except perhaps in very special cases) resort to aggressive military adventures. By making it appear that the principal issues today are military ones and that Russia's source of strength is primarily military, this policy has in effect played straight into the Soviet hands. Were the Soviets to embark on aggressive war on a large scale in Europe, they would undermine their chief source of power which is their alignment with progressive ideas. From one point of view the disastrous myth that Russia is in the vanguard of human advance and represents the forces of liberation, equality and humanity is the most powerful weapon in the Soviet arsenal. We should be glad to invite Russia to act in any way which would dispel this myth.

Although we pay lip service to the "war for men's minds," we are doing so poorly in fighting it, that the danger increases all the time that, because we cannot beat Russia in that area (especially in Asia), we will try to beat her by outright war. While we have been feverishly arming we have not been acting as if we really wanted peace. The Western disarmament proposal made at Paris by Dean Acheson was basically insincere because it was made with the prior knowledge that the Russians could not accept it, since this proposal specified as the *sine qua non* that the Russians—together with other nations—reveal their conventional armaments in which they are strongest—before America revealed her atomic weapons—in which we excel.

There are, unfortunately, several good grounds for suspecting that, with China gone Communist and the rest of Asia tending the same way, the United States does not really want peace and disarmament, and that even if the Russians should make an honest proposal in this direction, the West would reject it or try to attach impossible and arbitrary demands to it. This is probably the explanation, or part of it, why the United States has never stated the terms on which it would settle the cold war. It very possibly fears that if the demands were at all reasonable, Russia would accept them, while if they were not reasonable, American insincerity would be exposed. A continuation of the cold war offers the possibility of reversing the Communist trend and of coping with what we do not seem to be able to cope with any other way.

This policy can only be reversed and American influence thrown wholeheartedly and sincerely in the direction of peace if we can bring ourselves to accept the facts of life in Asia—principally the fact that for the foreseeable future China will be Communist and that as Justice William O. Douglas has argued, we must recognize China and admit her to a seat in the UN. We failed in a previous opportunity to do this, which might have helped to prevent the Korean War; we should not fail again. America must withdraw from the Korean War and give up any pretensions to being an Asiatic power. Along with such a step American weight should be thrown on the side of social and economic reforms throughout the Near East and Asia even if this means treading on British, French or Dutch toes. In this way we would begin for the first time to challenge the Russians where they are really strong and in the only "war" which is likely to be really decisive.

The fear of war breaking out is matched today by a deep, only partly conscious fear of peace breaking out. Subconsciously, particularly as regards our economic life, remembering the depression and the gloomy prophecies of the thirties, we do not feel equal to the problems of peace, and this constitutes a powerful incentive to keep the cold war going. We are still in a kind of post-depression shock and hangover. Because our social imagination hardly dares to envisage what we would do if we had to live in a peaceful world, we prefer to talk about permanent war crises in which our surplus production can be poured forever down the bottomless pit of preparedness. It is a way out. What we need to live in peace may curiously be something which the Russians have, while what the Russians need (for their problem is analogous) may be something of ours. Apart from special interests on both sides which actively work to obscure these facts, the great majority of Americans and Russians could only profit by more knowledge of each other.

It is time we stopped deceiving ourselves about preparedness, which has never been shown to be anything more than a one-way street to war. If we really want peace, we must begin acting peacefully now. A genuine disarmament proposal, taking into account whatever is just in the Russian view, might still prove successful. But disarmament is so essential if the next war is to be prevented, that the United States should if necessary itself disarm, regardless of what the Russians do. American disarmament would be less likely to invite Russian aggression than the present race to invite "defensive" war. Such a step would make our peaceful intentions unmistakable and by its very boldness would cut through the miasma of suspicion and fear. We would stand fully committed to peace, at whatever risk, and Russia would be forced to follow suit or sacrifice every advantage as champion of "peace." That the Russians would in fact probably follow suit is indicated by the peace campaign which the Soviet leaders feel the necessity to wage within their own orbit.

