

## A SOCIALIZING TREND

THE world of independent socialist thinking is now well aware of the fact that the Russia of today represents the most gigantic betrayal of socialism in history, and it is possible to say that the most reactionary members of American capitalist society are those who most envy the position and power of the Russian commissar. Marx reasoned that "capitalism" would grow more and more oppressive, while socialism, after the period of the "dictatorship of the proletariat," would become freer and freer until government and its necessity vanished. He also held that socialist revolution would happen soonest in the most industrialized countries, and that a socialist nation would not fight for territory. Events proved exactly opposite on all four counts.

The moderate socialist parties are little more aware of Marx's doctrinal fallacies than are the Communists, but they gain great moral and practical superiority over them in action, by accepting the principle that changes come about most beneficially when accompanied by the least violence.

The theory of the "class war," held by both communists and socialists, received a severe blow in the case of Britain, where the present socialist regime was a "class victory" only in theory. Socialists in general, preoccupied by traditional theory, have not realized, even in the case of Britain, that a stable socialism might come about by quite other means than the "class war"—through, that is, a functional, almost non-political, adjustment between representative government and mechanized civilization. (Here we define "socialism" as government-apportioned production and consumption.) The wasteful and destructive effects of mechanized civilization upon natural resources tend to produce class poverty and starvation. Mechanization has the same effect as increase of population because more per capita

is consumed. America of today, with a population of 145 millions, is running short on natural resources that would support India's 400 millions on a modest but fairly comfortable standard of living for generations to come.

Under the American system of political economy, continued luxury for a few and hunger for the masses due to increasing shortages are improbable developments. The prosperity of American capitalists—in fact, their existence as such—depends upon continued mass consumption. The inevitable answer to shortage is rationing—obviously a socialist technique. At the present writing, California, owing to drought and increased population faces a serious shortage of both water and electric power. Recently the California offices of one of the most influential corporations in America received imperative notice that unless power consumption were reduced forthwith by 10 per cent, *all* its power would be shut off! The Water Users' Association of the Salt River Valley of Arizona has assumed authority over the distribution of water from private wells, meeting no opposition because no other way could be found for handling the situation. Similarly, the current socialistic regime in Britain has its real basis in the impact of shortages upon a democratic community. There the shortages were accelerated and in part produced by war, but were inevitable, anyway, in a world of diminishing resources and vanishing empire. Scandinavia long ago met the problem of poor resources, in somewhat different fashion but with equally "socialistic" measures, although not according to Marx in either impetus or method.

The shortage crisis and its effects are far-reaching and ever-widening in America. Oil shortages exist—of temporary duration at present because of a shortage of refineries—but sooner or later to become permanent. Steel shortages exist

because of too few foundries, but also increasingly because of diminishing ore deposits.

In discussing the impending necessity of rationing fuel oil, makers of fuel-oil burners have been reprimanded for continuing to produce. They can be easily enough stopped: steel can be rationed or new installations forbidden; but the oil shortage alone may be expected to accomplish the limitations—a much easier method than expropriation and a bureaucratic attempt to operate the country's business. The opportunities and profits of "private enterprise" are fast diminishing; its risks and responsibilities increase, and there is nothing anyone can do about it. It is Nature's response to the greed of man: "That's all there is—there isn't any more!" Billions of tons of good earth are washed into the gulf of Mexico each year by greedy and ignorant tilling; there is less food because there is less good land. Once accustomed to rationing other things, we will easily accept the rationing of food. Ultimately, unless greed and ignorance give way to wisdom and thought for the future, hunger, will become a constant and omnipresent visitor on the American scene.

Except for human greed, Marx would never have written; meanwhile, the lessons in cooperation and equity that man has accepted from Marxian hands only when armed with fire and sword, are now accepted glumly but peaceably at the hands of the new socialist prophet—the Ration!

Thus socialism advances, not because of capitalist "oppression" according to Marx, but because the capitalists have served the desires of the people *too* well. It arrives, not on the heels of a capitalist system devastated by war or planned sabotage, but as the result of a system that is exhausting natural resources *too* efficiently.

