

## INSECURITIES OF THE SPIRIT

ONLY a very few years have passed since the days of high and unqualified confidence in the scientific method with respect to all future or even possible knowledge. There have been many versions of this confidence, but nearly all of them answer to the description of "mechanistic" in their explanation of what happens in nature and life. Two chapters in John Herman Randall's book, *The Making of the Modern Mind* (Houghton Mifflin, 1926), give an excellent account of the spread of the mechanistic outlook (Chap. 18, "The World Conceived as a Process of Growth and Evolution," and Chap. 18, "Philosophic Reactions to the Growing World of Mechanism"), and, by illustrating the sterility of its philosophic result, point to the inevitability of a revolution in thought.

However, for the mood of optimism and confidence in the mechanistic movement at the height of its influence, we can do no better than quote from Chapman Cohen's *Materialism Restated*, published in 1927. Mechanism, according to Cohen, is a closed system allowing no intruders with other explanations, whether theological or merely metaphysical; it is the system of science and the only one to which rational man should give attention. Cohen wrote:

One thing the history of science clearly discloses. This is, that whenever there has been a move towards a better understanding of natural processes, it has been based upon a tacit or an avowed acceptance of the mechanistic principle. How could it be otherwise? An explanation must be in terms of the known. To offer an explanation in terms of the unknown, is not an explanation at all. Explanation involves the establishment of an equation, in such a way that given *a*, *b* and *c*, *d* follows. And how can one establish an equation if one or more of the factors are not merely unknown, but inconceivable? To think of the unknown as like the known, is permissible, necessary, and helpful. To think of the unknown as utterly unlike the known, is neither permissible, necessary, nor helpful. That is why, in the history of man, supernaturalism has never enlightened, but always obstructed. In the whole of its history, it has never cast the slightest light upon any one of the problems with which the human mind has busied itself. It has not done this because it has lacked the

very condition of providing an explanation. To introduce the word "God" is not to explain, but to confuse. "God" is not an explanation at all. It is a narcotic. It lulls enquiry with a phrase, as a dram-drinker lulls anxiety with a dose of his favourite liquid. But the old questions recur, the old problems present themselves, and no answer has yet been found to any of them save on the lines of a scientific Materialism.

One of the most useful intellectual exercises we can think of for the present generation would be to take this passage by Cohen and analyze it for what is acceptable and what is not. The important question is: Which of Cohen's principles involves the validity of everything that modern science has accomplished, and should never be let go?

The almost thirty years since Cohen's time have been a period of progressive disillusionment with respect to the basis and implications of mechanistic philosophy. We have no space here to examine the history of the complex developments which produced this reaction, but it seems certain that few if any serious scientific writers would today repeat what Cohen said. They might *wish* to, feeling a sad nostalgia for the beautiful simplicity of the mechanistic analysis, but their own unhappy suspicions together with the temper of the times will prevent them from doing so. Brilliant as Cohen's analysis is in behalf of Mechanism, an equally persuasive argument for recognizing its limitations and inadequacy as a total philosophy was formulated by Ortega in 1941. Ortega was not the first nor the only man to give these reasons for ending the craze for mechanistic explanations, but no one has given them clearer expression. He begins his volume, *Toward a Philosophy of History* (Norton, 1941), with these words:

Scientific truth is characterized by its exactness and the certainty of its predictions. But these admirable qualities are contrived by science at the cost of remaining on a plane of secondary problems, leaving intact the ultimate and decisive questions. Of this renunciation it makes its essential virtue, and for it, if for nought else, it deserves praise. Yet science is but a small part of the human mind and organism.

Where it stops, man does not stop. If the physicist detains, at the point where his method ends, the hand with which he delineates the facts, the human being behind each physicist prolongs the line thus begun and carries it on to its termination, as an eye beholding an arch in ruins will of itself complete the missing airy curve.

. . . living means dealing with the world, turning to it, acting in it, being occupied with it. That is why man is practically unable, for psychological reasons, to do without all-round knowledge of the world. Crude or refined, with our consent or without it, such a trans-scientific picture of the world will settle in the mind of each of us, ruling our lives more effectively than scientific truth.

The past century, resorting to all but force, tried to restrict the human mind within the limits set to exactness. Its violent effort to turn its back on last problems is called agnosticism. But such endeavor seems neither fair nor sensible. That science is incapable of solving in its own way those fundamental questions is no sufficient reason for slighting them, as did the fox with the high-hung grapes, or for calling them myths and urging us to drop them altogether. How can we live turning a deaf ear to the last dramatic questions? Where does the world come from, and whither is it going? Which is the supreme power of the cosmos, what the essential meaning of life? We cannot breathe confined to a realm of secondary and intermediate themes. We need a comprehensive perspective, foreground and background, not a maimed scenery, a horizon stripped of infinite distances. . . . We are given no escape from last questions. In one fashion or another they are in us, whether we like it or not.

