

## ENLARGING COMMON GROUND

ONE of the unanticipated results of the scientific revolution has been to set in motion forces which tend to unite the world at a cultural level. Whatever else technology has done for good or ill—it has obviously increased the speed and scope of communications, so that the races and nations of the world, even so-called "primitive" peoples, now have opportunity to hear about what other races and nations are thinking and doing. It is almost inconceivable, for example, that a Kenya tribesman of fifty or even twenty-five years ago would have been in a position to comment, as one did recently, on the recent U.S. Supreme Court decision outlawing racial segregation in American public schools.

The peoples of the "free world" dread the spread of communism in under-developed countries. Let us note, however, that the spread of communism is either preceded or accompanied by some sort of notion of "science" and the benefits it is supposed to afford to the common man. A nationalist revolt may be possible without much grasp of the issues created by modern industrial methods, but communism requires at least some perception of the idea of progress proposed by dialectical materialism and the concepts of value which grew out of the rejection of orthodox religious assumptions. The threat of world communism, in short, appears idle and meaningless unless it be admitted that there also exists a growing uniformity of outlook—produced by the spread of Western technology, or at least the prestige of Western technology—to provide a common ground for communist propaganda.

But we have not, here, set out to discuss the danger implicit in the infiltration of communist ideas around the world; our point, rather, is that, for the first time in history, it has become possible to speak of *world* attitudes. A trend of thinking which is important enough to take hold in one large country may now affect the entire world, simply because technology, by imposing similar patterns of existence

all over the world, has produced similar conventions in ordinary thinking.

This situation may not be altogether unfortunate. If a wave of rebellion, prompted by the same sense of injustice, and animated by the same desires, may sweep the entire world, so, also, may an awakening to wider perspectives encompass the peoples of both hemispheres. It is even possible that the countries where the industrial revolution is only now being rushed toward its belated climax of development—chiefly in Asia—will not have to wait so long for the period of disillusionment with the nineteenth-century expectation of endless progress through scientific and technological advance. It is not too much to hope that, twenty-five or fifty years hence, the peoples of the leading powers, both East and West, will make common cause for a new kind of life—a life which breaks away from psychological bondage to industrialism and the mindless compulsions of the assembly lines.

What we are suggesting is that by that time, "progress" is likely to be more or less uniform, all around the globe, and that great differences among the cultures of the various nations will no longer be apparent. Already there are the beginnings of universality in religious thought. *Time* for June 7 devotes almost a page to reporting the beginning of the two-year council of Buddhism, the sixth since the death of Gautama Buddha, some 2,500 years ago. The *Christian Century*, also, while seldom generous to other faiths, notes editorially that the Christians, looking forward to a world council of Christian churches at Evanston, Ill., this summer, are not alone in holding religious councils, and calls attention to the Buddhist conclave at Rangoon, Burma. Delegates from many western countries, incidentally, will attend, showing the gradual penetration of the Occident by Buddhist influence. According to *Time*, Burma's scholarly Prime Minister, U Nu, is in some measure responsible for the holding of the Buddhist Council. It was he who caused the first pagoda on

the site of the council to be built, and he now works for a resurgence of Buddhism in his country. (Those who desire background on Burmese religion should read Fielding Hall's *The Soul of a People*, which has few rivals in the description and sympathetic study of Buddhist culture in Burma.) *Time* closes the account of the Buddhist Council with an interesting paragraph:

An ancient prophecy holds that 2,500 years after Buddha's death the Way he founded will either fade away entirely or experience a renaissance. The present council will disband in May, 1956, when the 2,500 years will be up, and U Nu is hoping for the upsurge. Said he recently: "The growing {Marxist} challenge to Buddhism has not been effectively met. . . The Buddhist organization we are going to have will combat these challenges not only in the intellectual field but if need be in the physical field as well."

It is doubtful that by "physical," U Nu referred to military measures, since Buddhism is unqualifiedly pacifist. Perhaps the *Time* reporter left out U Nu's amplification of this remark. Meanwhile, Westerners interested in non-sectarian Buddhism of the present would do well to subscribe to or obtain a copy of *Maha Bodhi*, international Buddhist monthly published at 4-A Bankim Chatterjee Street, Calcutta, India. (Western readers may be surprised to find that Buddhist thought has a subtlety which easily assimilates the perspectives of modern science without losing the strength of its primary philosophical assumptions—which is more than certain Christian groups are able to claim.)

