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SPECTATOR SAMPLER



Essays by

BERNARD DeVOTO, C. S. FORESTER, JOSEPH WOOD
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OLD H. FISHER, JACK JAMES, JOSEPH B. HARRISON, PAUL
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and S. CHANDRASEKHAR

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A Letter to Our Readers

Dear Mr., Mrs., or Miss X (unnamed but not unknown!):

As the *Spectator* moves toward its second decade of existence (a long life for dogs or magazines) it is pleasant to be able to present our friends, old and new, with an anthology of articles from the first nine volumes. This is not one of those compilations calling itself "the best of"—for we were a little shocked to discover how many of our best articles by how many of our best authors could not be included because of limitations of space. Fiction could not be included, for example; and exigencies of format and copyright excluded still other pieces which we should have liked to reprint. What you have here, then, is simply a reminiscent survey of nine years of an exciting publishing history.

A magazine, in some respects like a human being, has a life of its own, subject to growth and metabolic change, sensitive to the climate of its intellectual environment, guided by whatever principles or expediencies seem important to it. The *Spectator* was launched not because anyone wanted to see his name in print, but rather to talk about things which have meaning for the kind of person we assume you are. It announced itself as "a journal of interpretation"—in the broadest humanistic sense—and has devoted itself, through the years, to that adult purpose. It has taken seriously its orientation toward the West and the Pacific, but more than that it has tried to seize upon those aspects of thought and writing which extend intellectual rather than merely geographic frontiers. It has been the mouthpiece of no special clique of literary or critical expression and has engaged in no defense of esoteric intellectual "movements." (We still remember the dust raised in certain coterie-quarters when we announced that we would print no poetry that we did not understand.)

At the same time the editorial policy has never been "academic" in the sense that might be suspected from the listing of its board of editors. We believe in learning, but only that learning which comes to life under the searching and probing and broadly human and sympathetic understanding of writers who reach toward *meaning*, not merely erudition. Nor have we ever felt that an idea is the less important because it is felicitously expressed.

It is no news to *Spectator* readers that the world has changed a great deal in the last nine years; and as one looks back over the rows of yearly volumes he recognizes that the *Spectator* has reflected some of those changes. That which is important to men and women today involves ideas and attitudes which wash shores other than our own. And the words which appear in some of the titles here reprinted—"free men," "liberalism," etc.—are words even more crucial in 1955 than in 1945. In 1945 Wendell Willkie was just dead. He had written a book called *One World*, which at this distance seems colored with an amount of naïve optimism. The irony is that since then, in terms of mere survival, like it or not, we have literally become one world—and it looks as if ultimately we shall be one world or none. With history breathing down the editorial neck, it is small wonder that the magazine which concerns itself with matters of import to intelligent readers should find itself interpreting current ideological patterns.

But beyond this we are deeply aware that even today the life of the mind has more enduring bases than sociopolitical excursions and alarums. The permanent, the human, indeed the humorously light will always be important to the *Spectator*, for thank God life still has moments not altogether solemn.

Here, then, are a few of the things we are glad we have published.

Yours into the tenth year,

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THE BREAKDOWN OF INTELLECTUAL COMMUNICATION

by Louis B. Wright

NEVER SINCE ADAM invented words and Cadmus devised the alphabet has so much learned and literary publication been available to the public and to the fraternity of scholars. And never since the development of printing has so much of the learned and literary output been so ill understood and even unread by the generality of educated men. To outwit our enemies in the recent war, the armed services are reported to have employed Apache Indians to broadcast messages in their own tongue to another Apache on the receiving end. No German or Japanese could crack that unintelligible dialect and make sense of the jumble of sounds picked out of the air. Intellectuals of our day, intentionally or unwittingly, have succeeded almost that well in disguising their thoughts from all except the initiates of their tribes. They not only bewilder plain citizens having no special passport to understanding, but they confuse their brethren in other branches of learning. From universities, colleges, and institutes, like so many Towers of Babel, go men and women afflicted with a confusion of tongues, babbling in their own professional dialects, understood, if at all, by only a few of their own kind who master their difficult jargon and syntax.

Most professions have a vocabulary of technical words necessary to precise definition, words which can be learned and used with clarity and understanding. The doctor, for example, must know many Greek derivatives to describe man's anatomy and even more Latin words to cure his colic with a satisfying prescription from the *materia medica*. The astronomer, the chemist, the engineer, the craftsman, even the literary critic, all have special words of precise utility. We do not expect to find the specialist's speech, oral or written, as easy as the gossip column of a daily newspaper. We have no ground to complain if we are driven to a dictionary to unravel the meaning of words, used legitimately in technical exposition. We laymen need not expect to understand the more abstruse subjects in natural science and certain other highly specialized branches

of learning. But we do have reason for sorrow when those learned men who deal in subjects presumably of universal interest and comprehension invoke a pseudo-scientific vocabulary, all fuss and fustian, and disguise their meanings in a hideous jargon and a syntax untrammelled by grammar.