Already the American "rich" man works 90 per cent of his time for the Government as a result of the income tax, and industrial inroads into our resources promise to deliver him entirely into the communal hands. What comes next? Materially

speaking, the outlook is grim enough for the coming generations of Americans, whose current forefathers have been doing the same thing to their national heritage that the extinct empires of Asia Minor did to lands now desert wastes, and that the once-rich Chinese did to their own once-fertile country.

From a wider point of view, given the essentials of food, clothing, and shelter—human misery or happiness depends upon attitudes much more than upon things. Given freedom from the bitterness and envy born of obvious inequities, forced back upon the practically endless inner resources of the human self for "entertainment," and given the renewed zest for life that comes from the immediate and visible importance of effort in terms of essentials, the "poorer" America of the future may yet achieve that spiritual leadership that cannot coexist with lush plenty and idle self-indulgence.

The prospect is that the stern decree of Waste will turn man's foolish wrath from his fellow-man to his own individual greed and stupidity, and this, indeed, might lead to the Socialism of intelligent cooperation. Hate must have a human objective, and can be speedily dissipated in the implacable vastness of a Nature marching upon men as its common and indistinguishable victims. If we have failed to establish a fraternity based upon universal plenty, we may find bonds of unity in the meeting of a universal need.

## *Letter from* **GERMANY**

AMERICAN ZONE, GERMANY.—Has it been possible to overcome Nazism by the artificial revolution called "denazification"? This question will be asked anew, when, in a few weeks, the political clean-up will officially come to its end in the US occupation zone. [The writer, now acting as a Public Prosecutor in the Denazification program, has had opportunity for first-hand observation of this problem. During the Nazi regime he was active in the underground movement and suffered a long imprisonment.]

The past eighteen months of practical work in this line give but little reason for an answer in the affirmative, and there will be not a few people to say that the Germans have failed in the first political problem which they had to solve on their own. But if the elimination of the nazis from government and the national economy—as well as bringing them to justice—has not been executed as thoroughly as a liberal democratic world could ask, what are the reasons?

First, denazification is a political problem greater than that given to any nation to solve. Its peculiarity follows from the extent of the crimes as well as from the number of those having taken part in them. For the offenses against body and life, the destruction of material goods and civilisation, in short, the backsliding of a whole continent into the darkest barbarism, was not only the work of a small diabolical clique, but the result of a fanatical mass movement.

Strictly speaking, denazification meant first of all that nearly half of all Germans were concerned by the law published on March 5, 1946. A total of 28 per cent of the entire population belonged to the Nazi Party or to one of its affiliations, and to this figure their dependents have to be added, for wives and children are equally affected when their bread-winners suffer professional restrictions and are sentenced to considerable punishments.

In the US occupation zone, 3.3 millions were involved by the law in question. After the amnesty for young people and less important nazis, there still remained 1.4 million functionaries, i.e., influential nazis and party members of long standing, the so-called "old combatants." It should be realized that within this large number of nazis, all those who were guilty of individual crimes hid themselves, or their past, if they were able. The discovery of their crimes was possible only with the active assistance of the rest of the population, opposed to the nazis. Considering the proportion of this problem, it is not surprising that denazification has been imperfectly carried out.

It is hardly necessary to point out that the democratic movement in Germany got such hard political blows in the past that its formations have been almost destroyed. Among the nearly 12 million victims who lost their lives in concentration camps and houses of correction were hundreds of thousands of brave combatants of the German democratic movement, and those, having been wiped out by the Hitler terror, are sorely missed today, for they were the most active and the most experienced opponents of nazism. Their influence on the youth, having decreased already before 1933, vanished completely during the years of the Hitler regime. Hence, the present German youth—ordinarily the brightest and purest flame of revolution—is totally passive toward the present political rearrangement. Without an active youth movement, the signs of over-age and the corresponding fatigue are clearly in evidence.

National socialism deliberately catered to those portions of the population which by virtue of social position or mental training had a considerable influence. Although, after the occupation, all former national socialist officials and most of the employers were removed from office by a decree of Military Government, their influence was by no means overcome. Connected with millions of less important party members, they form a closed party of opposition which—

even unorganized—has a great underground influence on public opinion. Money, special knowledge, training, and social prestige are all put into the scale in this fight against exposure and punishment.