The beginning of actual disarmament now by the United States would be a true liberation not only for Americans but for people all over the world. It would release funds and energies for improving world living standards. It would be an outstanding example of the kind of leadership the world needs to take it out of the present impasse. It would seize the initiative for peace and stir the hopes and goodwill striving for expression among all peoples. No more powerful blow for democracy and freedom could be imagined. For once a nation would have demonstrated the social imagination and inventiveness required in an atomic age which has made war suicide. Such disarmament is the one immediate road which offers real hope to a world groaning under the back-breaking cost of rearmament, and it would put the present conflict on the higher level of peaceful rivalry where it belongs.

ROY FINCH

New York, N. Y.

Letter from

ENGLAND

LONDON.—Last week there was celebrated throughout England a Sunday of Thanksgiving for the restoration of the King to comparative health, following his operation for lung resection. This emotional gesture of a people is, no doubt, the result, in part, of organized official action, in particular that of the State Church. Yet behind what has the surface appearance of a crude form of near-superstitious mumbo-jumbo, there is a psychological phenomenon that has a significance for all who would understand the gestures of man in the mass, his emotional needs and spiritual yearnings.

Consider the facts. In a world where once-great empires lie in ruins all around, and fallen dynasties—Czars, Emperors, Kings and Dictators—survive mainly as half-forgotten names, our royal House not only survives, but flourishes with new vigour. World wars, tremendous revolutions, strange ideologies, have shaken the world of yesterday from foundations that seemed once to all men permanent and secure. Yet our Monarchy, like a rock in a surge of sea, still survives the tumult of world change. And not only that: but goes from strength to strength. This is a political and psychological mystery and marvel that has for long perplexed and, who knows, filled with envy, peoples of other lands.

The role of Kingship does not change as ideal: it is to exercise power for good. In primitive societies the King in person guides the State and leads his armies into battle. Today, the direction of State affairs falls to elected governments, and armies are led by generals. What power, then, is residual for the sovereign; and what purpose can be served by a continued monarchy?

It is not difficult to describe the sort of power exercised by, say, Edward II and Elizabeth. Those sovereigns initiated, they directed the affairs of state, enjoying a double prestige that inherent in power itself, and that emanating from force of character. Today, the monarchy stands above the strife of political parties and exercises no more direct part in government. What is the explanation? I think it is true to say that the power of the British monarchy, greater today than ever in our thousand years of history, draws its sustenance from sources other than political authority: they are psychological in essence. It is the Magnum Pater image to which the people respond emotionally, as mankind responds in diverse ways to the Deity Image which, according to Freud, is but an extension of the Magnum Pater image of which monarchy is the exemplar. In a sense a Royal Family partakes of the character of a Holy Family. Its power and prestige are independent of the personal qualities of the monarch, always provided he is one who endeavors to fulfill his high office; for nobody would dispute the proposition that no bad King could hold the Throne of Britain today.

A great king is not necessarily a great or clever man. But he must be a good man. For his power flows from his virtues, however homely: from devotion to duty, from self-dedication, the exercise of the cardinal virtues. These may be greater achievements than brilliance in the practise of the arts, than intellectual distinction. For the ordinary citizen the King is, in one sense, remote. He is surrounded by pomp, he moves remote from the run of common men, a glittering figure seen at some grand ceremonial or state occasion. And yet, and this is the paradox—he is very close, imaginatively, to all.

Today, it is probably true to say that this symbol of unity and a mystic common ALL-FATHER on the earthly plane is all that holds that congeries of English-speaking peoples together which, until so recently, constituted the British Empire. To sum up, then, the strength of monarchy in Britain lies in the emotional nature of man. It may be a form of idol worship and in many ways it does so approximate. But the lesson of this century is that Man demands some such form. No Kaiser, a Hitler, then. Is it, perhaps, by some process of a like will to revere and venerate a central figure, that the United States has, more than once, come near to the deification of a great President? Or is there some more profound reality in man, an inner resource, perhaps, as yet unrealized by man in the mass, for which such polytheistic ruler- and father-images are substitutes? The hope of an altogether free and self-reliant society makes us think so.