Ortega's luminous prose tells the story of what has been happening in modern thought during the past ten years. Not everyone, of course, would describe it as he does, nor even share his finished and urbane justification. The point is, Mechanism no longer reigns over the world of scientific thought, and the rules against philosophical speculation have been somewhat relaxed. Why this should be is easy enough to see for anyone not engaged in a rear-guard mechanist action, still clinging to the charm of limited certainty—which is sometimes not so certain as Ortega grants—and unwilling to take into account an entire range of causal possibilities which are either psychic or spiritual at any rate, not physical at all!

Mechanism is dead or dying, first, because it has exhausted itself by its own extreme claims in the contest with theology and the irrepressible irrationalisms of theology. To be really beaten, theology must be beaten on its own ground, which is the ground of metaphysics and philosophy. Theology *seemed* to be beaten by scientific materialism only because, during the night-time of science, theology had unwarily invaded the realm of physical nature and had erected flimsy structures of explanation inspired by sheer fancy. These were easily knocked over by the sturdy young sciences of physics and biology. Orthodoxy suffered as a result, but theology merely retreated to a safer sphere of influence, where its representatives spent their time mending fences and inviting reconciliation with scientific philosophizing. An anxious world soon responded, du Nouÿs' *The Destiny of Man* being a fair example of what was to be expected.

Another reason for the breakdown of Mechanism was the "dematerialization" of physics and its transformation into the intangible stuff of "fields" and "equations." It became more and more difficult for the ordinary person to think of the world as a "machine," so that machine explanations grew less and less real to him. Then there were actual discoveries—a great many of them—in biology and physiology which were almost impossible to relate to the mechanistic doctrine. Capping the climax, from the scientific point of view, the experiments in Parapsychology came along, indicating for most people the reality of extra sensory perception, prophecy, and even the possibility of an actual physical force exerted by the mind (psychokinesis). While the psychologists, as a body, still resist the findings of the workers in extra sensory perception, sophisticated modern opinion is already preponderantly on the side of the psychic researchers, and scores, perhaps hundreds, of books have been written—"crude or refined, with our consent or without it"—to provide a trans-mechanistic picture of the world with the help of parapsychological discovery.

But if we admit this liberation from the closed system of Mechanism—what then? This is the terrible question which, so far as the scientific thinker is concerned, is like opening a Pandora's Box of intellectual horrors, with very little hope indeed as the last visitor among this company to be released among us. Gone is the beautiful simplicity, gone the brave-

new-world mood of the worker-in-research, who must now make some sort of peace with a whole catalogue of incommensurables, from hints of mental telepathy to the track of the Ineffable itself.

This is the greatest pity of all in the cycle of Mechanistic assumption, now coming to a close, that it permitted the intellectual classes to satisfy their minds with the uncomplicated disciplines of the grosser sciences, thus unfitting themselves to cope with larger possibilities now clamoring for attention. There is a parallel between the present time and the almost forgotten epoch of Spiritualistic wonders which broke loose in the United States a little more than a century ago, and soon swept around the world. It is a minor irony of the history of modern materialism that the men most vulnerable to the fantastic glamor of the seance and the feats of mediums were the most honest and hospitable minds of the nineteenth century. William Crookes, Alfred Russel Wallace, and Oliver Lodge, to name but three, were among the really distinguished scientists of that period, and their very integrity led them where lesser men, in greater bondage to conventional attitudes, would not follow, yet their ignorance of the vast lore of the psychic in human history either rendered their explorations unproductive or made them captive of the puerile claims of the Spiritualists.

But psychic phenomena of an apparently supernatural order do not seem to be playing—at least no more than usual—a special part in the abandonment of Mechanism, today. Instead, the opening of the way to transcendental speculations is less compulsive and of far wider scope. The vein of Mechanism is worked out. No psychopompic wonders are needed to spur the imagination in new directions. It is the invitation to enter a new universe of thought to which men are responding.

The best thing we can do at this time, while welcoming the general trend, is to admit that among the fruits of this liberation will be all the extravagances of both mind and emotions that the Mechanist critics predicted would appear with a return to religion or even some form of Idealism. The West has no serious preparation for an adventure in transcendental thinking, and no protection against its wilder enthusiasms. The heritage of the miraculous is with us yet, and there will be those who, having suffered the

painful restrictions of scientific method in the name of Truth, will now embrace its very opposite undisciplined guessing and an emotionalism nihilistic to reason—on the ground that God and/or Spiritual Reality *can do anything!*

So, the serious investigators who feel the mood of emancipation in the air are in a very difficult position. They won't want to echo the old mechanistic slogans in self-defense, but neither will they receive the vagrants and camp-followers of some new kind of crusade with its own, ultra-modern version of pie-in-the-sky.