The legitimate barriers to general understanding have increased enormously with the growth of specialism in the sciences and the technical professions, which occupy so large a place in modern life. The increasing tendency to fragmentation in our society is driving us all into separate cells ever more insulated against communication with other men of special knowledge. So vast is the field of knowledge now that the physician has difficulty comprehending the physicist, and the chemist is worlds removed from the astronomer. Even the broad divisions of science have separated into special fields walled away from each other. The pediatrician would hesitate to set a broken leg and may not know the vocabulary of the radiologist who X-rays his patient. But this division may be inevitable and unavoidable, a part of the price we pay for an increase in precise knowledge and skill in fields where laymen cannot expect to be informed.

Less excusable is the failure of communication between men of letters, literary and historical scholars, critics, teachers, and social scientists. They have an obligation to supply intellectual leadership to a society floundering because it lacks both knowledge and wisdom; they are presumably concerned with social and spiritual values, with the preservation and interpretation of the usable past, and with the cultivation and discipline of man's mind and emotions. Although this group has had great influence upon contemporary society—greater than the lay public is aware, perhaps—it has fallen short of its opportunity and obligation because of the breakdown of communication, not only between specialists and the generality of people, but even between the branches of related knowledge. Too often, historians write only for the understanding of other historians in their particular niche of research, literary critics write only for members of their special cult, poets choose their diction and patterns of expression to conform to the fashion of a select coterie, and educationists and sociologists invent a jargon in envious imitation of the technical vocabularies of the natural sciences. Each according to his kind pours out a multiplicity of works understood only within a narrow circle.

While discontented members of the intelligentsia moan that the

Philistine middle class does not appreciate them, they continue to make their ways darker and less comprehensible. And the lay public, attempting to read the works of the highbrows, gives up in disgust, decides that they are pedants, phonies, or fourflushers, and contents itself with the entertaining simplifications prepared by the *Reader's Digest*. Now no one would argue that the man of learning should throw his pearls before the audience of the *Reader's Digest*, or that the poet or critic must be entertaining and easy, but one might well ask whether there is not some common denominator of expression, understandable by the fraternity of educated men, to which the scholar and man-of-letters ought to aspire. Certainly in our time there has been no goal of clarity which has lured the intellectuals. On the contrary, a turgid style and the clash and grind of a rasping terminology have too often denoted the intellectual and marked him off from the despised fellow who makes a living by writing for the understanding of ordinary mortals. Unfortunately the intellectual often manifests in his rigmarole a snobbery and an arrogance perhaps induced by his sense of insecurity in a world which he finds inhospitable.

So incomprehensible have many learned authors become that we must depend upon those brokers of ideas, the journalists, to interpret their works to the public, not merely the *Reader's Digest* public, but residents across the street from the authors in their own little republic of letters, for frequently even intellectual neighbors have small understanding of each other. The journalists themselves are sometimes mistaken, and garble the meanings which they seek to elucidate. But they at least try to make clear matters left devious and dark by authors who disdained to make any concession to clarity.

Among the learned themselves, the failure of communication has produced a contemptuous attitude of one branch of knowledge toward another. Historians, as one who has dwelt among them can testify, regard a distressing number of modern poets as cranks, stuttering meaningless gibberish. And such poets as I have been able to consult display a fine contempt for the labors of historical research, the work of dull dogs leashed to a dragging weight of footnotes, work ill digested and unreadable. Everybody unites to abuse the authors of articles of literary research—everybody except the practicers of literary research themselves. *The Publications of the Modern Language Association*, the burial place of vast numbers of research articles, has become a byword for dullness, pointed to with scorn by literary critics in the more advanced reviews.

These critics themselves, in the chosen journals of their cults, frequently give the impression of indulging a special kind of dullness hidden in a thicket of philosophic obscurity, a dullness which few or none can understand. Not many among us—scholars, critics, or poets—feel any obligation or necessity to make ourselves intelligible to our brethren in letters, much less to the nonprofessionals. And as among primitive people, what we do not understand we usually dislike and dismiss, or, with naïve faith, we accept the empty words as magical incantations which we believe must surely have a meaning though it eludes us.