ENGLISH CORRESPONDENT

REVIEW

POINTS OF INTEREST IN EASY READING

FOR those who find constructive values in dramatization, and therefore enjoy fiction which is usefully provocative, John Steinbeck often seems something of an enigma. Those who were held enthralled by Steinbeck's beautiful retelling of a Mexican folk tale in *The Pearl* may have wondered at the crassness of other of his productions such as *Cannery Row* and *The Wayward Bus.* Steinbeck is, indisputably, a man of considerable complexity. At times a hard "realist," who is moreover not altogether above pandering to the popular thirst for sensation, he is, at other times, as he described one of his characters in *Tortilla Flat,* "a lover of beauty and a mystic."

Burning Bright, published by Viking in 1950, is the author's latest example of his own kind of"mysticism." *Burning Bright* is also a literary experiment in its attempt to combine the forms of the play and the novel. Having seen little comment on this volume, we hazard the guess that it has so far fallen a bit flat, yet the work is at least interesting in both intent and development. Steinbeck's desire to transcend the limitations of the play-form stems from his determination to find a better way for expressing the inward thoughts and attitudes of his characters. As in *Tortilla Flat,* he invents his own language to convey the essential thoughts and feelings of his characters. (This is, of course, a complete about-face from the techniques used in *Grapes of Wrath.* In *Burning Bright,* the most complete perceptions and aspirations *potential* for each of the characters are translated into words, and the characters are allowed to speak them.)

One of Steinbeck's earliest works, *To a God Unknown,* might be called a forerunner of this latest novel, as to central theme. But while the mysticism of *To a God Unknown* was somber and depressing, that of *Burning Bright* creates a different psychological effect. Steinbeck's focus for mysticism, in both, is fecundity. Just as the vast generative powers of earth are brooded upon by those who speak for Steinbeck in *To a God Unknown,* in *Burning Bright* the theme is the will-to-generation-and-perpetuation-of-species, which the author feels to be an essential reality in all mature men. Steinbeck now seems to have partially clarified a subject which long ago claimed his interest and, clarifying it, he transcends some of the limitations which may be said to surround his earthy mysticism. The conclusion of *Burning Bright,* in which the leading character has been haunted by his unrealizable desire to have a child for continuance of his blood inheritance, shows a wider, almost metaphysical transformation of viewpoint:

> I know that what seemed the whole tight pattern is not important. Mordeen, I thought, I felt, I knew that my particular seed had importance over other seed. I thought that was what I had to give. It is not so. I know it now.
>
> I thought my blood must survive—my line—but it's not so. My knowledge, yes—the long knowledge remembered, repeated, the pride, yes, the pride and warmth, Mordeen, warmth and companionship and love so that the loneliness we wear like icy clothes is not always there. These I can give.
>
> It is the race, the species that must go staggering on. Mordeen, our ugly little species, weak and ugly, torn with insanities, violent and quarrelsome, sensing evil—the only species that knows evil and practices it—the only one that senses cleanness and is dirty. that knows about *cruelty* and is unbearably cruel.
>
> This is the only important thing. I've walked into some kind of hell and out. Our dear race, born without courage but very brave, born with a flickering intelligence and yet with beauty in its hands. What animal has made beauty, created it, save only we? With all our horrors and our faults, somewhere in us there is a shining. That is the most important of all facts. *There is a shining.*

Here we see Steinbeck passing to a sympathy, whether consciously or no, for some of the oldest symbolisms of spiritual rebirth. Here, too, we have the thought of progressive inner awakenings for every human being.

For those who have at times accused Steinbeck, not entirely without justification, of trading on sensual experience and dwelling on the casual aspects of love, the following passage will seem perhaps both surprising and important. The Catholic Pope said something similar a while ago, but

Steinbeck is trying to present what he feels to be a *law of nature,* carrying with it its own inspiration towards what people call "a higher morality." The following occurs during a discussion of love affairs:

> When the bodies of man and woman meet in love there is a promise—sometimes so deep buried in their cells that thinking does not comprehend—there is a sharp promise that a child may be the result of this earthquake and this lightning. This each body promises the other. But if one or the other knows—beyond doubt that the promise can't be kept—the wholeness is not there; the thing is an act, a pretense, a lie, and deeply deep, a uselessness, a thing of not meaning.