As the denazification procedure against every nazi requires the proof of his actual guilt, an array of witnesses for the prosecution is necessary. The increasing reluctance of people to act as witnesses for the prosecution against the nazis must be taken as a political barometer of the nazis' influence. The result is that the criminal activity of those on trial becomes obscure, and consequently they are sentenced lightly or given a short probation. Inevitably, in the course of time, many official positions will be reoccupied by nazis.

During the time of the Weimar Republic, people used to say that the ministers and the porter were republicans, but the ministerial counselors and other experts were still monarchists. There is a great danger that within a short time the German governmental apparatus and the judicial and educational establishments will again be staffed by the opponents of democracy. While it is not likely that National Socialism will be able to regain its power, its mere existence in the very heart of Europe is working as a factor of disintegration, making impossible the creation of a new culture.

Will there be any offset to this dangerous development? It certainly would be wrong for the German democratic movement to await the overcoming of nazism by those from abroad. But it would be a fatal mistake for the progressive powers of the world not to see that political house-cleaning has to be indivisible and universal, passing all national frontiers.

The future behaviour of the German youth will be of great importance for the political development in Germany, especially with regard to the overcoming of National Socialism. At present, German young people experience the new order accompanied by unspeakable need, and they see it followed by unrestrained egotism and

corruption. They see the ruin of the former democratic alliance against Germany and its degeneration into a state of a "cold war." Their present political inactivity does not prevent them from watching the events in Germany clairaudiently and critically. The resulting cynicism, unfortunately, is precisely the culture-medium from which nazism may gain new strength. The dangerous alliance between nazism and youth, therefore, will be eliminated only with the overcoming of economic need and the national tensions.

By reason of the development of modern economy and technical science, our globe resembles a house, the residents of which cannot be indifferent to an epidemic in one of its lodgings. The fight against the epidemics of nazism and militarism is a command of political hygienics which can only be efficient by the mutual assistance of all the residents of that house.

GERMAN CORRESPONDENT

## REVIEW

### PEOPLE WITHOUT HISTORY

A BOOK such as Carlo Levi's *Christ Stopped at Eboli* should be required reading for all those who are unable to define human objectives in any but political terms. Levi is an Italian anti-fascist who was exiled to "forced residence" in a small village in the South of Italy at the outbreak of the Ethiopian War. Christ, according to local tradition, never reached this village, but stopped some distance away—at Eboli—dooming the inhabitants of Gagliano and their descendants to remain forever outside the pale of Christendom. Levi's book is an account of his life among the "pagans" of Gagliano.

Some men live above the level of political thinking, but these Italian peasants live below it. For them, political forces are not rational forces, not anything over which they, as human beings, can exercise a measure of control, but simply brute facts which intrude into their lives in the same way that a storm or a malaria epidemic will take its toll of destruction and death. A class of society that is oppressed and knows it is oppressed will commonly react with cynicism toward political ideas expressed by representatives of those in power, but the Italian peasant is too tired for cynicism. The peasant's attitude toward the State is similar to the fairytale villager's feeling about the dragon which lives in the cave at the foot of the mountain. Now and then, the dragon will carry someone off. It has always been so.

The natives of Gagliano have no sense of history. They tell anecdotes about the past; they remember the brigands who fought against the enemies of the peasants; they know who is for them and who is against them, but they have no feeling of belonging to anything great that is taking place in time.

Levi was kind to the peasants. He managed to remember something of what he learned in medical school—he had graduated, but never

practiced, having become a painter—and he treated their diseases. When the timid mayor of the village delayed permission to Levi to treat a distant sufferer from appendicitis, the peasants armed themselves and Levi could have led a revolt against the fascist authorities. They loved him as children love the dreams of their imagination—for he was a miraculous dream of kindness and understanding come true. And yet, the fascists had Levi on a string. This was no dream, and gave Levi a special place in the village; he, too, suffered at the hands of the State, and so he "belonged."