Among the tribes of academic folk, the group for whom other academics have the least respect is composed of those professional educators who have their hogans in the schools of education. Rarely does an historian, a natural scientist, a professor of English or other literate person have a good word to say for these clansmen, who by a peculiar diligence, an intense devotion to the interests of one another, and a special dialect have advanced themselves in power. One of the major reasons for the contempt which academicians display toward their brothers-in-pedagogy is the pseudo-scientific language which these have cultivated, a speech which lends itself to strange incantations. By the tom-tom beat of phrases, as any reader of pedagogical textbooks, treatises, and professional magazines can see for himself, the educators hypnotize semiliterate audiences in the way that preachers among some of our more primitive sects impress their congregations with a flow of words. Translated into plain, clear English, the jargon of polysyllables can be boiled down into thoughts of astonishing simplicity. Irritated by sesquipedalian nonsense, which seems hardly worth translation, more learned academics have dismissed the educators as the Holy Rollers of the profession and have thereby committed a great tactical error. Left to themselves, segregated from contacts with humane letters, conscious of the contempt of scholars and humanists, specialists in pedagogy have been forced to read and applaud one another's work. Constant repetition of texts from their holy books in the course of time has made fanatical believers who have gone out as missionaries and found converts among college administrators. These true believers find it as difficult to comprehend other philosophies of learning as their hostile colleagues find it hard to understand their dialect.

The low repute of contemporary poetry among the learned professions, whose members might be supposed to respect the noblest branch of letters, must be attributed in large measure to the bewilderment with

which the doctor, the lawyer, or even the average professor of English faces much of the serious poetry of the present day. The reader confesses that he cannot make head or tail of it and feels disgruntled. The painful elucidations of the serious critics help him very little. He cannot understand them either. Perhaps the fault is all with the reader, who should work harder at his task. Much of the world's greatest poetry is not easy; *The Divine Comedy* is not precisely hammock reading, but the intellectual and emotional satisfactions which come from its study are infinitely rewarding. But the puzzles in *The Divine Comedy* are not mysteries merely for the sake of mystification.

Readers from the learned professions today have a scandalously small acquaintance with contemporary poetry. A poll at a recent luncheon of a dozen eminent professors in various branches of the humanities, for example, disclosed only two who habitually read any living poet. More than half of the group even expressed disdain for most current poetry, which they claimed to have sampled earnestly without any compensating satisfaction, mental or spiritual. "When the poet has something to say and can express with genuine power what he finds in his heart to write, I can be patient with his metaphysical puzzles," one professor of history asserted. "But why should I waste my time untangling a commonplace of contorted prose masquerading as verse?"

The fashion of expression which many contemporary poets have adopted has placed them beyond the comprehension of most readers. Perhaps they are ahead of their time and one day will seem as conventional and clear as the paintings of nineteenth-century French impressionists, who were damned in their time by conservatives. But meanwhile the poet, because he does not reach the understanding of educated men, recedes farther and farther from his traditional role as a prophetic leader. The bard has given way to the recluse, silent to all save specialists in his particular brand of verse.

The vogue of obscurantism, shared by the poet with prose writers of the *avant garde*, represents a loss to society of intellectual leadership sorely needed in a materialistic world. The self-imposed retirement behind barriers of cultism has removed from the stream of positive leadership minds which might have contributed to the elevation and freedom of the human spirit.

This flight from life by active minds is a negative disaster. Some critics, however, have seen a more sinister and positive evil in the trend

toward cultism among the litterati. *The Times Literary Supplement*, for example, on March 18, 1944, printed as a leading article, "Cultic Twilight," which drew a gloomy parallel between some of the Nazi hocus-pocus and analogous "myth-discoveries" among fashionable literary coteries. "Mythogenesis is a cult of our day," the *Times* observes. "It has sent a literary movement in this country and America into a frenzied derangement of words—and in Europe it has driven a nation mad and laid Europe in ruins. . . . The racial myth preached by the Germans turns history into fable; the literary myth turns art into legerdemain. Words before sense is one of the literary mottoes, and if words are too ingrained in meaning to be mishandled, then invent some that can by no possibility be interpreted except by the inventor—who will leave a key to the claque so that future generations may not study in vain. The Joycean Rosetta Stone is not quite complete; there are some chips off the corners; but enough has been found to relate distantly *Finnegan's Wake* to life. And if a reader, enlightened by the translation, should suggest that, after all, what is revealed in treasure of thought hardly made the trouble worth while, the fault is still his. He should have been satisfied with the triumph of sound over sense, have accepted the complete autonomy of words that makes the medium of prose to be itself the 'object,' the meaning, of literature!"

The decadence of the German intellectual, as symbolized by his adherence to racial mythology, in the *Times'* opinion, is scarcely less sinister than the decadence of English and American intellectuals who herald the Joycean chaos as the "foundations of a new art, a new language, a new moral order." And with fervor rare in its pages the *Times* exclaims: "New orders, new myths! Joyce is not to be blamed for the Joyceans, nor Freud for the Freudians. But the victims of the cult-makers are entitled to protest. We have seen how the elements of mysticism, melodrama, and plot in German myth-making have swung a whole nation into action. Egotism, clannishness, and vanity dominate the new cults. . . . Everything is in excess, without courtesy as without reason. Transcendental prerogatives are demanded for freakishness in literature as they are for national designs. Both have an array of fabulous symbols and a childlike kind of drama in their inflated notions. This would be pathetic if it were not so arrogant, so capable of mischief. Too long brooding over Historical Missions by New Artists—or by political dictators—leads to the death of the free spirit, to the dialects, and the deeds of despair."