This sort of dilemma, it seems to us, has been in the cards we have been dealing ourselves for quite some time. The present is distinguished only by the fact that we can't put off much longer some rather important decisions regarding the Mechanistic account of Nature and its various alternatives.

## REVIEW

### PROPOSAL FOR NON VIOLENT DEFENSE

A MANAS reader with a background in technology was stimulated by the MANAS review of the Quaker pamphlet *Speak Truth to Power*, to try to arouse interest in the possibilities of a non-violent alternative to war. He sent a hundred copies of the pamphlet to people prominent in business, professional, and literary pursuits, and some others inviting comment. The replies he obtained, he now writes were mostly like the criticisms of the pacifist outlook made by the non-pacifist contributors to the *Progressive* (Oct.) debate on the proposals of *Speak Truth to Power* (reviewed in MANAS for Oct. 26). His own reaction to these replies is as follows:

What surprises me is that none of these "critics" and only a few so far of my replies grasp the idea that this is *resistance* that is being proposed by the Quakers, *not* passive yielding to injustice, brute force, or superior power.

*Resistance* may be of a number of kinds. Once it was with swords, then bullets, now with H-bombs. Perhaps still better methods are possible. Perhaps non-violent resistance methods may be even better than violent methods. . . .

I tried to point out the possibility of effective resistance by non-violence . . . in my letter [accompanying each copy of the pamphlet], but few people seemed to grasp the idea that a very effective means of resistance can be evolved without deliberately setting out to kill somebody. Most people seem to regard this on first thought as *non-resistance*, which very definitely it must not be.

It would be folly to propose to wipe out our defenses all of a sudden, with nothing to substitute. Careful preparation would have to be made before embarking on a new policy. Citizens would have to be educated and trained for their behavior in such resistance. If we spent a small fraction of what armaments require every year, it would go a long way toward preparing this new kind of defense. Just as we have evolved very clever and efficient means of killing, so we must evolve just as clever means of resisting injustice without killing.

The greatest incentive is in the hope that such methods might ultimately eliminate war entirely. If

the world could spend the efforts and money that are now required for armament on constructive developments and education instead; and if the people of the world could be given a new hope and spirit by elimination of fear of war, we would see undreamed of progress. For man has never been able to utilize properly his modern knowledge of how to control and enjoy his environment because he has had to spend most of his available capital and effort on armaments for war.

Since you have so forcibly introduced the idea of non-violent *resistance* to your readers, I think you should bring out more pointedly the efficient possibilities that are latent in this method.

There can be little doubt but that this subject should have exploration, although we should rather refer readers to some of the "classics" on the subject, instead of attempting the discussion ourselves. There is a great deal already in print on non-violence. The first full-length book on the subject, so far as we know, and very likely the best, is Richard Gregg's *The Power of Non-Violence*, first published in 1935 and issued in a revised edition by Fellowship Publications in 1944. A collection of Gandhi's writings on the subject was printed in 1942 by the Navajivan Publishing House, of Ahmedabad, India, under the title, *Non-Violence in Peace and War*, and there is an extensive pamphlet literature covering every phase of non-violent methods. The late Jessie Wallace Hughan, one of the founders of the War Resisters League, contributed a study of the possibilities of non-violent resistance to a military invasion of the United States. Those interested in pursuing this subject may obtain lists of books and pamphlets from both the Fellowship of Reconciliation, 21 Audubon Avenue, New York 32, and the War Resisters League, 5 Beekman Street, New York.

Here, we should like to consider the general reaction to our correspondent's effort to interest people in non-violent methods, which is a problem quite apart from the planning of an extensive national program of non-violent resistance to military aggression. First of all, on the encouraging side, there is the notable fact that

non-violence is now beginning to be discussed in non-pacifist publications, as, for example, in the *Progressive*. Another instance of such discussion is the review of *Speak Truth to Power* which appeared in the November *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*. The reviewer, Ursula Batchelder Stone, has some shrewd observations on the reaction of the typical American reader to this appeal for an abandonment of violence in war:

It is improbable that the examples cited or the logic of the situation will make the average American willing to consider the use of non-violence seriously. He is more likely to shrug his shoulders and mutter something about wishful thinking. If pressed hard this average citizen will probably accuse his interrogator of being a "red sympathizer" or a coward.

It seems to this reviewer that the reason for this attitude is not hard to discover, but it is a hard one for Americans to admit. We are afraid and we show all the typical fear reactions. We don't quite understand what we are afraid of and that makes it all the harder since fears which are in large part irrational assume the composite aspects of boogie man, ghost, and the devil. This sort of fear is difficult to deal with in an objective manner.