Only a man like Levi—without political illusions—could understand and help the peasants of Gagliano who were without political ideas. And only a man like Levi, who possessed political intelligence, could give a political definition of the practical necessities of the peasants. When he returned home, he tried to tell his political friends about the needs of Gagliano—of all southern Italy. They could not understand him. Finally, he realized—

they were all worshippers of the State. Whether the State they worshipped was the Fascist State or the incarnation of quite another dream, they thought of it as something that transcended both its citizens and their lives. Whether it was tyrannical or paternalistic, dictatorial or democratic, it remained to them monolithic, centralized, and remote. This was why the political leaders and my peasants could never understand one another. The politicians oversimplified things, even while they clothed them in philosophical expressions. . . . All of them agreed that the State should do something about it, something concretely useful, and beneficent, and legislative, and they were shocked when I told them that the State, as they conceived it, was the greatest obstacle to the accomplishment of anything. The State, I said, cannot solve the problem of the South, because the problem which we call by this name is none other than the problem of the State itself.

Levi gives a page or two to description, in highly abstract terms, of what he calls a "reversal of the concept of political life" which, he says, "is gradually and unconsciously ripening among us." Its meaning, he adds, is "implicit in the peasant

civilization." There is no space to elaborate this idea, and as *Christ Stopped at Eboli* may be bought for a quarter in the Penguin edition, there is no real occasion for it. (A book devoted to Levi's "political and personal philosophy" is supposed to come out this year.)

There would be value, however, in pursuing further a study of peoples who live without politics. The Arab herdsmen described by Bodley in *Wind in the Sahara* have no political idea of progress. The Tibetan farmers and craftsmen with whom Marco Pallis (*Peaks and Lamas*) lived for many months represent another "nonprogressive" society—which, incidentally, is amazingly prosperous and free. Then, going to the past, there is Jules Michelet's *Satanism and Witchcraft*, an extraordinary work issued in English in 1946 (Citadel), in which medieval superstition is passionately explained as a turning to diabolism by the hopeless peasants of Europe. Michelet's sympathy for the victims of feudal Christendom is similar in tone to Levi's compassion for the people of Gagliano, and actually, there seems little difference between the oppressed peasants of the Middle Ages and the peasants of modern Italy.

Reading such books should accomplish one thing. It should give the reader a realizing sense of the vast diversity of human beings, and reveal, in contrast, the extreme provincialism of nearly all theories of centralized political control—theories in which men figure chiefly as units or "counters" in a supposedly ideal system of social organization. Politics cannot give a total view of life. When reformers attempt to devise political structures to encompass not only the mechanisms of social relations, but individual philosophical conceptions and ideals as well, they succeed only in creating another totalitarian scheme.

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### "Book-of-the-Month"

The following considerations in respect to Thornton Wilder's *Ides of March*, current choice of the Book-of-the-Month Club, are not meant to

prove that this is either a book to be embraced or one to be avoided. Mr. Wilder labels his description of the historical scene preceding Caesar's death as an "historical fantasia," making no claim to scholarly reconstruction of one of the world's celebrated dramatic events. Capable reviewers have given a variety of judgments on the merits and demerits of distorting history for literary purposes and in this instance such condemnations are partly disarmed by Mr. Wilder's frank confession of poetic license. What we are interested in, primarily, is why Mr. Wilder's "fantasia" is the particular kind of fantasia it is. While the novel maintains the usual flow of erotic suggestion without which few books today come to be read by the general populace, this trait is in itself no adequate clue to the author's state of mind.

There are many similarities in volumes chosen for Book-of-the-Month consumption. Popular taste will vary considerably from one literary era to another, but certain psychological trends persist. Mr. Wilder's latest work is no exception. He presents ancient Rome's most colorful figures in such a way as to demonstrate his own apparent conviction that all philosophies of life bog down—that the universe simply will not allow man to catch up with it. The author is not offering the public a pretentious work containing "social significance," but is assuring us that his version of the world of Julius Caesar is also the only sensible version of the world we live in today. We are to sympathize with the aberrations of characters who possess a limited sort of brilliance or greatness, but we are not asked to believe that anyone can release himself from the cross-currents of political and sexual intrigue.

Mr. Wilder is telling us what to expect from the world—that the world is what it has always been and will always be—a showy drama without point. There are, he implies, no principles from which the creation of truth, goodness or beauty may be depended upon to flow. This philosophy, incidentally, is that curious modern eclecticism

offered by Ross Lockridge, Jr., in his *Raintree County*—a type of sophistication which glories in its own incapacity to solve the basic problem of human happiness. (There is, possibly, some connection between this spreading defeatism and Mr. Lockridge's own personal tragedy—he died recently by his own hand, despite the phenomenal success of his first novel.)