In some degree the dialects of the esoteric cults have become the cure, for the literature itself carries no meaning to the uninitiated. Though these cults have their influence, it is chiefly an influence by hearsay, gossip heard above the rattling of cocktail glasses and the jangling of long words.

The seeker after light might think that he could turn to the literary critic for illumination, but here he is frequently disappointed. The "serious critic" is likely to wrap his ruminations in such metaphysical terminology that the work expounded seems simple by comparison. "I don't know what Blank is talking about," a brilliant young intellectual recently remarked of a critic, "but he is a sincere fellow and I admire him." Critics of this type, disgusted with the crassness of commercial publishing, have found an outlet for their indignation in the literary quarterlies, but unhappily their influence is wasted because they have felt no compulsion to make their philosophies and their ideas apparent to the multitude—or even at times to the editor who, with sublime faith, publishes their work. Ironically the critic, who should be the interpreter between artists and the public, exemplifies in an exaggerated degree the obscurity which is the blight upon so much intellectual activity in our time. And the critic does not have the consolation of the educationist, who manages with the abracadabra of words to fool a portion of the public into believing that he is learnedly scientific because he sounds that way. When the critic musters a panoply of jargon, readers lose patience and exile him to the "little reviews" where members of the rarefied cults survive in the half-light of mutual admiration.

That "serious criticism" is really destructive of the appreciation of literature is a suspicion found all too often among fellow intellectuals not sealed of the tribe. In "An Open Letter on Critics and Criticism," in *The Nation* for August 1, 1942, Mr. Joseph Wood Krutch uttered some words of wisdom which deserve to be remembered: "In recent years criticism has certainly been taking itself with a new seriousness. After scorning the easy impressionism of the late nineteenth century, it now scorns also the easy Freudianism of the twenties, and is showing signs of scorning only a little less openly the easy Marxism of the thirties. The science of aesthetics has come into fashion again. Poets, many of whom seem to be more interested in criticism than in poetry, have got so far from the old romantic attitude toward their art that they argue at length such metaphysical questions as the cognitive and noncognitive

nature of poetry. . . . But I wonder whether the New Seriousness isn't reducing itself to the New Pedantry." Mr. Krutch recalls that "an enthusiastic dissector of poetry by the methods of semantics said to me with an air of triumph, 'At least I have shown that it is not easy to read a poem.'" And Mr. Krutch adds, "But I wonder if to carry that conviction is to perform any very useful service for poetry. I have the impression that at least ninety-nine out of a hundred contemporary readers accept it already—accept it, indeed, so absolutely that they have no intention of trying."

Mr. Krutch, like many other thoughtful interpreters of literature, objects to the esoteric critics because, instead of providing light, they make the darkness yet more obscure. "What proportion, I wonder, of the audiences which for more than two centuries kept Shakespeare alive on the stage understood everything that a qualified critic could find in his works. How much better off would they and literature have been had they been convinced by semantic critics that it is not easy to understand *Hamlet* and that accordingly it ought to be protected from them? What, in other words, is the best base for great art, a broad base of eager readers and hearers or a select coterie capable of analyzing the seven ambiguities and of knowing a sprung rhythm when they see one? If serious criticism tends to encourage the choice of the second alternative, then I hope that serious criticism will be read by no one except serious critics."

This wish which Mr. Krutch makes for serious criticism has verily come to pass. The critic, writing only for other critics, impresses only a small elite, who themselves dwell sequestered from the main currents of intellectual society. We today have no counterpart of the criticism of the early nineteenth century when the hard-headed critics of the *Quarterly* and the *Edinburgh Review*, with all of their faults, wrote with such vigor that the entire literate world sat up and paid attention. They exerted an influence, not merely upon coteries, but upon public taste as a whole. They intended to be understood and they never lapsed into a dialect of their own creation.

Blame for the obscurity into which so much of humane learning has fallen must be shared alike by all of us who ply the trade of scholar, teacher, and interpreter of letters. For too long each in his corner has worried his own particular bone and growled at the approach of an intruder. But everywhere there are signs of an awakened consciousness of the obligation, not only to society, but to learning itself. If learning is

not to die, smothered in its own pedantry, it must acquire an awareness of its public relationships and particularly of its obligations to other members of the fraternity of scholars. In every profession new voices are making this demand with an appeal to common sense and enlightened self-interest. Everywhere there is realization of the need for better communication.