Turning now to an entirely different sort of novel, we can recommend several passages in *A Room on the Route,* by Godfrey Blunden, for those who would like to try to come closer to some of the psychological mysteries of the Communist movement. (In Edmond Wilson's history of the Russian revolution, *To the Finland Station,* incidentally, we find good background for *A Room on the Route,* and vice versa.) Blunden writes feelingly of that time when the earliest Russian revolutionists knew a kind of superman strength as they visualized the making of a new world. Today, of course, the original revolutionaries are nearly all dead. They became dangerous to the reactionary regime that followed the revolution, just as centuries before, the idealists and dreamers of 1789 became dangerous, and fell before the French guillotine. We select for readers one passage, as spoken inwardly in retrospect by a woman whose husband was one of the first revolutionists:

> Who remembers us? Only those who feared us are alive to remember us, for we are all dead. And these young ones, these young men from another generation, from another country, bringing good will and learning, what can they know of us (yet we might have changed their world!). Now, looking at them, one sees the earnestness, the effort to bridge time, the detachment, the scientific interest, but it is impossible to convey to them the feeling of our time; for the spirit dies, is crushed and withers, and cannot be revived in words. How can they know how we felt then, for we were young; in us was the youth of a thousand years, the energy of centuries of repression bursting forth; we were like a volcano held down by the pressure of the ocean suddenly erupting, boiling upward. What scalding energy we had! We could do anything, we had the strength, the physical strength of workers, and among us there was genius and talent and skill, the whole world was ours. How can others know the freedom we enjoyed? How can they know what it is like to live without the threat of starvation or exploitation, without the need of money or property, without superstition, without class inferiority? How can you, whose life is confined by the necessities of earning, of accumulating property, of acknowledging authority, narrowed by envy and ambition, compressed by prejudice and precept and precedent, how can you understand how it was with us, free from all bourgeois pressures, from want, from religion and moral codes, free to live and to love as we liked, free to work? Who has ever known such freedom? Who has ever been happier than we?
>
> Rachel in her small room, quietly lost in remembrance.
>
> Remembering the happiness with Vanya, how they shared together this feeling of freedom, feeling that now it was their mission to bring it to the world, to bring it to the oppressed and poverty-ridden. Remembering, with amusement, how their happiness was so great and so genuine that it deceived the Polish border guards, as they walked across the border, arm in arm, herself pregnant, so happy together, Vanya jaunty again, smiling at the guard and the guard smiling back, never thinking they might be Communists, and they walking through on the road into Germany.

It is possible to feel a great surge of warmth and sympathy for Rachel and her husband and their friends—even perhaps a bit of nostalgia, for some essence of such dreams may have been present in the dreams of our own youth, even if we had never heard of "Communism." It must be possible also to have hope that great courage and originality have not entirely died in the harsh thought-confines of present Russia.

COMMENTARY
CITIZENS OF EAST AND WEST

WE ought, in fairness to readers, to confess to a special admiration felt for certain individuals of the modern world—men and women who, whatever their local race or nationality, cannot be thought of as "belonging" *to* anything less than the world community. It is, we suppose, the truly cosmopolitan spirit which generates this feeling. Sutan Sjahrir, for example, quoted in this week's Frontiers, is an Indonesian patriot, and something more. He is a man who is master of two cultures and civilizations—the Eastern and the Western. Gandhi, perhaps, was another example of this achievement, and Nehru even a better one. These men have each embodied in varying measure the genius and dynamic activity of Western liberalism, exhibiting different aspects of it in their lives, while expressing also the depth and variety of Eastern traditionalism and sagacity.

There have been Westerners who, in the course of their lives, developed a corresponding grasp of the Eastern outlook and genius. Edmond Taylor, in whose *Richer by Asia* we never tire of browsing and mining, is one illustration, and a generation ago, G. Lowes Dickinson, that mellow Englishman of philosophical bent, found in himself a chord of profound understanding of the East.