There was no moral movement in Lockridge's Book-of-the-Month selection nor is there any in the *Ides of March*. Apparently both these authors and the public for which they wrote are content to believe that the whole conception of questing after truth is a naïveté of childish minds. Wilder's Caesar, it is true, discovers many "truths" about the ignorance and irresponsibility of his subjects, and the absurd inconsistencies of the average mind, yet nowhere is it suggested that Caesar's understanding might bring him into deepening relationships with those around him. Intelligence, in such a context, has no clear value.

Caesar is presented as the wisest of Romans, the most capable and the most likable. Yet he is also a man who once stooped to every device, becoming a reformed character only during his last years of administration. The moral seems to be that Caesar, like many energetic men, was quite often a Bad man, yet one who became a *wise* ruler, acquiring virtue by trial and error and by the inspiration of complete fearlessness. Here there may be a not accidental parallel with the modern tendency to admire as capable men of affairs those who have first "achieved," no matter what the cost, and who then transform themselves into sagacious executives with hearts of gold. This is a dangerous habit of thought for people who like to think they are forewarned and forearmed against the menace of Fascism. It is exceedingly doubtful whether the ruthless Caesar of historical record ever became quite the benevolent philosopher depicted by Bernard Shaw and Thornton Wilder. The hope that the responsibility which comes with power will convert ruthless men of action into

men of principle has betrayed numerous political generations, from Caesar's time to our own.

## *COMMENTARY*

### UNFOLDING OUR HISTORY

WE have the feeling—hardly a unique impression—that the world is rapidly reaching a jumping-off place in history. This sense of extremity is not made of the gloom of impending disaster—although that is a concurrent feeling; rather it is a suspicion that we—the modern world—have lived out and finished the kind of existence to which all our familiar objectives and purposes have referred, and that we are ready for something new.

What is good in writing and thinking, today, all seems to have been said before—many times. There is no wish to discard the truths we know, but there exists some inward restlessness to rediscover them in more profound relations than we presently understand.

If, then, we can regard the present as the close of an epoch, and look without anxiety upon the past two thousand years, it seems an inescapable conclusion that all the accumulating disasters of this period have been exactly what should have been anticipated, as necessary results of the kind of men we have been, and what we have done with our lives.

There is even a kind of security in recognizing that we can understand, in principle at least, the present condition of man, by seeing how it has come about. For worse by far than any disaster is the human failure to see its cause. If there is a Hell, and if men can suffer there, its essential torture must be the imposition of incomprehensible events upon minds longing to comprehend, but unable to do so. What else could attack and destroy the truly human essence in men? Conversely, the only heaven worth entering would be a field of ever-increasing knowing and understanding—a pursuit that is never really denied to us, although the restrictions sometimes seem great and intolerable.

Perhaps, as so many of the mystics have said, we carry our goals within us, and unfold our epochs from the recesses of human nature, hoping somehow, through the creation of history, to expose the mysteries of our being and to learn something of ourselves. It is certainly true that no man understands history at all except in the terms of autobiography; and perhaps, again, from the sense of completion which seems implicit in history today, there is an illumination of the self of modern man.

## CHILDREN ... and Ourselves

IF a parent were to try to determine exactly what the most important accomplishment might be in his relation to a child, he would probably settle upon the achievement of honesty. It is a child's tendency towards deceitfulness which disturbs and perplexes a parent. To be disturbed by any form of dishonesty is natural, for all human relationships are seriously interrupted by deception, yet the parent who is perplexed at the emergence of deceit in children can usually find partial explanation in the various forms of deceit he has been practicing himself. Some words of Thomas a Kempis addressed to the problem of war are applicable also to the problem of honesty. "All men desire peace, but few men desire those things which make for peace." It is the same with truth.

Though all parents desire their children to be completely honest and open with them, the task of learning *how* to be completely honest with a child often seems too difficult. We never, for long, fool children. Often they sense insincerity in adults more quickly and directly than will, for example, a business associate. And when children are forced to talk with deceitful parents, there is little encouragement for them to be honest themselves.