We are also struggling with our guilt over "the bomb." We seem to be afraid of some divine retribution. It reminds one of the ancient prayer, "Forgive us those sins of which our conscience is afraid."

It may be salutary for us to remember that if we are afraid the Russians must be even more afraid. Is it any wonder that with fear as a motivating force both Russian and American actions sometimes leave a good deal to be desired?

President Eisenhower obviously was trying to create a less fearful climate in Geneva last summer and, if the above analysis is correct, this is a necessary first step to any settlement of specific disputes. Trying non-violent methods involves risks of major proportions including the risks of violence to ourselves and the risk of losing face with the rest of the world. But these are risks that we must face.

It will, we suspect, take a long, long time to win very many of the American people over to a serious consideration of non-violent methods of

resistance. In the first place, Americans have the habit of winning their wars by conventional means. Their sense of success is untempered by any bad defeat, and why give up a way of being victorious that has always worked in the past? In the second place, the martial spirit still claims the loyalty of this energetic and resourceful society. A careful reasoner may be able to show that there is plenty of room for valor and daring in non-violent action, but the feeling for courage and the do-or-die spirit is grounded in colorful, romantic tradition, for most people, and not in rational analysis. Eventually, in the passage of years, it may be possible for pacifists to work up a body of tradition and lore of non-violent heroism that will in some measure "compete" with the military tradition, but no synthetic substitutes can supply this need.

Meanwhile, everything that is written and said in behalf of non-violent attitudes will help in producing at least the idea of an alternative to war, even if it is an undesirable and unpopular one. The important thing is for men to recognize that there are intelligent people who do regard non-violence as a possible alternative to war. If, as we are trying to suggest, the chief obstacle to a wider acceptance of non-violent methods of resistance to aggression is in deeply engrained habits of mental and emotional reaction, the more terrible the prospect of actual war becomes, the more the likelihood that *any* available alternative will begin to receive attention. At first, that attention may be furtive, even somewhat subconscious. Practical men may be heard to joke about the use of non-violence, as a way of flirting with an idea they don't want to seem to agree with or regard with any seriousness. Then, if small groups practice non-violence in limited situations in order to gain limited objectives, the general awareness of the method will slowly increase.

But it seems quite unlikely that the hypothetical situation of a great marshalling of forces, with the men with guns, tanks, and atom bombs on one side, and the serene spirits armed

with love and pure and fearless hearts on the other, will ever actually exist. The peoples of this world are far too alike for this kind of alignment to ensue. For this reason, the familiar argument about how non-violence can succeed against inhuman military aggression may turn out to be a quite academic debate. So far as the West is concerned, the rejection of war may begin, as an attitude of mind, in something resembling the stubborn refusal of young men in West Germany to have any part in another German army. We are not suggesting that West Germany can have no army, or that very many German youths will resist the draft to the last ditch, but that theirs is a set of the emotions which makes the preparation for a successful war extremely difficult. When the men who are obliged to plan national policy are confronted by such psychological problems, they may easily be led to choose a way of dealing with other nations which makes war less likely—if they can.

In other words, the outlawing of war will come, we think, as the result of an entire complex of causes, some rational, some emotional, some ethical and religious, some arising from sheer fatigue, and some from happy accidents of history. It will not, in other words, be the product of a clean moral decision on the part of a great mass of enlightened people to be "non-violent," although a determined minority who think this way may make a major contribution to the great change.

The difficulty of a mass decision in behalf of non-violence is fairly obvious in the fact that mass behavior seldom if ever has a *moral* inspiration. The springs which move masses of men into action are almost always powered by the grosser emotions—fear being the principal lever. In the case of India, the relative success of Gandhi's non-violent mass movement must be qualified in several ways. First, the idea of moral force or suasion is not new in Indian tradition. Second, there is fairly clear philosophic ground in the doctrine of *Ahimsa* or harmlessness for both the ethic and the effectiveness of non-violence. Third,

the longings of the Indian people for political freedom and self-government gave Gandhi's movement the incalculable drive of nationalist devotion. Fourth, the Indian people had no alternative. They could not succeed by violent means because they lacked the arms and the industrial economy to back a military enterprise in revolution.

But after we have noted this, we need also to remind ourselves that few if any of the major forward steps of history have had a purely "moral inspiration." The primary argument, for any people, against war may be a moral one, but a whole host of lesser reasons will surely have contributed to the peace of the world, when it finally comes. There is the further consideration that, even if we concede that non-violence has had its chief success in India, there are numerous lesser successes to its credit in European history. In *The Conquest of Violence* (Dutton, 1938), Bart. de Ligt has hundreds of pages giving instances of the successful or partially successful use of non-violent methods by national, ethnic, or working class minorities. From this it should be apparent that no one has any business to dispose of non-violence as "impractical" before he has taken the trouble to examine its already impressive record.