This movement must not be confused with a degeneration into journalism—always the fear of scholars. Accurate and technical scholarship, learned and difficult criticism, we must continue to encourage. Never was there a greater fallacy than the belief that all learning, scholarship, or criticism, must be gay, simple, and alluring to the passing reader. We shall continue to need many an abstruse and tedious study. Someone should say a word for the poor devil who counted the syllables in Chaucer—that perennial illustration never forgotten by the enemies of exact scholarship. Had he not performed that weary labor, we would never have recovered the secret of Chaucer's musical verse, and the world would have been the loser. But we must ask ourselves whether we have done our best to write for the understanding of all who might need our scholarship, our poetry, and our criticism. We must search our souls against pedantry.

In my opinion, the most fruitful and natural play of the mind is in conversation. . . . If I converse with a strong mind and a rude jousting, who presses me hard and digs me right and left, his ideas touch off my own. Jealousy, emulation, and contention stimulate and raise me something above myself. Agreement is absolutely boring in conversation.

—MONTAIGNE

LONDON REVISITED

by C. S. Forester

IT WAS ALONG this part of the road that the flagstones in the pavement (do I call it the pavement or the sidewalk?) suddenly and inexplicably became wider. A little boy used to walk to school over these flagstones, treading on all the cracks. I cannot remember now how he rationalized that compulsion—how he explained to himself the pressing need that at each step some part of his shoe should be in contact with a crack—but I well remember how urgent it was. Those old-fashioned flagstones with their unpredictable irregularity of size set an infant's mind at work devising games and systems to deal with them in a much more acute fashion than your modern flags of synthetic stone, monotonously uniform in size and texture.

Four journeys a day up and down that street for more than two hundred days a year for several years impressed my memory with those flagstones so that I will never forget them. It was here that the wide ones were which six-year-old legs could not stride, so that leaps were necessary. The broad flags were still there, but now in the roadway beside the pavement stood an air-raid shelter; built to resist bombs, it was of too massive a construction to be easily removed, and its removal could await a moment of national leisure.

And just above the broad flagstones stood the "Royal" house. It used to bear a little plaque in the design of a crowned heart with the one mysterious word, "Royal," as enigmatic to me as Charles I's last word—"Remember." Those plaques are collectors' pieces now; they were the emblems of fire insurance companies, and in the days when each company had its own salvage corps they were useful indications to the corps to tell them which property to look after in the event of a fire. But to the little boy pausing in his pilgrimage from crack to crack to look up four times a day and read that mysterious word, there was high romance without sordid details in that plaque. Was the Prince of Wales born there? Had Charles II hidden there as well as in the Boscobel oak? And the plaque

was still there; if the collectors had ever spotted it they had not succeeded in persuading the householder to part with it. Good luck to him.

But down the hill from the "Royal" house, all the way down to the main road, was destruction and desolation— desolation made more desolate by the dreary and ugly prefabricated houses being built among the ruins. A big bomb must have fallen just about where the little boy had lived all those years. The house was gone, and the sycamore trees into which he used to climb; there remained only a fragment of the foundations among the prefabricated houses which a house-hungry nation was hurriedly erecting. There was still clearance work going on; the soil which had once been fought over by the little boy's leaden hordes (he had defended and captured fortresses there before he had read about Uncle Toby and Corporal Trim doing the same thing at another time and place) was now trodden by German prisoners under the supervision of a twenty-year-old private in the A.T.S. with a complexion of peaches and cream. In those 1900's when soldiers still wore red coats in the street whoever would have thought of drab prisoners of war at work among the ruins—and, a fortiori, whoever would have thought of women soldiers in women's units?

So I climbed back into the battered car which, despite its batterings, had cost a small fortune in pounds sterling, and drove off, remembering painfully to keep on the left side of the road, and keeping a wary eye on the petrol gauge to see that the precious rationed juice did not run dry. What did it matter to me that in the City there were bomb-blasted vacant spaces all gay with golden and purple flowers? The City meant little to me; it had few memories for me. I used to manage to lose my way in it even when I was grown up, on the few occasions when I penetrated into its complexities to lunch with friends who earned their livings in it by more conventional methods than mine. I was in the London that I knew best, the London of my childhood and boyhood and early manhood—by coincidence it was also that part of London which had lain directly on the main axis of the flying bombs. The southern suburbs centering round the Crystal Palace were harder hit than any other part of England—Coventry and Plymouth suffered more concentrated pounding in a small area, but those long slopes outside the rim of the saucer-like London basin, facing southeastward straight at Hitler, took a long, long pounding for many weary months. Here were the well-remembered crossroads on the way to Dulwich College. I could hardly recognize them; the buildings on each

of the four corners were totally destroyed. The picture gallery—once it held the finest collection in England except for the great galleries—was only an empty, battered shell. The Great Hall of the college was only a shell, like Tintern or Fountains Abbeys. Burned out, presumably, during the fire blitz. Yet peace brooded over those quiet, suburban roads as it had brooded when I was a boy. (Here came a schoolboy in his black coat and straw hat with blue-and-black band, cycling along with a bundle of books under his arm exactly as I used to cycle along all those years ago.) The essential spirit of the London suburbs seemed unchanged, and the London suburbs, with which the outsider can rarely hope to be intimate, are typical of modern England.