There are also some forms of deceit that are never questioned, simply because they have been repeated so many times. For instance, do not many parents, especially those who cultivate a possessive attitude toward their children, labor unceasingly to convince them that they, the parents, "love" the children more than anyone else possibly could? Every parental declaration of the noble "sacrifices" they have endured for the sake of their children is an effort to chain down the child's capacity for love, thus localizing it for the future enjoyment and benefit of parents. In the first place, it is never certain that the parent is so noble as to be able to offer the finest and most complete love which the child may ever share.

Second, parents who lay claim to virtue because of "sacrifices" made on behalf of children are neither virtuous nor have they actually sacrificed anything, really. Nothing done with a view to producing a desired result may correctly be called sacrifice. It is only an exchange. And anything done in the natural fullness of love is never considered as "sacrifice." It is simply a spontaneous motion of one human being to express a deeply felt closeness with another, and seeks neither flattery nor reward. There is only one form of action meriting the designation "sacrifice" in a philosophical sense, that of the man who places all he has upon the altar of a principle. The man who conceives himself to be "sacrificing" for a *person* is simply one more calculating human, bargaining for results.

So that which a parent "does" for a child could be more honestly interpreted as something the parent *wants* or *desires* to do. The child can learn more by puzzling about why a parent "wants" to help him and be affectionate to him than he can by feeling a somewhat uneasy sense of obligation for sacrifices supposedly made on his behalf. This might be the child's opportunity to learn that there are forms of love which he does not yet comprehend, and this can lead to the respect for parents which is a forerunner of mature love in the child himself.

It might be asserted that there is no love without honesty, and no honesty without at least some kind of love. Honesty and love are both expressions of trust in another's integrity. If we cannot achieve the one, we shall never have the other. For this reason, then, it is urged that the child should know something of the actual emotional states of a parent. To let the child think that he is loved in exactly the same way, no matter what he does, simply because he is the parent's child, is to give him what seems a peculiarly erroneous notion of spontaneous and complete love. If he ever comes to think that "love" can be guaranteed by the setting up of a family institution, he will encounter great subsequent

confusion. Perhaps the clearest way of stating this point would be to say that we think love is a by-product of consistent mutual fairness and regard—a manifestation of an inspiring harmony rather than the daily structure of an affectionate relationship. Daily affection can be offered—consistent regard and fairness can be striven for, but personal love itself is not striven for. It simply "is" or "is not," in varying degree, according to the amount of indirect preparation which has preceded it. Parents may be momentarily shocked out of an emotional state of love by a child's actions, and this, perhaps, the child can understand.

Each child has excellent *opportunities* for love with parents. Love may be thought of as that which naturally exists when no barriers of temperament block sympathetic understanding. All men can love all men, though those of the same family may more easily find complete emotional understanding through the media of hereditary similarities and proximity.

There are, of course, many definitions of "love," and in the context of the present discussion perhaps all of them should be investigated. For our purposes, the most serviceable one is as follows: "Love is the outgoing of soul towards something that is regarded as excellent or beautiful." Another dimension can be added to this definition by saying that the greatest love in any human relationship is a *mutual* "outgoing of soul." Love, then, is a spontaneous ultimate expression of a unity mutually felt and enjoyed. Something less than this may correctly be called respect, passion, fair consideration, adoration or possessiveness. And we invariably do love, whether we would like to have it this way or not, differently at different times, according to the degree of mutual "giving" that occurs under varying circumstances, and in the midst of variable psychological and moral states. Love, fortunately, seems also to have another qualification. We do not love only those who have the most spectacular capacities, but may

feel full love for anyone who *gives* fully, who lives to the limit of his present abilities. This, again, is because we unconsciously equate the excellence of persons with the whole-heartedness of their giving.

## *FRONTIERS* SCIENCE AND FREEDOM

GRANTING that the average man knows little and cares less about what some anthropologist may say concerning the human race, and granting, too, that this popular indifference toward current scientific theorizing may in some ways be a good thing, it is still of some importance to be acquainted with what the scientists are thinking—or seem to be thinking—about man. There always come times—usually hard times—when the average man turns to the experts for practical assistance, and there is evidence that if he should ask for such help today, the professional advice of anthropologists would be at least bewildering.