To return, then, to the program of non-violent resistance of invasion outlined by our correspondent: This proposal is not exactly "pacifist," in that it contemplates a possible combination of military with non-violent methods. This latter, however, has only a minor role in the general plan, which is conceived in terms of two basic objectives: (1) To convince an enemy—Russia, for instance—that we are both unwilling and unable to attack any other country; and (2) prepare for an internal "scorched earth" policy which would greatly hamper if not completely disorganize an invading force. Those interested in the details of this plan may be able to secure a copy from the author, Irving F. Laucks, P.O. Box 607, Healdsburg, Calif.

The appeal of this plan to the world is twofold. First, it makes plain that the United States is no longer to be regarded as a threat to the peace of the world, since the measures for defense which have been adopted are no longer the same as measures for offense. Everyone knows that the only "defense" in atomic war is "massive retaliation," and it is this terrible reality of modern war which keeps modern populations in a state of anxiety, regardless of the strength of their military armament. Second, enormous sums would become available to serve the economic needs of the depressed areas of the world, if the expense of modern armament could be eliminated from the American economy.

The "scorched earth" plan proposed is a carefully outlined technological program involving the decommissioning of industry and the evacuation of the population of urban and industrial areas. The real point of the program, however, is this:

Once we show the rest of the world that we have no aggressive intentions, once we show the rest of the world that we can give them some hope of not being wiped out in an atomic war, Russia or no other power would dare to attack us. Not only world opinion, but the opinion of the Russian people themselves, would prevent such an attack. We must remember that the Russian people are just as fearful of hydrogen bombs as we are. So far they have been kept to their hard tasks because their rulers have told them they must prepare a defense against capitalistic or U.S. aggression. Once they see that there is no possibility of any such aggression, their own domestic opinion would prevent any attack on us.

The scorched-earth policy is absolutely defensive only. It cannot possibly be used for aggression. This is its strength.

We can find no serious flaws in the logic of this proposal, so far as anticipated reactions are concerned. A program like this one *would* convince others of our completely peaceful intentions. The expectation that world public opinion would prevent any nation from attacking a country which is totally without aggressive armament may be sound—sounder, that *is*, than

the expectation that fear is an adequate deterrent of the aggressive actions of other nations. The chief objection to the plan—if it is an objection—is that it fails to meet the fears of people who suppose that other nations are ready and waiting to attack us, and will do so at the first sign of weakness.

There is a further logic in the plan which should have great appeal, once the initial obstacle of unreasoning fear is overcome:

This plan gives the United States at once the initiative in the struggle for men's minds, opinions, ideas, and this, after all, is the real struggle that free enterprise faces with communism. It is a conflict of ideas. Our retaliation policy does not recognize this. Arms cannot compete with ideas. The pen is still mightier than the sword. Our present policy diverts our attention from the real crux of the conflict. Russia is like the magician who diverts the attention of the audience with one hand while with the other hand he does the trick. Russia has succeeded in concentrating our attention on defending against fear of her attack, while on the other hand she has been winning the minds of the backward peoples of the world who, after all, are in the great majority.

Then, there is this wider criticism of the military program of the United States, which neglects the long-term view of the development of the modern world:

Our policy of retaliation, while it may serve as a temporary defense against Russia, does not take into account what is happening in the backward countries of the world, the Orient, the Near East, Africa, and even Central and South America. Unless free enterprise or capitalism can demonstrate in concrete, tangible form to these people that it has something to offer them to relieve their misery, destitution and starvation, then we are bound to lose before long in the competition with communism. In spite of all the ruthlessness which we deplore we cannot deny that Russia under communism has progressed in thirty years from the most backward country in Europe to one of the strongest countries in the world, and that the condition of its people has risen tremendously. This progress of the common Russian from what he was under the Czars to his present condition is what impresses the backward countries of the world. Now they are seeing this process repeated in China. They want a chance to get some of the things and ways of

living which American movies have shown them. They want education for themselves and their children. They want to be able to read and write. This is what communism offers them, and to obtain it they are willing to put up with some of the disadvantages in dictatorial governments.

The thoughtful man is bound to see the truth in these statements, but, unfortunately, the man whose decisions are largely governed by fear tends to be angered by them, chiefly because they *are* reasonable. He can follow the counsels of his fear only by ignoring such arguments, and anything which seems to distract from those counsels becomes a menacing presence, a symbol of darkness which is easily transformed into the Enemy itself. Hence the fanaticism of people like the followers of Senator McCarthy, who suspect and resent all who do not agree with them one hundred per cent.

Fear, then, as the reviewer in the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* said, is the chief barrier to the idea of non-violent defense, just as it is the obstacle to all rational attempts to reach international accord based upon justice, tolerance, and mutual understanding.