The England that fought Napoleon was an England more of farms than of factories, despite Napoleon's gibe at "the nation of shopkeepers," but the England that fought Hitler and withstood without panic five and a half years of murder and destruction, was an England of cities and their suburbs, an ideal target for the fire blitz and the flying bomb. There is a woman I know in south London. She is an ordinary suburban housewife in her middle forties—may heaven forgive me for writing of her in this way, because once I thought her as beautiful as the day, and I used to write poems about her, and dream of her fairy footsteps and the curls on the back of her neck. She was out shopping one morning when the air-raid siren sounded, and she tried to get home instead of taking shelter because her sick mother was alone in the house. That was the day when atmospheric conditions prevented the barrage balloons from being kept in the air, and the Nazi aviators took advantage of the fact and came down and machine-gunned the streets after dropping their bombs. My friend was the only living creature visible in that neighborhood, and a plane swooped upon her, spitting bullets at her. But fortunately there was a bomb crater just there, and she sprang down into it, crouching against the smoking earth and creeping round while the plane circled over her seeking a clear shot, the bullets hitting the earth close beside her. The upper corner of a house saved her—the bullets cut it clean off when the aviator did not notice it was in his line of fire. Then, having expended his ammunition, the Nazi flew home while my friend climbed out of the crater and went on to look after her sick mother. And she is still an ordinary suburban housewife. Now I come to think of it, that very last sentence is a greater tribute than all the poems I used to write to her eyelashes.

The House of Memory was a ruin, too. My children had spent their

babyhood here; in the little public park at the back I had wheeled them in their perambulators—but the emplacements for the battery of anti-aircraft 4. 5's were new to me. And the house itself was a ruin; the house where so much had happened, where so many novels had been thought up and written, where I received the trans-Atlantic telephone call that summoned me to Hollywood, was now a terrifying skeleton of roofless walls. There was nothing to do but to avert my gaze and scramble into the car without looking back and drive to the West End, back to oblivion.

When the social caldron boils and bubbles, a scum invariably floats at the top, and I was part of this scum, as I reluctantly admitted to myself. The people of England—the great, solid, marvelous mass of them—were enduring with the national tenacity the shortages and inconveniences and the irritations of postwar life. I floated serenely above them. There was no question of patronizing a black market; it was merely that in the case of a certain few luxuries the machinery necessary for rationing them would be too clumsy and expensive, so they remained on the free market to be bought by people like me, and by the usual refugees with mysterious sources of income, and by the war profiteers (healthily few of these, though), and the Argentine businessmen, and the American correspondents. It is not practicable to ration duck or venison, so we ate those things every day while, for every one of us, a hundred thousand people round us made do on a meat ration that provided three small chops a week. We had several pairs of trousers apiece; everybody else had to get along with a new pair of trousers a year. We had suitcases full of underclothes, and the collars of our shirts were not made of pieces cut with miserly care from the tails. And I was favored beyond even most of the scum, because I had friends who were glad to see me. They brought out their best for me—the hoarded pot of jam, the can of fruit—and they squandered a fortnight's meat ration on a joint of meat. Could I say roast beef was not a supreme pleasure to me, that I disliked canned fruit? No. I could only accept it without comment, the way it was offered; the English social graces are distinguished by the absence of verbiage where verbiage is not necessary.

It was nothing new to me to admire England, but to me personally it was something new to be able to laugh at her through my admiration, although England has satirized herself throughout the ages. Piers Plowman did it seven hundred years ago, and Swift did it two hundred fifty years ago, and Evelyn Waugh did it last year. Now I could laugh,

thanks to my new-found objectivity. It was the height of the Season, and the Eton and Harrow match, and the Oxford and Cambridge match, and the King's Garden Party followed one after the other. Outward appearances had to be preserved. The morning coat and the gray topper and the gold-headed cane sauntered through the streets as they did when the century was young. White waistcoat and tails ignored clothes rationing, and while the Great Powers bickered over the destiny of the world, a woman member of Parliament was excluded from the King's Garden Party because she did not wear a hat.