Possibly because Buddhism is essentially philosophical rather than dogmatically religious, it is possible to point to a Buddhist Council as signifying something more than a denominational gathering—as marking, perhaps, a symptom of genuine revival in the Orient. In the West, despite the many evidences of activity among the churches, it seems likely that the reawakening to religion may in large measure pass the churches by altogether. In the May-June number of the *Humanist*, Clyde Kluckhohn, Harvard anthropologist, reports that, in his experience, there is rather more than less concern with moral issues than there was twenty-five or thirty years ago. When Kluckhohn was an undergraduate, his age-mates were saying:

To hell with all this preaching. Of course we've got to have some order and stability in society. And you're a fool if you don't behave in public in "the right way" (meaning, not in conformity with moral principles, but according to the accepted conventions of a particular group at a particular time). But this is a life where, really, dog eats dog. You are smart if you preserve an outer surface of respectability. But take what you can get where you can get it. . . .

Today, Kluckhohn feels, while there is probably more deviation from religious orthodoxy, more and more people are asking genuinely moral questions. "They ask," he says, "with deep seriousness":

Are there moral principles which apply to all men? If so what are they and how can we be sure as honest men and women that these principles have universal validity? Or are some things right for the Hindus or Russians but not right for us Americans? How can we distinguish what is local or provincial in the moral code of our traditional religion from what is truly universal or indeed divinely revealed? How much do my previous beliefs in the broad sense stand or fall with my continued observance of particular taboos or practices? How much weight should I, as a moral being, give to the fact that some statements in my particular holy book are clearly at variance with well established scientific knowledge? Is this incidental and unimportant, caused by the human fallibility of interpreters and expounders, scribes, and other weak instruments of the divine revelation, or must I conclude that this holy book is merely a repository of tribal folklore, having, like most folklore, some important grains of human wisdom in it?

Another perspective at more or less the same—the university—level is found in the Summer 1954 issue of the *Phi Beta Kappa Key Reporter*, in an article by Charles E. Wyzanski, Jr., a U.S. District Judge in Boston, Mass. Judge Wyzanski moves, perhaps, in circles more orthodox than those frequented by Clyde Kluckhohn, yet their experiences are broadly parallel. The former writes:

Most of us went through our university careers singularly uninterested in religious problems. We hardly knew that we were victims of the *Zeitgeist*. But not only were we caught in the backwash of Darwin, of Marx, of Freud, but we sat complacent on the edge of a long period of Victorian optimism only slightly dented at the periphery by the struggle of World War I. Our hope, in our undergraduate days,

was centered on the material world, and our material capacities to deal with it. . . . Our philosophy left no places for those inexplicable cruelties and unwarranted blessings which experience has now taught us govern so much of our lives. We knew little of the non-rational, not only in our enemy, but in ourselves. And indeed, if we ever thought of what it was that we could not explain, we supposed that some day a scientist, or a doctor, or a psychoanalyst would be able to uncover the territory wherein lay the secret to which we did not then have access.

But now we, long out of college and far wiser in the ways of the world, know that there is that which we shall never know, and that this which lies behind the veil of mystery will always be for man the very condition subject to which he lives and dies.

What we now know, our sons have learned earlier. Witness the large undergraduate audiences attracted by Niebuhr, Tillich, and the other gifted preachers of our day. Note the increased demand for counseling on spiritual subjects, and the almost bashful yet nonetheless intense desire of each man to examine the roots of his personal religious background and the forces which shaped the congregation whence he emerged. You who observe this generation of university students could comment in convincing detail the early stirrings of a deep religious revival. The nourishing of this fervor is a principal business before us.

These remarks, addressed to the governing boards of Harvard and Yale universities, bear evidence of the same profound questioning of religious and moral issues noted by Prof. Kluckhohn. Twenty-five years from now, perhaps, this attitude will begin to make itself felt in world affairs, just as, today, we may be reaping the harvest of a very different spirit typical of the youth of a generation ago. There is reason, at any rate, to look forward to a period of increasing moral responsibility on the part of the coming generation.

In any event, there is no doubt about the fact that cycles of intense interest in moral and spiritual questions do overtake societies and often change them radically, for the better. The Reformation began as a deep questioning of the assumptions of the then prevailing orthodoxy, so also the Quaker movement and the Wesleyan reform. We may find encouragement in the fact that present-day religious questionings are likely to be informed by a broad

tolerance and also by an interest in *comparative* religion—which is the best protection against sectarianism. Conceivably, an even more basic inquiry may begin to make itself felt, by investigation of the question: Just what ought we to hope for or expect of religion—any religion, or the best conceivable religion? Can religion be more than altruism and philanthropy directed by scientific discipline, knowledge, and insight? Ought a fundamental distinction be made between supernatural revelation and transcendental wisdom? Does an impassable chasm of logic and common sense bar the man of scientific background from giving serious attention to claims of the ancient mystics, the gnostics and neoplatonists of the West, the arhats and yogis of the East? A thorough-going comparison of the great religions of the world can hardly escape this question.