And how do you overcome fear? This is the most difficult question of all. One thing is certain: Fear is never overcome quickly—group or collective fears, that is. The moral factor of fearlessness as a trait of populations is an ingredient of culture which comes as the slow growth of character. It is as intangible as the "moral power" of which Gandhi spoke, since it exists in generous measure only in the very few, and is left out of the calculations of those who pride themselves on being "practical." Fundamentally, it is the fruit of what are sometimes termed "spiritual" ideas, yet in suggesting this we court a semantic difficulty which may add more confusion than light. Perhaps a study of the lives of fearless men would be the best way to seek the answer to this question.



## **COMMENTARY**

### **"LIFE" DEFENDS UNESCO**

AN apt illustration of the problems of democracy is found in a *Life* editorial (Oct. 24) on the recent American Legion Convention held in Miami. Heading his story, "The Legion Is Disgraced," the *Life* writer described how the delegates voted a condemnation of Unesco, despite complete vindication of this affiliate of the United Nations by a Legion committee guided by a former national commander of the Legion—Ray Murphy, a distinguished Iowa lawyer.

Murphy's committee rejected entire the charges "made in an earlier half-cocked Legion resolution and by anti-UNESCO propagandists." The Legion committee could not unearth anything to brand Unesco as communist-dominated or in any way a "subversive" influence. It did discover that Unesco has helped to reduce illiteracy in backward areas. Murphy spoke of Unesco's effort "to break the chains of ignorance that shackle the minds of men . . . to free untold millions from the miseries of disease. . . ." *Life* shows the Legion's attack on Unesco to be wilfully false:

. . . while Collins [Seaborn P. Collins, National Commander] cracked the ringmaster's whip, the delegates voted down one of the most thorough and conscientious studies of the "facts" ever made by a Legion committee. . . .

Incredibly, fewer than 50 of the 3,200 delegates ever even read the report. They did not even debate it. By voice vote they condemned UNESCO—for the same false reasons Murphy had so devastatingly exposed. Not having read it, they perhaps did not know Murphy's further finding: that the source of all these false charges was a group of hatemongers some of whose organizations are on the Attorney General's list of subversives (they attack President Eisenhower as a "Swedish Jew").

At Miami, Commander Collins had pretentiously told the Legionnaires: "To speak out or act without carefully considering the facts is to invite public distrust and indifference." This gave *Life* its last paragraph:

It may seem a fine irony that the flag-waving Legion now appears in the role of a cat's-paw to subversives. But the convention does not represent the 2.8 million Legionnaires who largely do a fine and patriotic job in their communities. It represents only the handful of kingmakers who run the national Legion as their private dictatorship. If men who fought two wars to defend democracy cannot win it for themselves they will deserve nothing but "public distrust and indifference."

Since our observations about *Life* Magazine are not always kind, we are glad to call attention to a *Life* editorial which performs a really useful service in exposing the Legion condemnation of Unesco for what it is.

## CHILDREN

### . . . and Ourselves

#### THE INTELLECTUAL PARENT

WE suppose many parents who have felt themselves privileged to possess a bit better than "average" intellectual background have wondered how a good critical or analytical sense can be encouraged in their children. And if such parents actually *do* have an evaluative ability beyond the average, the first conclusion to which they will be drawn—a trifle discouragingly—is that here, as with many other matters, it is much easier to determine what is not to be done than what is to be done.

Intelligent people are often pessimistic and cynical, their critical capacities finding a great plenty to make them skeptical of the goodness of man and of the worth of existing social forms. Yet it seems to us that there is a definite danger to a child in remaining in constant contact with this type of mind, even though children do need to learn that all is not gold that glitters. For if *everything* is analyzed iconoclastically, no encouragement is given to the child's longing for affirmation, without which no one can live much more than a second-hand existence.

It is as if each man or child had only so much energy to expend; if the fundamental orientation of the expenditure is critical, there is no resource for understanding hopes and optimisms—and life, actually, is made of these, much more than of the discouragements and doubts. The child reared in an atmosphere of pessimism, or even a persistent skepticism, because he is supplied with no roots of affirmation, will have no happiness. Better for him to have large hopes, or even faiths preposterous, so long as they are his own.

We sympathize, however, with the cynical-*sounding* parent, and rise to defend him on another ground. The next worst thing to having no hope or faith in man's future is to be unaware of the capacity of the mind to build delusions.

The skeptical man is often someone who has developed enough maturity of perspective to realize how often he is the victim of oscillations of thought. He comes to know that in the world of opinion no one is ever altogether right about anything.

It is not really cynical bias which prompts the psychologist to note that most of our mental and emotional lives are marked by a long procession of illusions. This is a "fact," even though it is also a fact that we may pass through a series of progressive awakenings from our illusions, precisely because we progressively recognize them to be such.