Writing of his travels in the Orient, Dickinson devoted a brief chapter in *Appearances* (Doubleday, 1914) to the story of the Buddha, told in statuary by the images of the great temple of Borobudur, in Java. This, he felt, is what it meant:

> . . . all this sculptured gospel seems to bring home to one, better than the volumes of the learned, what Buddhism really meant to the masses of its followers. It meant surely, not the denial of soul or God, but that warm impulse of pity and love that beats still in these tender and human pictures. It meant not the hope or desire for extinction, but the charming dream of thousands of lives, past and to come, in many forms, many conditions, many diverse fates. The pessimism of the master is as little likely as his high philosophy to have reached the mind and heart of the people. The whole history of Buddhism, indeed, shows that it did not, and does not. What touched them in him was the saint and the lover of animals and men. And this love it was that flowed in streams over the world, leaving wherever it passed, in literature and art, in pictures of flowers or mountains, in fables and poems and tales the trace of its warm and humanising flood.

This, too, it would be well for the West to learn to understand.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves

SINCE some parents who read this column do not admit to the label of "Christian," it seems important to suggest that every parent and teacher, labelled or unlabelled, purchase the Dec. 19 issue of the *Christian Century*, which contains a special twenty-four page section of analysis and comment on the UMT (Universal Military Training) Commission's Report to Congress. Whoever reads this valuable contribution to increased understanding of the factors at work in this crucial time of educational history will certainly be convinced of one thing—UMT means a thoroughgoing psychological reorientation of American youth, almost from the cradle, and directed toward complete acceptance of a military scale of values.

Those who have developed respect for the judgment of such citizens as Robert M. Hutchins, Pearl S. Buck and Albert Einstein will give serious heed to the warning which all three issue—the warning that we must resist "the clutch of militarism." Dr. Hutchins writes:

> Though free and independent citizens make the best army, the army is not the best place to make free and independent citizens. The place for that is the educational system. If the system is not doing its job, let us reform it. Let us not delude ourselves into thinking that universal military training can do what the educational system ought to do.

Pearl Buck, as if in continuation of Dr. Hutchins' remarks, concludes her own piece as follows:

> Our ancestors forsook Europe, many of them, in order to escape such conscription as UMT, because they had learned by experience that where all men prepare for war, war becomes inevitable. It is strange irony that now, after winning the worst of world wars, we should believe that peace depends upon training, not for peace and the prevention of war, but for war itself and the shaping of young men's minds toward war.
>
> There is very little time left. A few weeks from now, a month or two, it may be too late. Unless the parents of our boys declare their determination now against the yoke of universal militarism, we may find ourselves fettered and our sons absorbed into a system which is opposed to the fundamental elements of our democracy. It is easier to prevent UMT now than it will be to remove it later. The clutch of militarism upon the people of any country is strangling. Freedom is involved, the freedom of our sons to be themselves and to develop through civilian and not military education. We are a nation of civilians, our government is civilian and must always remain so. We must not allow our citizens to become militarists, under the pretext of fear. There is no reason for fear. Our strength is not in UMT and can never be. Our strength is in the high quality of our citizens, a quality which can be produced only if our nation remains free from the rule of military minds.

Dr. Einstein places the problem in a broader context:

> In the long run national armament does not produce security, but only increases the danger of conflict. The alternative to UMT is world government as the exclusive source of stabilizing power.
>
> If the United States introduces universal military training it will intensify the conviction everywhere that also in the foreseeable future the problems of the world will be decided by brute force, instead of by supranational organizations.

We recommend for correlative reading an article published in *Coronet* for October, entitled "Classroom Movies." The author, Frank H. Grover, describes the way in which high-school motion pictures, the most effective means of youth-propaganda to date, are to become a focus for the cooperation of innumerable Boards of Education with the Department of National Defense:

> The diverse efforts of school administrators, educational leaders, and private industry were all being focused on a single objective: to make available to the schools of the nation for the school year 1951-52 an adequate series of instructional films which would help young people prepare to give their best to, and make the most of, military service.