While a "safe and sane" Humanism may prefer to avoid it, the trend of modern psychological investigation—in both parapsychology (ESP) and psychiatric studies—may compel the fully educated man to undertake this inquiry. It is even possible that, by this means, a deeper bond than any developing from the spread of modern technology may be discovered to unite West and East in a common quest for truth.

## *REVIEW*

### DOUGLAS, AGAIN

WE have by this time nearly run out of ways of expressing enthusiasm for the Asian commentaries of Justice William O. Douglas. Whenever Douglas writes a book, we can be sure that it will be both good writing and good for us. The crusading jurist shows us just how provincial we Americans are in regard to the whole Asiatic world, why we do not understand the problem of Communism in the Far East, and why, as a nation, we are unable to win the spontaneous alliance of Asian peoples. Douglas is global-minded; he dreams of an America of the future made truly great by common dedication to the global ideal.

*North from Malaya*, as with the author's earlier volumes, is packed with illuminating information and up-to-date facts. Along with his stating of the facts, Douglas says very much the same thing he has been saying all the time, yet, if anything, the message improves by repetition and gains in specific substantiation. We particularly call attention to a twenty-page summary in the concluding chapter, for if one does not have time for the whole book, nor sufficient interest in the details of Eastern political trends, he will still find this one section ample reward for a trip to the library. We can probably serve our readers best at this time by quoting some characteristic paragraphs from this chapter. Douglas writes the following under the heading, "American Tolerance for New Ideas":

The Asian Socialist Conference that met at Rangoon in January, 1953, came out not only against Communism and colonialism but capitalism as well. Capitalism in Asia is mostly different from the capitalism we know. We identify capitalism with free enterprise, operating competitively in an economy of abundance. We identify with free enterprise dividends for stockholders, collective bargaining and good wages for labor, and a wide range for the individual initiative of management. Asia has different associations with capitalism. Capitalism in Asia was foreign capital that sucked a country dry and sent the profits abroad. To Asians capitalism is a system that pays labor a few cents a day. Capitalism in Asian eyes is one method the foreigner used to exploit the continent and to control it. Moreover, the

Fabian philosophy from England and the Marxist literature from Moscow and Peking have greatly influenced Asian thinking. It was particularly the Marxist literature that had the appeal. The reason is that when the present generation of Asians started looking for ways and means of starting revolutions and throwing off their colonial yokes they found that the revolutionary literature readily available was Marxist. American literature on how to start a revolution was no longer extant. And Marxism taught socialism as one of its main tenets.

These are the main reasons for the drift to socialism in Asia. Social justice is the talk in the villages, as well as in the capitals. The natural resources of the country must be developed for the benefit of all the people, not for a select few. Profits from enterprises must go into community projects, not into private pockets.

We must become accommodated to the idea that Asia will not be remade in the image of America. All the wealth we possess, all the bombs we command cannot force it. Asia starts from a different point of history with a different background from ours. She will borrow some ideas, but she will make her own political and social inventions. Asia today is seething with unorthodox ideas. That fact often makes Asia seem unreliable, dangerous, or even subversive to some. It is in that reaction to Asia that a great danger lies. If we are congenial to the orthodox, we will be confused, if not alarmed, in Asia. Every Asian socialist, every unorthodox political leader will look like a dangerous undercover man for the Kremlin. If we have that attitude, we will miss opportunities for warm and enduring political alliances.

The conflicts that are within each of us project themselves into all our relationships. The sense of guilt, the dark fear that lies deep in the subconscious, the unreasoning prejudice that fills the heart with emotion—these can build up to produce illnesses and accidents and become violent influences in family, community, and national affairs. They also can become powerful factors in international relations. Those who are too provincial, too frightened, too prejudiced to be tolerant of new ideas at home are almost certain to be intolerant of Asia. We begin and end each problem in human relations with the individual. We Americans will reflect abroad what we believe and do at home.

As usual, Douglas praises the diplomatic endeavors of Indian statesmen while exposing our own shortcomings. India, he feels, as led by Nehru,

is fighting the "cold war" against Communism in the most intelligent way possible. The stake in that war is red China. Nehru's natural allies in this struggle—more important than bombs and marching men—are China's cultural ties with India, Burma and Vietnam.