A Court official with whom I have a slight acquaintance debated solemnly with me a point I raised with him regarding how Sir Thomas More would be spoken of in an official English document nowadays. The British Government is, of course, painstakingly careful regarding titles, naturally and rightly so, seeing that it awards them, and they are part of the national currency. It will speak with unaffected sincerity about the Honorable and Reverend John Smith, and His Highness the Gackwar of Baroda, and, by courtesy, it is just as careful with foreign titles. Sir Thomas More was canonized some years back, and presumably the prefix "Saint," bestowed by Rome, is a foreign title which must be treated with courtesy. But he was knighted by Henry VIII four hundred years ago. Should it be "Saint Sir Thomas More" or "Sir Saint Thomas More"? My friend hummed and hawed over the knotty point which might present itself for immediate solution at any moment should circumstances arise in which allusion might be necessary in an official announcement. Supposing a church were to be dedicated to him and the King should go to lay the foundation stone, what would the Court Circular say? It would be a precedent. Is "Saint" a title or a rank? If it is a rank the question is easy, and "Saint" comes first, just as a certain distinguished officer used to be Admiral Lord Louis Mountbatten. But if "Saint" is an honorable distinction it is more complicated, because only one distinction is mentioned. Peers who happen to be baronets as well never trouble to mention the fact. Would a knight call himself a saint or a saint call himself a knight? Do bats eat cats? Do cats eat bats? I've forgotten now what my friend eventually decided, but it was very important.

The traditional empire builder wore dress clothes in the midst of the jungle; now he wears them in the midst of clothes rationing. Years of military service, of Home Guard duty, of fire fighting, of driving Nazi invaders from British skies, have not eradicated the feeling of the need

for the right clothes for each occasion. Clothes rationing introduces a new complication, one which would have delighted the heart of Thorstein Veblen. For no one, not even the greatest stickler for the etiquette of clothes, can possibly buy a new dress coat. If he were to do so, it would mean going without shirt and trousers in everyday life, and that would involve an even worse breach of etiquette than dining at the Savoy in a lounge suit. So the possession of dress clothes is a new hallmark; it is a proof of the possession of such things before the war. And if clothes rationing continues long enough, it will be a proof that one's father had such things, and will constitute a clearer claim to lineage than any sixty-four quarterings. Yet I fear that in the years to come money, as usual, will find a way, and second-hand dress suits will be purchased by social upstarts just as in the old days pedigrees and coats-of-arms could be bought.

It may be significant that, despite the profound social revolution going on in England at the moment, good society still wears dress clothes. The French Revolution brought about preposterous changes in men's fashions. The *Sans-culottes* and the *Incroyables* boasted of their changed attire, and were even labeled on account of it. England has succeeded, as she has succeeded before, in effecting a far-reaching change while leaving the surface undisturbed. For a nation distinguished for the production of the most flighty geniuses of historic times, it is remarkable that she has never lost her sobriety and her common sense during any long or important period.

The mists still close in over the city, just as they did when Whistler painted his nocturnes. The softness and restraint of the English landscape still endure. There is nowhere else in the world, not even in San Francisco's Bay area, where atmospheric water vapor so profoundly modifies the view, softening and etherealizing it. I can look out from Mount Diablo—westward toward the Golden Gate—or from the Grand Canyon's Bright Angel, and revel in what I see, enjoy it, perhaps even grow a little lightheaded about it; but when I looked out from the Embankment, and when I braked my car on the crest of Wenlock Edge, I recognized, like an old friend, the lifelong feeling that I wished some different arrangement of chromosomes had made me a painter instead of a novelist. The English social system can adapt itself to economic change, but looking over Wenlock Edge I felt goose flesh at the thought that in a few more years some public nuisance might begin spraying substances from airplanes to modify the English weather and change the character of all

the beauty I was looking at. Beautiful it still might be, but not the beauty I have known all my life, the beauty I can hardly bear to write about in this cold-blooded fashion.

And yet in the Strand I thought about San Francisco's Post Street; on Wenlock Edge I thought about Grizzly Peak. Can a man love two women at once? I fortunately do not have to debate that point at this moment. But this I know, that a man can love two countries at once. Which is my wife and which is my mistress? England or California? Fortunately, again, I do not have to decide. Does a man while he is in Eunice's arms think lingeringly about Euphemia's charms? Maybe he does. Driving through Devon I found myself stringing words together in my mind to the tune of "Widecombe Fair." Widecombe was only just over the hill, and yet I was singing to myself faithlessly

Jan Peerce, lend me your old Ford
All along out along down along lea;
For I want for to go to Hobo Hot Springs,
San Diego, San Francisco, Santa Ana, Santa Clara, Santa Rosa, San Jose,
San Luis Obispo and all—
San Luis Obispo and all!

There are people in England who still sing those words. I taught them.

There is nothing besides the goodnesse of God that preserves health so much as honest mirth, especially mirth used at dinner and supper and mirth towards bed.