All of those concerned in advancing this program are obviously convinced that Universal Military Training is a necessity, and that

conscientious efforts to aid intelligent adjustment are the duty of well-wishers of youth. Mr. Grover sums up this viewpoint:

> With the beginning of the Korean War, and especially with the passage of the Universal Military Training and Service Act last June by Congress, the nation endorsed new principles which demand great psychological adjustments by our young people and by their parents.
>
> We now, as a nation, have declared that boys in high school will be trained to fight, no matter what their past experience. . . . We do not know whether or not war will come; if it does come, we don't know when it will come. These boys may be men with sons of their own in high school before the next war. But these boys will be trained for military service.
>
> Here we have a great shift in thinking and in values, a big change in our social pattern. The most immediate effects of these changes fall on our young people.

Mr. Grover notes that the reconditioning process will perhaps be very difficult to achieve, since "youngsters have been taught to abhor violence and to value 'getting along with others.' This philosophy runs all through their training, from infancy through high school." A tough obstacle, but perseverance can surmount it!

All of the foregoing builds something of a case for any sympathy we may extend to non-conformism on the part of those youths who refuse to submit to military training. Most of these are Pacifists in the traditional sense—that is, they have inherited from parents who are Quakers, members of the War Resisters League, or of the Fellowship of Reconciliation, etc., a strong disposition to oppose any and all forms of militarism. There are others, however, who simply feel that it would be wrong for them to support a military program unless they are sure it is "necessary," and until they are considered old enough to vote against measures of U.S. foreign policy which may conceivably bring war closer.

A few months ago we read with interest a report in a small town paper of a nineteen-year-old conscientious objector's refusal to cooperate with the draft law. This "uncooperative citizen" even refused to fill in a lengthy questionnaire for the presumed establishment of his religious sincerity. Had he complied, he might have been allowed some kind of deferment as a "recognized" C.O. Apparently, he did not like the role of suppliant, for he simply wrote to his draft board, as follows:

> I am convinced that war preparation and war and the struggle for power on which the policy of our own and other nations is essentially based is not in accord with the survival of the American people or with any higher allegiance which I hold, either to mankind or to God. I am glad to make this witness to a Higher Loyalty.

Whatever the word-symbol "God" means to this particular young man, he has a high degree of concern for his social and moral responsibility, and the high courage of a form of independence which did not falter when he was confronted with two three-year concurrent sentences in a U.S. Federal penitentiary. We wonder, by the way, if this young man is really saying anything different from what is said by Pearl Buck and Dr. Einstein, save that he furnishes the statements with a very noticeable exclamation point. Such dramatizations of the present crisis seem worth a great deal of sympathetic attention, whether or not we would ourselves wish, or wish our children, to follow the same course.

FRONTIERS
Life Looks at Asia

THE last "all-out" number of *Life* devoted to a single subject, as we recall, dealt with the issues of education in the United States. The subject was important and *Life* gave it a thorough treatment—as thorough, that is as can be expected of a publication with circulation running over five millions. Now, in its issue of Dec. 31, 1951, *Life* has "done" Asia. As usual, the *Life* editors attain a certain magnificence of coverage. There are beautiful reproductions of Oriental objects of art for the esthetically minded; there are Asiatic movie stars for those interested in how close Chinese, Japanese, Indonesian and other Asiatic actresses can come to Hollywood standards of charm; and there are political analyses for "practical" readers. The core of the presentation is F. S. C. Northrop's discussion of "The Mind of Asia," through which *Life* makes accessible to the Common Man viewpoints ordinarily reserved for Heavy Thinkers.