Douglas continues: "China has millions of her sons and daughters in Southeast Asia. China is too big, too powerful, too proud to remain long in a subordinate position to the Soviets. India, I think, stands fair to win that cold war. . . . The West cannot by arms or by diplomacy pry China from Russia in the near future. But India has a good chance to do so. The violence of Vishinsky's language on the Indian resolution [in respect to exchange of Korean prisoners] is a measure of the Soviet fear." Instead of helping India in its crusade, however, it is apparent that the United States? in costly and unsympathetic ignorance, criticizes any position taken by India which does not happen to coincide with narrowly partisan opinion. Justice Douglas adds up the balance sheet:

Our press is often blatant and arrogant. We shake our fist at Asia in threatening ways. Our views seem pretty well set, and many minds are closed. Bombs often seem to take the place of political inventiveness. It sometimes almost seems that we have become as dogmatic as the Soviets.

In 1945 the prestige of America was great. It overshadowed the prestige of every other power, including Soviet Russia. But what we did in the years that followed dissipated much of our influence. When Indonesia was clamoring for her independence from the Dutch, we sat on the sidelines and let her clamor. Nehru summoned an Asian conference at New Delhi to consider the matter; and on January 22, 1949, nineteen Asian nations announced for Indonesian independence. We did nothing as forthright as that. We were far less vocal than Russia in promoting the cause of Indonesian independence. Much of what we said and did about it in the Security Council of the United Nations was equivocal. When the Vietnamese were clamoring for their independence from the French, we were worse than equivocal. We actually threw our weight behind the French in trying to still the nationalist movement in Vietnam.

I exaggerate a bit, for there are bright spots. Conversation with people in America's small towns is more encouraging than conversation in sophisticated

circles. The lower echelons in the State Department have had men of vision who, knowing Asia, despaired of our actions and our words. And the example of some of America's outstanding representatives in Asia—Bowles in India, Sebald in Burma, Spruance in the Philippines—has made an impression in widening circles. But the exceptions are not many. By and large we have treated Asia with disdain and disrespect.

The result of all this is that we have made Communism the lesser of two evils to thousands of Asians by shouting at them, "You must be for us or against us." And by speaking fewer and fewer words of sympathy for men engaged in a struggle to emerge from vassalage to colonial exploitation, we alienate potential allies—who don't want any sort of colonialism, whether it be English, French, Dutch, American or Russian.

In brief, *North from Malaya* is another attempt to awaken the American conscience, to impress upon us the great fact that the only voice which can out-speak the Soviets in Asia is a voice which raises humanitarian ideals above the din of political controversy.

Writing on "Principles and Politics," Douglas puts it this way:

If we trade our principles for support around the world, we become merely another great power engaged in exploiting one people for the benefit of another. That role leads only to political bankruptcy and bitterness. That role sacrifices our position of moral leadership. In that role we lose stature. Instead of showing the peoples of Asia an alternative to Communism, we in effect make Communism seem inevitable to them.

The so-called practical politicians may say that this course is daydreaming, that America must always stand fast to her allies, that the world of affairs is a hardheaded world where expediency must rule. But as Jesus, Gandhi, and other great souls have shown, there is no more powerful voice in the world than the voice of conscience. The present-day struggle is for the balance of political power in the world. That struggle can be won only by ideas.

## **COMMENTARY**

### **EASTERN EXAMPLE**

IT sometimes happens that two MANAS articles appearing in the same issue, although independently contributed, will converge on the same general problem, reaching similar or complementary conclusions. This is the case with the lead article and the discussion of the Douglas book, *North from Malaya*, under Review. The review section, however, adds a note of explanation on the spread of Marxist ideas in Asia which is not mentioned in the lead—the fact that colonial peoples, looking for guidance in their struggle against Western imperialism, often found only communist tracts and literature.

There have been striking exceptions, however. Eastern leaders who had opportunity for education in Western political thought and the ideals of the liberal tradition gave quite another direction to the development of their revolutionary governments—as, for example, in the cases of Jawaharlal Nehru and Soetan Shjarir of Indonesia. Both Nehru and Shjarir may be named as Asian statesmen who are masters of two great cultural traditions, the Eastern and the Western, and who have not permitted themselves to become alienated from the values of either one. Nehru's devotion to Western political ideals is well known; Shjarir, although a less familiar figure, seems to possess a similar comprehension of the need of the new Eastern republics to combine Western vigor and libertarianism with Eastern ethics and traditional philosophy. In *The Revolt of Asia*, Robert Payne points out that Shjarir studied carefully John Stuart Mill's *Principles of Political Economy* during his eight years of imprisonment by the Dutch, and the benefit of these reflections became evident when the young Indonesian patriot emerged as a leader of his country's revolution. As Payne puts it:

He [Shjarir] had a clean, sharp, humanistic brain; he admired the West "for its indestructible vitality, its love of and desire for life," and he was apt to regard the worst evils of capitalism as better than

the mysterious myopia of Oriental mysticism, or even of Islamism. From the West he derived a singular capacity to put his ideas in order, and a practical determination to see that there did not exist a large gap between ideals and their realization.