For example, if he picked up the March issue of the *Scientific Monthly* he would find his ardor for self-improvement both cooled and ridiculed by Prof. Leslie A. White's discussion of "Man's Control Over Civilization." According to Prof. White, man hasn't any. He hasn't any control over his own thinking, either:

Whether a man—an average man, typical of his group—"believes in" Christ or Buddha, Genesis or Geology, Determinism or Free Will, is not a matter of his own choosing. His philosophy is merely the response of his neuro-sensory-muscular-glandular system to the streams of cultural stimuli impinging on him from the outside. What is called "philosophizing" is merely the interaction of these cultural elements within his organism. His "choice" of philosophic belief is merely a neurological expression of the superior strength of some of these extrasomatic cultural forces.

Remember that, the next time you go through the motions of making up your mind!

Of all futile enterprises, there is none so pointless and barren of result as this attempt of certain men of science to convince the rest of the world that human freedom, the innate feeling of the capacity to choose, is nothing but a vast illusion. The amount of "reason" that such scientists employ in an effort to demonstrate that all reasoning is without meaning is evidence of an appalling waste of intellectual energy which might have been constructively employed. Prof. White, for one, might have used his space in the *Scientific Monthly* for an honest discussion of the difficulties in any theory of

either self-determination or social control. The problem for the individual is to find out for himself the pressures to which he submits without knowing what they are. A man can always face his prejudices, his bad habits, if he wants to, and he can start in to remove or change them. And in a society where there is intelligence and mutual good will, the same sort of program can be undertaken.

But Prof. White insists that all theories of changing the cultural environment are grandiose schemes of self-delusion. In this, he says, education is a chief offender, by spreading the idea of free will. Neither students nor teachers have any freedom—both are merely off-prints of the Cultural Process. "Being a process that is within the system that is culture, it is therefore fallacious to think of it [education] as acting upon culture from the outside." "*Education*," declares Prof. White in unequivocal italics, "*is what culture is doing to people.*" Only anti-scientific ignorance allows us to "believe that it is we who make our culture and control its course."

As with any generalized half-truth, the evidence to support this claim seems inexhaustible. The author cites the conclusions of Prof. A. L. Kroeber, University of California anthropologist, on the rule of "fashion" over the supposedly "independent" modern woman. Surveying the length of women's skirts for a considerable period, Kroeber found that they have changed from long to short and back again with a regularity rivalling the sunspot cycle. For those who like statistics, it may be stated with authority that the full "wave-length" of the oscillation between long and short skirts is about 100 years. "Women," Prof. White asserts triumphantly, "have nothing to say about it." And not only the women who wear the skirts, but also "the designers and creators must conform to the curve of change." His final point, it must be confessed, has force:

It may seem remarkable that a great class of citizens who cannot even control the dimensions of their own skirts will nevertheless organize themselves into clubs to administer the affairs of the world.

Prof. White seems to have overlooked the fact that last year a group of women in liberty-loving Texas organized themselves into a club to oppose the latest lengthening of their skirts—with what success we do not know. Nor does he notice the nudist rebellion

against the skirt *per se*. But these things doubtless have a "cultural" explanation, too. For every case of unthinking cultural conformity, however, there are intelligent nonconforming individuals who are never mentioned by writers like Prof. White. Of course, deterministic theorists would probably fall back on "glands" to explain these few dissenters, but even they are not the final evidence of freedom, which is a primary fact of human consciousness. What the determinists seem determined not to recognize or understand is that freedom always expresses itself in some framework of existing or predetermined conditions. And any act creates new conditions which determine the framework of the next succeeding choice. So, with succinctness and wisdom, John Dewey defined freedom as knowledge of necessity.

Prof. White ought to be arguing for this knowledge of necessity as the means for recognizing the margins of human freedom. Instead, he can hardly find words to describe the folly of social scientists who imagine that human beings can in any way alter the course of "culture"—that arbitrary power which "makes man what he is and at the same time makes itself." He quotes a number of social scientists who are currently exhorting the world to apply "science" to social problems. These men, of course, are "deluded." For Prof. White, the single and over-riding lesson of science is that it cannot be applied to social problems at all. He writes:

To call upon science, the essence of which is acceptance of principles of cause and effect and determinism, to support a philosophy of free will is fairly close to the height of absurdity. Verily, Science has become the modern magic! The belief that man could work his will upon nature and man alike *if only he had the right formulas* once flourished in primitive society as magic. It is still with us today, but we now call it science.