The young need to learn about both of these propensities of the mind. They need to know about both in order to be warned of themselves, to know that the faint sense of insecurity one associates with some of his flash opinions need not be denied by bluster, dogma and force, but rather accepted as the promise of a sounder view to come.

To proclaim that youth had better have preposterous faiths rather than no faiths at all is not quite the same as saying that "religion is good for the young." Religion, as usually understood, fails to qualify as a faith in the sense we intend, for the beliefs encouraged are, just because they are anxiously and partisanly encouraged, second-hand beliefs so far as the child is concerned. Second-hand faith, like second-hand skepticism, is bound to be debilitating. It is just as bad to be told that all the faiths and beliefs we shall ever need are already handily available in the catechism as to be told that no faith or belief can be important.

Censure of habitual critics, it seems to us, can follow two legitimate lines, one philosophical and the other historical. We shall have to use Socrates, as he has so often been used before, to illustrate the first. Socrates thought it might indeed be true, as the Oracle had said, that he was the wisest man in Athens, because he knew that his awareness of his own ignorance was much more profound than that of his fellow Athenians.

Socrates had, however, *earned the right to his skepticism*, because he was by nature a man of great faith, even a devout man. His skepticism grew from recognition of the great difficulties involved in the search for truth, and was not a denial of the validity of the search.

Socrates harmed no one and actually benefited everybody by his skepticism because he was not in the least skeptical concerning man's hope of enlightenment, but only skeptical of all claims that such enlightenment could be easily or painlessly attained. His faith in man was so great that it needed no buttressing by egotistic assertion, no self-hypnotism, and if our children have the capacity for emulating Socrates' sort of skepticism, they will be very good children indeed.

The historical criticism of the critics involves no more than calling attention to the obvious fact that everything in the world which interests us had its origin in someone's faith. Even notably inadequate faiths have supplied part of the dynamic necessary for their improvement or correction; they have, at least, been points of departure. Further, all the great men we have heard of have been men who suffered great travail and disappointment because of some kind of faith. Through the disappointments they learned, not only something of what was wrong with their initial dreams, but also something of that mysterious creative quality in other men who had other faiths—a universal "believing"—which makes all men potential brothers in a sense the animals do not know. We share our sorrows and tragedies, both the result of dreams gone awry, but still of dreams, and through sharing we come to know the complications of human nature. From the comprehension of tragedy comes the capacity for art and literature, rightly included among "the humanities."

So our plea to cynical parents and teachers to strive to be less so is not a plea in behalf of religion at all. Religionism and skepticism are both isms; neither, in their conventional forms, leads toward the development of a freely inquiring

mind. And every child deserves a chance to build large hopes and large faiths if he wants to—we have no right to force either our beliefs or unbeliefs upon him. No matter what we think we have learned from life, no matter how great our experience with pitfalls of disillusionment, it will still be true that we cannot learn anything for anyone else, just as no one else is able to do our learning for us. And, too, it seems more than just possible that we may have missed the chance to build a faith or faiths that we should have had, missed seeing things sufficiently in the round to protect ourselves from summing up the whole of life as a mockery or a misery-go-round.

## *FRONTIERS* The Religion of Medicine

THE art of the physician must, by any standard, be considered one of the noblest known to man. For the healer is daily encouraged to study psychology and philosophy as well as the mechanics of the body, and, if there be any compassion within his nature, he will feel himself a companion to those in need of his ministrations. In a world full of theoreticians, a doctor deals daily with the application of theory; he works in a living laboratory capable of stimulating an ever fresh succession of discoveries.

However, there is also little doubt that the tremendous expansion of physiological knowledge during the past two hundred years has placed the practicing physician or surgeon in a position akin to that of a high priest. Here, as elsewhere throughout society, the public asks for decisive authority and gets it. And here, also, the independent minorities on the fringe of orthodox medical science the diet and health-food faddists, the chiropractors and the "radionics" experimentors, live beyond the pale. That a too rigid orthodoxy in medical science is highly undesirable for philosophical and psychological reasons is well attested by proof that medical orthodoxy may also be faddist—much more dangerous, too, if incorrectly or inadequately presented, simply because the average man merely goes along with current waves of opinion, determined to get "the newest treatment."

The British, a cautious and thoughtful lot when it comes to innovations of any kind, have refused to sanction compulsory vaccination for government service, college entrance, or anything else. This because a sufficient amount of attention, apparently, has been paid to the lack of precise knowledge in regard to immunization in general. The wonder drugs, too, have been used more provisionally in England than in the United States: two noted English physicians recently announced the results of research intended to

show a correlation between the widespread use of sulfa and penicillin and an increase in the incidence of cancer.