It is evident from the behavior of men like Shjarir and Nehru that Eastern leaders are doing their part in the great humanitarian project of bringing together the East and the West to share in a common, universalized civilization. It remains for Western leaders to pursue similar paths of mutual appreciation and understanding.

## CHILDREN ... and Ourselves

IN rereading a portion of Lyman Bryson's *The Next America*, we came across some passages on the contemporary high school which merit inclusion in our fragmentary but persistent discussion of conflicting beliefs concerning our public schools. Bryson views present educational controversy in terms of intellectual history, implying that the "combatants" should realize that the tone of modern thinking is vastly changed from medieval attitudes. We have *wanted* experiments, more free time for the individual during the educative processes, etc. And in terms of the same philosophy, we have appointed the high school—instead of the church—as the agency responsible for influencing the character of our future citizens. Bryson writes:

The Catholic Church was never subject to control by the people whom it served in its secular mission, any more than in its spiritual mission. A mediating agency that has to obey as well as educate the people is the more challenged and the more inspired. This is the case of the secondary school; it is the one institution by which practically all our future citizens are shaped. There may be, someday, a great enough increase in college attendance, of all economic groups, to move this social task to a later period and a higher level of learning, but we are still far short of a college-bred typical citizen, if indeed that is what we want.

No one can soberly write these words without taking the moment to assure the reader, again, that he is aware of all criticisms to which high schools are subject. But he has to confess that most of the criticisms strike him as being much like the derision and sarcasm that was earned by the priests and friars of the Middle Ages when they were doing their greatest work. The common and commonly influential institutions in any culture have always been trusted by the unimaginative normal man and derided by the sensitive. They have generally deserved both the praise and the blame and we cannot expect contemporary sensitive souls to be prophets, also, and know that what seems to them so full of failure will be the elements in their own time that future times will be most interested in because most typical and most influential. The critics can take

comfort in the fact that posterity also enjoys the expressed residues of the angry men and if they happen to be great in expressive powers, whether wise or not, they may be remembered longest. That, as we have already said, is one of the typical injustices of culture history.

The high schools are trivial and even wicked institutions to some of those who ask too much of them, and to those who disregard the speed with which the system has been set up, growing much faster than the population which they served. "The ratio of the number of high school graduates to the number of persons seventeen years of age was 2 per cent in 1869-70. This had increased to 6.4 per cent by 1899-1900 and to 54 per cent in 1947-48."

We are particularly interested in Bryson's observation that, according to what may be derived from past history, "future times" will be more interested than the present in the expressions of "angry men." Therefore, for the "nth" time, we suggest that such a book as Albert Lynd's *Quackery in the Public Schools* contains elements which supporters of "the new education" should ponder. Lynd was, indeed, "an angry man" at the time of writing, and anger can be legitimately disapproved. But Lynd—or Robert Hutchins, who makes some of the same points without becoming angry—touches upon those weaknesses of *status quo* philosophy which are always enemies of educational evolution. What is chiefly wrong with Lynd is not his criticisms of the majority opinion in educational circles, but his spread of a "crisis atmosphere."

The "crisis atmosphere" is bad enough for religion and politics, but it is certain death for educational perspective. The educator, as a philosopher, knows that there is no such thing as a "crisis" save and except one which occurs as a moment of decision in the mind of a single man. The educator must not believe in any other "crisis" because he has already placed his faith in the ability of each person to live through adverse external circumstances, and to keep to the essential work of growth in understanding.

With this formulation in mind, it is increasingly easy to sympathize with those who

criticized our "Fratricide among Educators" and Spencer Brown's *The Hot War Over our Schools* because of their titles. The point is, however, that in just such terms controversy over educational theories in schools gains public attention. We do presently have the elements of "warfare," yet we must disregard those elements in order to resolve the issues into points which may be reasonably discussed.

Bryson's passages are also good on the "secularism" of modern culture. The high schools *are* on the spot, more than they ever were or could have been before, principally because we now insist that they, and not the churches, inculcate in our youths a sense of ethical responsibility. In this situation, those who "ask too much" of the high schools are simply heaping the blame for their own confusion on the shoulders of public servants.

Always, when theorizing at this level, we gravitate to some of Hutchins' themes. For it seems likely that philosophical maturity can come to our public school instructors only after a quickening of intellectual vigor in our universities. The teachers we need cannot be "trained" in teachers' colleges—at least, not beyond the point where progressive conditioning makes them less apt to repeat in the classroom the psychological errors of the past. No one can introduce young persons to the thrill and grandeur of a life of the mind unless he knows what makes a life of the mind. To find out what this life is and how to share it should be the work of our universities, and here, more than anywhere else, individual investigation and self-discipline in learning must replace prescribed requirements for degrees.