All in all, the *Life* treatment of Asia is better, it seems to us, than lots of wordage found in less popular magazines, and while the issue may not contribute greatly to Western understanding of the East, it will certainly make the American public more *aware* of certain Asiatic realities, which is a worth-while achievement in itself. And even if *Life* does not really strive for "objectivity" in relation to issues of American foreign policy, in printing the critical statements of Nabih Amin Faris of Lebanon, of Frank Moraes of India, and Sutan Sjahrir of Indonesia, the editors obviously pay their respects to the ideal of objectivity, which is more than many editors will do in time of war. The comments of these three states men are all useful, but Sjahrir's remarks, perhaps because of our prior knowledge of this remarkable Indonesian patriot, seem especially valuable at this juncture of history. Sjahrir addresses Westerners in terms which they can understand. On the matter of "democratic" propaganda to the East, he has this to say:

> In countries where either colonial or autocratic feudal rule has for centuries accustomed people to oppression and a lack of basic human rights, the ugly reports of conditions in totalitarian countries can never sound so terrifying as to people used to the benefits of freedom and democracy.

Of the newborn Eastern republics, he observes:

> The young Asiatic nations are very sensitive on still another point: their technical ability to manage their own economic affairs. Despite political independence, in many places the old colonial powers are still dominating the economic scene. American agencies, working for ECA or EximBank, often do not take into account the historic economic position of foreign nations in Asia. When these agencies insist on thoroughly detailed plans and projects from Asiatic nationalists before they will consent to grant any dollars, the Asian becomes suspicious. He can easily persuade himself that U.S. aid and loans are only weapons for the West to subdue the native economy once again. When the U.S. threatened to withhold food shipments to India because India was not willing to back up U.S. policies in Korea, Asians thought it one more proof that America planned to force her will on the Asiatic people. Even the method by which the Japanese peace treaty was pushed through added to the doubts of Asiatic nations about American respect for their dignity.
>
> Europe's outdated and outmoded regimes in Asia should be deprived of U.S. support entirely. Also, the U.S. should pursue its own fresh approach (the Point Four plan) to helping Asia toward progress and a better living standard. Once these policies are clear, they should be applied with wise psychology and full understanding of opposing viewpoints.

Prof. Northrop's essay is notable in that he proposes a thesis for which MANAS has been contending since the beginning of publication. It is that the views of men on the ultimate questions of philosophy and religion have a profound effect on their behavior. In this article the learned author of *The Meeting of East and West* does something which may be a bit startling to the typical American reader—he identifies as fundamentally the same the psychological attitudes of Christian, Mohammedan, and Jew, because of the characteristic similarity of the God-idea in these three religions.- This similarity is discussed

in a passage seeking to explain the psychology of Islam:

> The mentality of Islam is grasped in its essentials therefore when the beliefs common to the three Semitic religions—Judaism, Christianity and Mohammedanism—are specified and when the unique revelations which Islam believes God to have given man through Mohammed are added. We find two basic common principles: First, both nature and man are the creation of an omniscient and omnipotent personal God who is immortal and *determinate* in character. (By *determinate* is meant anything definite with characteristics different from those possessed by something else. For example, the sun has the determinate shape of a sphere, and dice have the determinate properties of a cube.) Second, each individual person has a determinate immortal soul, different from that of any other person.

From these "determinate" views of the highest, Prof. Northrop suggests, the Western nations have developed precise or "determinate" ideas of good and evil. And while he does not press this conclusion further, we might add that the codified morality of the West often takes the form of dogmatic self-righteousness and violently militant crusading in behalf of "the right."

In contrast is the non-determinate philosophizing of Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism. For hundreds of millions in the Far East, it is the *indeterminate* which is the real. Prof. Northrop finds in the *Bhagavad-Gita* the key to the ethical outlook of the Far East, where the immanent reality of *Brahman*—the True Self in all things—is honored above determinate forms and values:

> The good is to dedicate one's self to the indeterminate, all-embracing immediacy which is Brahman and to give up determinate desires and actions, treating them as the worldly and transitory things which they are. But man is in part transitory and determinate as well as in part the indeterminate, unlimited formlessness which is his true self or Brahman. Thus man on earth must acquiesce in the transitory, determinate earthly state of affairs as well as the timeless, divine formlessness. Hence Krishna tells Arjuna that he must act.
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> However, his action must be of a particular kind. To act so as to accept the world, cherishing the victory of battle or regretting the defeat it may bring, is evil. This is to turn the relative and the transitory into the absolute and the timeless. Arjuna's action will be good, Krishna tells him, only if he acts with nonattachment. In other words, one accepts the determinate, earthly deeds and facts of life for whatever they may be, ugly or beautiful, with indifference or nonattachment. One is in the muck of the world, but not of it.