What, then, does a cultural anthropologist suggest we do about our plight? Is anthropology nothing but an elaborate catalogue of the unchangeable forces that are shaping the future—is it true that the more you know about anthropology, the less you can do about man?

Toward the end of his article, Prof. White uses a little word-magic of his own, making it plain that although we cannot "control" the future, we can learn to *predict* it. And foreseeing what the omnipotent

Cultural Process holds in store, we can "adjust" to it. But lest we suppose that somehow we would have "willed" to do this, Prof. White hastens to add that "it would not have been 'us' who achieved it, but our culture."

Prof. White's Augustinian theology is absolutely flawless. No merely human will can ever interfere with the majesty of the Cultural Process. Man may worship before the fane by offering a careful description of its omnipotence—a reverent, anthropological hymn—but in order to obtain its benefits he must give up his most cherished possession, his illusion of freedom. Then, having discharged his wicked self-will, the mystic Grace of "adjustment" brings him salvation.

Scientists who seem to be transformed but unregenerate theologians, clothing their dogmas in the language of materialism, will never affect the popular mind directly. No man who denies the primal instincts of the mind can ever exercise any real educative influence, although he may spread an inordinate amount of confusion among those who are impressed by his cleverness—just as David Hume confused all of modern psychology with his denial of egoity. Hume, however, had the candor and humor to admit that his own speculations appeared to him "cold, and strained and ridiculous," while his modern successors have neither his iconoclastic genius nor his common sense.

## READING AND WRITING

The determination of Mrs. Caroline Urie, social worker and widow of an American naval officer, to pay no taxes for war purposes will probably strike many Americans as an irrational attitude. On March 14 (the day before income tax payments were due), Mrs. Urie wrote President Truman announcing that she had deducted 34.6 per cent of her tax—the proportion she estimates is earmarked for war. "If they want to send me to jail," she said, "that's all right with me. . . . I'll never pay any more money for war."

Democracy, it will be argued, is a rational process. Nobody likes war, and nobody likes income taxes, but we have to put up with both. We have a Congress to decide these things, and if everyone could question the decisions of the Congress whenever he pleased, soon there would be no Government, no order, no national defense, no anything.

So Mrs. Urie is irrational. But what, exactly, is she to do, feeling the way she does? From where she stands, paying for a war is irrational. Maybe she has read Morgenstern's *Pearl Harbor*. Maybe she is convinced that democracy means the right to have no part of killing anybody, for any reason, and to take the consequences of this position. In her case, the consequences might be a jail sentence, although this may be doubted. Mrs. Urie once worked with Jane Addams at Hull House. For five years she was director of the School for Immigrant Children. The Government may feel a little silly trying to put her in jail. Maybe it should.

A week or so ago a leading news magazine blandly announced that a war with Russia is "in the cards," not now, but later, when both nations are "ready." This was followed by a page of explanation telling why the war would be delayed. Nobody wants a war, but there it is, and all the man-in-the-street can do is wait around . . . or so it seems. The news magazine also told what the war would mean—compulsory labor, compulsory

financing, compulsory everything. Compulsory death for millions was not mentioned—that is taken for granted, we suppose. The news magazine said nothing about stopping the war. It was just a nice, objective account for the American business man—what to expect, and when.

A visit to a large aircraft factory here on the Pacific Coast adds considerable local color to one's sense of doom. One plant, at least, seems to be making no commercial planes at all. In the plant in question, 10,000 men working two shifts are turning out jet fighters and bombers as fast as they can. The plant has Government contracts. It's all official, according to schedule, and absolutely democratic and rational.

But from Mrs. Urie's viewpoint, it's not rational at all. She objects to buying death for *somebody* on a cost plus basis. Thoreau had a similar idea, about a century ago. Actually, there are two rationales in this problem: there is the rationale of a great nation getting ready for war, and the rationale of a lonely individual getting ready for peace. So far as Mrs. Urie and her income tax are concerned, the democratic process is 34.6 per cent irrational, and she won't go along. This is her way of trying to be a good citizen and a good human being at the same time. It is beginning to take some imagination.