Many of our best minds are indeed to be found on the campuses, working for degrees which, in turn, will enable them to teach in colleges. But a colossal amount of stereotyped drudgery separates them from their goal—a customary four years of library research and technical paper production. It takes an extraordinary intellect to emerge from all this with

enthusiasm still intact, and teachers without enthusiasm, in college as in high school, are relatively worthless. Our high school teachers enjoy a great advantage in this respect. The young college graduate who discovers a strong desire to teach can get right at the business while *his* enthusiasm is still alive. Nor will he become enmeshed in the psychological toils of "status," which, in our universities, afford so many foci for political maneuverings within departments.



## *FRONTIERS*

### **Business and the Liberal Arts**

ONE of the points in the "Hollywood investigation" conducted by the House Un-American Activities Committee was that capitalists are invariably unflatteringly typed. Businessmen protest against the uncomplimentary manner in which they are portrayed by movie writers, novelists, etc. The *Wall Street Journal* assumes a defensive irritation concerning the bad reputation of big business, points indignantly to the art foundations, literary fellowships, art collections, and the like, and asks if these are not proof that the businessman is culture's best friend. The situation bears scrutiny.

To begin with, the American businessman has never pretended that he is not operating from motives of profit. It may be the sole reason why he is in business, as he has many times admitted. The nation's economy is built on enterprise for gain. And the business of America is business, as Coolidge once said. The capitalist purpose is precisely what it says it is: to extract from the consumer the most profit that can be gained, at the least cost to itself, in whatever way is expedient, so that stockholders may be paid for their investment. Free enterprise means freedom to make the most profit in the most expeditious way.

But arguments involving "the arts" are nonetheless pertinent. Business, being by nature rigid, conservative and prudent, isn't apt to encourage innovation, artistic freethinking, free inquiry or personal individuality. (The "rugged" kind of individualism, commonly attributed to business enterprise, is quite another thing.) Not being prudent, conservative or conventional, critical artistic qualities therefore represent a danger to the values of "pure" business. In turn, art cannot live generously in a business economy because it violates the first sacred principle of business: It cannot guarantee a profit. It is, perforce, unfit, unable to thrive, or even to survive

under the rigidities of enterprise. Moreover, there does not seem to be mass interest among Americans for art. The business ideology is accepted and believed in by most of the citizenry. The attitude of the public is, "If it don't make money, it ain't no good," and, "If you're so smart, why ain't you rich?"—on the theory that one has something to sell, and if this something has no market value, it is without merit, since only the fittest survives.

As an example, there is the independent literary magazine, wherein a large amount of work is involved, no salaries paid, no profits forthcoming, and none expected, unless the publisher is new to the game, or naive. Money is regularly lost, and expected to be lost, and expenses are mostly paid out of the personal pockets of the editors, or of friends willing to contribute. Those literary magazines which are not independent, such as the university reviews, are usually financed by the school and must bow to the front office and the alumni. Sometimes they are financed by grants and donations, but here too the publications are not expected to draw profits, or even to pay for themselves.

Those who are unfamiliar with the little magazine field, and the financial circumstances surrounding it, are baffled as to the reasons for publishing; they cannot understand it. "If it doesn't make money, why do you do it?" they ask in bewilderment and, in the end, they conclude that the editors and publishers are crackpots. It may be that many of these literary magazines are published and edited by individuals who like the feeling of power and influence their publication gives them—to accept and reject gives them a status they cannot achieve in ordinary life; and perhaps some of these individuals publish magazines because it is the only way they can get their own work into print—but despite these neurotic and egocentric tendencies, the little magazines do, on the whole, present worthy work, and their purpose is to present worthy

work—a fact which seems incomprehensible to the public.

There is, in fact, an element of derision and contempt in the average American's view of artists and intellectuals. "Longhairs," these creative people are called, and this is extended even into politics: the members of Franklin D. Roosevelt's brain trust were known as longhairs, and witness the effect of former Secretary of State Dean Acheson, who was too intellectual and too fastidious to suit the rough and vulgar tastes of the average politician, to whom culture is an unknown country. Adlai Stevenson has much the same effect among the culturally illiterate—he speaks too well, too clearly; he criticizes with too much point. Certain of our newspaper columnists and radio commentators become quite rabid on the subject, perhaps because of their own deficiencies along intellectual and aesthetic lines, but, whatever the reasons, the attitude, the habituation against intelligence, against culture, is there.