In the United States, it appears that every young physician's initiative is in danger of becoming swallowed by a tightly closed corporation. Divergent opinions and theories can result in studied neglect from the sacred circle, as was the case with Dr. Benjamin Sandler, author of the controversial volume, *Diet Prevents Polio*, recently mentioned in a MANAS editorial. Dr. Sandler's impressive experimental results get little attention from A.M.A. officials, and we wonder if this is not because the suggestion that personal self-discipline and elementary study of diet can prevent polio reduces the drama of "research" that attempts to produce effective polio vaccines.

A young doctor's temptation to trade on the ignorant awe which the layman feels is, we feel, provocatively portrayed in Morton Thompson's *Not as a Stranger*. In a discussion revolving around the attitudes of interns near the completion of their discipleship, "Brundage" symbolizes the man who means to use his authority for all it is worth in financial gain. The claim of one cynical realist is that 90 per cent of all doctors mix a generous proportion of exploitation with their genuinely needed services provokes an objection:

"You know you don't really think that way. No one goes into Medicine unless he really wants to—"

"They're merchants of service. They have a service to sell. They've learned how to take care of people. They're licensed. For a fee they'll help people who never learned how to help themselves. They've paid their money and their time to learn all there is to know of the human body and the medicines for it. They'll sell that knowledge at a price. So many dollars per problem."

"You're talking about Brundage now. Brundage and the few fellows like him—"

"And do you know what holds us together? Our union? It's fear and ignorance. To the average human his body is a great and a sacred mystery. And the man who knows the riddle of the mystery is a god. That's what we are—gods. And the thing that holds

us together as a group is our realization of this. We know how the public feels about us. And we know what *we don't know*. We know a lot. But we don't know the simple, basic things. We've got a rough idea but we still don't know positively where blood is manufactured. We don't know how the kidney secretes urine. We don't know why we wake up. We don't know why we sleep. We don't know why the heart beats. We don't know what triggers cells to regenerate. What we don't know about a cell itself, the very basis of life, would fill more volumes than all the theories we've ever studied. We don't know why a woman menstruates. We don't know how the fertilized ovum crosses the space between ovary and tube. We don't know why a child is born—what triggers birth—what shock is—"

"We don't know anything, do we?"

"Oh yes! We know a hell of a lot more than the people who pay us to take care of them! That we do! We know eight medicines—eight specifics out of all the tens of thousands known to man—which medicines will specifically cure the disease for which they are administered. Eight—and only eight! We can set bones. Mechanically, we get better all the time."

"Why blame Medicine? It's not our fault that laymen think of us as witch doctors!"

"Because we trade on it! And you know goddamned well we trade on it!"

"You're thinking of Brundage, again—"

"Thinking of Brundage? My God Almighty! What happens when any of us makes a mistake? We're a solid front! Nobody can make a mistake in Medicine, don't you know that? Who the hell can testify but another doctor? And who's going to testify for *him* when *he* makes a mistake? What do you think those lines mean on your diploma—'privileges and immunities'! What do you think immunity means! The right not to be prosecuted when a patient dies! That's what it means!"

The worst danger, of course, is not that some patients may die, with doctors easily exonerated in cases of malpractice, but that the public, by resigning itself so completely to the magic of the experts, encourages arbitrary and smug authority on the part of the profession. Just what an "ignorant" layman can do to preserve some measure of freedom in medical matters is hard to

say, beyond the suggestion that the British seem to have an excellent idea. English physicians typically regard polio and all other new vaccines with reservation, and encourage their patients to share the responsibility in such decisions. Vaccination is not compulsory anywhere in British life. And this rule is a deliberate reversal of an earlier policy under which the English took the "everybody get immunized" road, until they decided it had been a wrong turning.

While compulsory immunization in private life is not yet in force, here, there is little doubt but that a powerful faction of medical opinion favors legislative insistence. If, a few years from now, the issue comes to a head, a careful pondering of Clarence Darrow's sentiments on the subject will be in order. He once wrote as a concerned layman in a magazine article:

The medical profession in the United States has been carrying on a vigorous campaign all over the country against new methods and schools of healing because it wants the business, and insists that nobody shall live or die without its services.

Whether it cures more or fewer people than the schools which do not use medicine, or whether it cures anybody, are debatable questions which I shall not attempt to discuss. I stand for every one's right to regulate his own life so long as it doesn't infringe other people's right to do the same; and if a man wants to live and die without the aid of the medical profession, he should be permitted to do so. If he hasn't that right it is pretty hard to tell what rights he should have.

Now I would have no quarrel with the medical profession if they would leave me alone. I am willing that they should advertise their wares, but I object to being forced to patronize them. They have specifics to prevent one from taking almost every disease, yet not one of them can explain how prevention is brought about—nor can he prove that it does prevent. They are not content to vaccinate those who apply to them, but they ask the State to compel everybody to be vaccinated. *I might as well ask the State to compel everybody to hire me to try their cases!*