The Yale professor of philosophy thus sets up the psychological and philosophical differences between East and West, and one could wish that he had stopped there, without attempting to interpret particular acts and policies, such as Nehru's conduct in relation to the Korean war, in the light of the rather far-reaching assumptions involved. When he attempts to turn his analysis into a tract for the times, the result becomes a species of special pleading. We may be grateful, however, for Prof. Northrop's brave attempt to convey the idea that philosophy directly affects conduct—that what a man thinks about the ultimate nature of things has a "determining" influence on what he thinks of his fellow men, and how he deals with them.

One could wish, again, that the *Life* editors had reminded themselves of Edmond Taylor's *Richer by Asia* (Houghton Mifflin, 1947), and had asked the author of this important volume to comment on Prof. Northrop's thesis. Taylor's pungent prose, it is true, might have turned the *Life* "treatment" of Asia into something of a bombshell, if not a boomerang, but the values gained would quite possibly have been worth the risk. However, in reading Taylor, it is necessary to remember that he is examining the East for what he may learn about the West—the mistakes and delusions of the West—for the benefit of himself and of other Westerners. He is not writing to make himself and his countrymen feel either "superior" or "inferior" to Indians, but as an experiment in self-discovery. Obviously, he is grateful to the East, to India in particular, for what he has been able to learn from his stay in that part of the world. This, after all, is the only sort

of "use" it is legitimate for a man to make of other lands and peoples.

On the question of the political ideas and attitudes of Indians, Taylor writes:

> Indians—at least the Hindus—I decided, were more successful than we are at dissociating their feelings about a human being from their feelings about his ideas. More than that, they had a different feeling about ideas, about political truth. Again, it seemed to me, this attitude stemmed from their religious traditions.
>
> Hinduism, unlike Christianity (or Marxism), is not a religion of revealed truth but of truths—truths which by their very plurality are suggestive guideposts to the discovery of God rather than unbreakable rules for salvation. Men are pilgrims and each man in his own age must find his own way to God. . . .
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> Carried over into politics this attitude makes for mutual tolerance among followers of different political creeds having roughly similar goals, and even for a measure of understanding among those who pursue antithetical goals—doubtless the Hindu has a vague feeling that, just as all religious paths lead to God, so do all political paths lead to some goal of human betterment.
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> With us, truth, faith, right belief are absolutes finally and immutably revealed. Right belief is salvation and error is damnation. Because error is damnation it is damnable—and infectious. It is not just a personal misfortune but a community menace. . . . A young soldier in Franco's armies during the Spanish Civil War once explained it to me this way:
>
> "We don't hate the Communists or want to punish them. It's just that Communism is an incurable disease they are spreading around so we have to put them out of the way. We have to rid Spain of this disease and there is no other way of doing it.". . .
>
> In our zeal to exalt or safeguard the pedigrees of truth and error we develop rigidly systematic ideologies which often come perilously close to those that flourish among the paranoid cases in our insane asylums—so close sometimes as to be indistinguishable. That clumsy adjective on page 59 of Comrade X's new novel is the cryptic footprint of a latent Trotskyism, the League of Nations failed because it did not insist upon conducting its business in Esperanto, and the weather is less bracing than it used to be because the New Deal has undermined Free Enterprise. . . .
>
> The cultural humus in which a great number of our specific delusions grow is a threefold delusion of rightness, which apparently the Indians do not have, or have less of: Our sense of rightness is apt to be excessively authoritative, our being right confers a quite disproportionate merit on us—and makes disagreement heinous as well as wrong—and the principle about which we are right has transcendent consequences.

This "rightness," it seems clear, is the natural child of the "determinate" view of "God" and morality to which the West is heir. And as Edmond Taylor suggests, while Asia may have its own delusions, this is one which is far less noticeable in the Far East.