These thought habituations have evolved over a considerable period of time and cannot lightly be dismissed. There is no possibility of change without changing the structures of both business and government, which are accepted as operating toward similar ends: to operate the economy for profit, and not for use. (Supply and *demand*—not supply and *want* or need.) Since there is no inclination among the population to change to anything so radical as a use-economy, we are back at the beginning of the circle. It is idle to expect or to hope that new and more mature habits of thought can be birthed if only one could *reach* the people and *tell* them. Art *has* reached the people, and it has been rejected. It does not fit into the general pattern. It is a curiosity among some, a pretension among others, or something to be ignored, laughed at, and ridiculed. The public has demonstrated, in its choice of reading matter, music and pictures that what it mostly wants is not Art, but escape and this may perhaps be an

indication that the public doesn't like itself very much, since it cannot stand its own company.

The artist has been driven into a peculiar corner. The modern intellectual poet and writer, on the other side of the fence, regards a people's art with contempt and, despite his loud claims of social conscience and identification with society, reveals in this contempt a similar contempt for society itself—for is not society made up mostly of the people who daily reject his poems, his stories? Unfortunately, these writers feel that when their work is rejected, they are also rejected as individuals. And so they escape to an exclusive patch of culture to which entry by the public is forbidden—the moment a piece of art is popular, is purchased with eagerness, is well distributed, it is cast out of the magic circle and labeled "commercial"—that is to say it has sales value, it is sought and demanded by the public—the very quality which gives it survival value. Only the rejected and the neglected art has a high place in our exclusive artistic circle. On the part of the artist, "If it sells, it ain't no good, it ain't art."

The United States is a business nation, made up of thousands of communities—small, large, medium—which represent business units: the veins, if you will, by which we live; the heart of which is the businessman. The town is built around its business—its real estate, its shopkeepers, its factory, if any, as Veblen so dispassionately pointed out (and Veblen is resented, it may be added—for Thorstein Veblen was far too critical to suit the taste of the hypersensitive and defensive businessman). The townspeople are sustained by its business, and not business by the townspeople. Any advance into art, because of its inherently liberal, even radical, nature, would be a threat to the business structure, which is inherently autocratic and conservative. Everything is radical which threatens to bring about a change—and to be radical is to be completely new. Any free inquiry, expressed through art, that reveals the chicanery and cupidity by which business operates would

necessarily be regarded with fear, indignation, animosity, and shame. Art may represent culture, and art may be valuable, especially as the key which enables us to evaluate civilization, to develop our critical powers and sense of discrimination, but it is the hot, uncomfortable light of inquiry which would serve to dry up the movement of business toward profits. Wherefore, art does not flourish, and is persistently, subtly—and openly—under attack.

This may be the reason why there has never been any great artistic movement in the United States—a fact which has puzzled many people who are of the opinion that we ought to have done better, particularly since we are so big, so impressive and, above all, so rich. America has never produced giants of writing, painting, poetry and music that Europe has given in so great measure to the world. If we are so rich, isn't it reasonable to conclude that we can afford to be cultured also? But business and art are inimical and seldom tolerate each other, and art will continue to be a kind of orphan, an anomaly, a minority affair, so long as we remain in the *rigor mortis* of business autocracy, and maintain its authoritarian conventions, which largely prevent culturally fertile thinking.

The fact that serious literature is seldom in the best-seller class, and that literary stories are sparse in the large circulation magazines is so notorious that it need hardly be described in detail. The editor of one popular women's magazine complained that circulation dropped as soon as he began running "literary" stories. The small amount of literature that does somehow wriggle through the net may perhaps be aimed at Martha Foley's anthology of the best short stories of the year, as a prestige measure or a sop. In any case, the quantity and quality are neither too menacing, nor sufficient, to represent a peril to convention. It may be noted, however, that there does exist a certain amount of apprehension on this score, despite the microscopic quantity of serious writing in evidence enough so that various investigators,

past and present, promise to make books and magazines the subject of future probes in search of "unapproved" writing—*e.g.*, social criticism, which is regarded as subversive—a situation which exists in Communist Russia, and is one of the means by which the Communists continue to hold power—otherwise known as thought-control. Logic leads one to believe that any criticism is un-American—that is to say, inimical to business operation. These fears seem to have coagulated into committees ruled over by various politicians who have made it their mission in life to label as communistic anything that menaces privilege—and it is free inquiry which regularly is attacked. It seems unbelievably naive to believe that the Communist government would ever permit free social criticism, and allow free inquiry in its totalitarian structure—but this is the childlike delusion that is spread among Americans—that free inquiry is Communistic.

There have never been assertions that business overflows with the milk of human kindness, nor does business often admit that it has a responsibility toward its workers, toward society, or toward art. There are even some newspaper publishers who maintain that they do not exist for the purpose of presenting accurate news, but solely to make profits from the promulgation of their private views (it is not enough to have a private view, it seems; one has also to be paid for it—as though having a view at all is a very remarkable affair; perhaps it is). However, that there exist uneasiness and guilt on this score is reflected in defensive advertisements, announcements and proclamations about "What's good for business is good for everybody," "More and more for you," "Industry provides a better world to live in," etc. etc.—and all the rest of the nervous public chest-thumping, to escape the stigma of selfishness and irresponsibility which are the core of business operation for profits, and also to distract from the unpleasant fact that it is the worker who sustains business, that it is the worker who makes the goods which business sells, while "capitalism" supplies only other people's money in

the way of investment. Let it be remembered that money is a relatively recent invention, and that the system has never worked efficiently for all.

There is also the "Look how big, how grand, how great, how strong we are," to conceal the intellectual and cultural poverty that lies under our opulent surface trappings, and to deflect attention from the fact that the price system provides comfortably for only some individuals, not all.

However, despite the fact that businessmen have defined themselves in the clearest terms, it is evident that they do not quite like themselves, either, nor their role. They instantly recognize themselves in literature and moving pictures, and it does not please them; it makes them angry. They resent being described as fat, uncultured boors, with no æsthetic or social sensitivity, living in the twilight of the counting house, devoid of the more stimulating aspects of life, sensible only to the clink of gold. It is apparent that here there is a certain amount of guilt feeling, self-consciousness and bad conscience—or else why would resentment be exhibited? But it is also apparent that, caught in its own trap, business cannot be otherwise. Behavior and attitudes are strictly grooved, regulated and under surveillance, and thus one must conform or pass out of existence, even while protesting against the role, and disliking it. Some even fight feebly against it—but the very nature of business forces submission, and watches jealously for signs of too much independence.

It might be argued that we are permitted to write and paint what we please, as much and as often as we please, with no OGPU to spy on us. However, we fail to supply a market for critical literary and artistic products. And if the budding genius does not bloom, it's his own fault. Nobody stops him from producing, but if he can't sell his product, remember, it's no good. Also, by limiting the possibility of earning a living at serious art, many of the early hopes and enthusiasms of young writers and artists are killed off prematurely.

The amounts of money which are charitably directed toward fellowships are small enough so that there need be no alarm about creating an artistic renaissance that might have a deleterious effect on business, while at the same time, these philanthropic sashayings into art have a prestige value in the eyes of the public, and in the eyes of the philanthropist himself, by way of proving that he really is not such a bad egg after all—which is to say that he rides to posterity on the coattails of the artist, for he apparently could never get there on his own account. These men could not have achieved their position living side by side with art but, after having achieved it, they can afford to press a few coins into the thin fist of the beggar. In this connection, it is to be observed that most of these cash contributions go toward painting, music and the more harmless arts, rather than to literature or the theater, both of which are more articulate, and therefore might conceivably present a greater threat.

It should be remembered also that when one of these businessmen collects art treasures, the purchases are commonly made by agents (as Hearst and Morgan hired others to purchase art objects, to make sure that they were Art—implying that they themselves would not recognize Art when they saw it) and the purchases are usually of great pecuniary value, on the theory that the more they cost, the greater the prestige redounding therefrom—following the pattern of conspicuous waste and conspicuous spending so ironically described by Veblen. These paintings are practically always the work of established artists—mostly dead ones—about whose genius there can be no question. Unknowns are left undisturbed (not having proved themselves and therefore less likely to have prestige value); nobody wants to take chances on unknowns, and thus lose his ticket to posterity. The pleasures of choosing one's own paintings, or other *objets d'art*, are not often indulged in by the philanthropist himself—and rightly so, since the discriminative sense required is often lacking, and only an agent who knows the field would

presumably be able to nose out the more valuable items, and know their cash value, and therefore achieve the prestige sought through the ownership of this art.

In literary fellowships, the donors do not undertake the reading and selection of manuscripts, and then work unremittingly to bring them before the public because of a sincere appreciation of and belief in these works. The money is simply allocated, deducted from the income tax, and then the actual work is left to others who are familiar with the field, while the credit accrues to the donor, solely for having supplied the cash, and it is he who is also credited with the artistic sense of picking a winner. Some of these fellowships are distributed in a manner which more closely resembles a contest than a sincere effort to unearth talent. A serious writer, after all, wants only to write, to do his work, not to compete. The competitive element is quite out of place, and serves only to smother creativity.

It is true that the foregoing does not apply in all cases. The point is that a businessman behaves the way he does because he has to, and not because he wants to. Nobody wants to be regarded as a seven-headed hydra—unless there's money in it. It's just as silly for artists to expect business to receive them happily with gladly open arms as it is for the businessman to hope, or to demand, that artists and writers paint him in prettier colors and words than the model warrants.

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