—ANDREW BOORD, 1626

A PROBLEM IN FICTION

by Wallace Stegner

THERE ARE SO MANY KINDS of stories that one cannot hope, by analyzing or re-creating one, to say anything very definitive about the form. One kind, intensely personal in feeling, deriving often from memory, its origins clouded and obscured by time, its methods so unconscious and undeliberate that the story seems to grow by itself out of some fecund darkness, can reward analysis only if the analysis searches out the whole mental and emotional state of the author during composition, and becomes a kind of personality analysis, a study in Jungian terms of the creative process and the creative personality. Another kind, built deliberately according to predetermined blueprints, is hardly worth analysis no matter how skillfully it is made, because the skill is all it has; it exists at a rudimentary level, without the difficult and indispensable quality of original design. It is the quality of design which I assume we are after in this series of story re-creations, and what may be valuable in such a study is the simple record of how a story came into being, how the scattered materials of time and place and people and situation and idea and feeling and significant action were subjected to some sort of synthesis and emerged a new thing, with a form of its own.

Almost any professional writer has had stories write themselves for him. I suppose most of us look upon that kind of story with a slight awe: it comes so easily and it leaves no tracks. Almost any writer too has had on occasion to build a story from scanty suggestions or fragmentary experiences, to hew one out by main force. This latter kind lends itself better to critical retrospection because

its processes, if not exactly clear, have been at least painful.

"The Women on the Wall" is a story that had to be hewn out. It is one of the few I ever wrote directly from a scene and a group of people immediately under my eyes, and perhaps because I knew nothing about any of these people except their external appearance and their general situation, and so was without the help of the gestative processes which memory and the subconscious often perform painlessly, I had a good deal of difficulty in finding out exactly what my story was *about*. Action is an easy thing to invent and a hard thing to guide, because to guide it you must know where you want it to go.

Since I am engaged in a process of re-creation, let me re-create. The circumstances which gave rise to the story were not in any way unusual; the idea began casually and accidentally, in the middle of a time of letdown and boredom. I had returned to Santa Barbara from New York in the spring of 1945 to recover from an illness and a long stretch of working on racial minorities in the United States. I was in that state of mild collapse that follows the finishing of a book. Habit drove me to my desk after breakfast, but I could think of nothing I really wanted to do there. I wrote letters, or looked out the window across a lovely pine-shrouded point and a sunken lane, with the Pacific shining beyond and the mornings so still and temperate that I almost felt the house wallow slightly, like a ship in a dead calm. I smelled the slow warm fume of that little promontory—pine and eucalyptus and wood smoke and *Ceanothus* and kelp, and heard the relaxed swash of surf on the beach.

And I saw the Army and Navy wives who lived in apartments in the old beach club building on the point. Every morning about eleven they began to gather on the stone wall at the end of the lane, and for a half-hour, three-quarters, an hour, sometimes longer, they waited as quietly as patients sunning themselves in a sanitarium garden, until the mailman in his gray car and gray uniform drove up to the row of mailboxes.

Perhaps the way that picture formed and broke up every noon, only to re-form again in almost identical shapes and colors the next day, impressed it upon me unduly. Perhaps the women did not

have over them the still purity of light that I thought I saw. Nevertheless I saw them waiting there under an intense stillness, a picture of a wistful charm. Before two mornings had passed, what I really did in my study was watch that most beautiful, lulled, enchanted place above the blue and violet sea, with the frieze of bright, still women along the wall.

I have no idea at what point I began to think of them as a story. It was simply apparent after awhile that I felt them with the clarity and force of a symbol, and that I wanted to write them. But you do not write a picture. You do not even write a "situation" like this of the women waiting patiently at the remote edge of the West while their husbands fought the Japanese thousands of miles westward across that miraculous water. Waiting was obviously a significant wartime activity, but it was fairly inert stuff to make a story from.

The women waited, as women have always waited in wars, and I watched them as avidly as a Peeping Tom. I saw how they were tuned-down, stilled, withdrawn into themselves until they seemed to have little to say even to each other. I heard the surf on the beach below, and the surf was slow and muted. I saw the mornings pass over as even and imperturbable as the muted sea and the waiting women. I knew that these images and shapes of quiescence that came to me might sometime be useful, that they were the images from which an atmosphere could be created, but I did not see any story around which to create an atmosphere. The images lay around in my mind at random, unconnected, and though I must even in the beginning have had some perception of how everything that struck me as important about those women had a cyclic, reiterative compulsiveness—tides and waves and growing mornings and the gathering along the wall and the climactic and awaited coming of the gray car—I was too interested in the images singly to see their significance en masse.

And another confession of almost unbelievable obtuseness: I had watched the women for upwards of a week, and been reminded of Keats's "On a Grecian Urn" a dozen times, and been impressed every morning freshly by the clear Attic light, the Mediterranean clarity, of the picture the women made. But it was a week before I

made the connection with Penelope on the rocky isle of Ithaca above the wine-dark sea waiting her twenty years for Ulysses' return.

That belated perception of the classical parallel took me forward a long step. The very roll and ring of Homer's epithets and the soft thunder of his names added a dimension, dignity, depth. So I found myself with a place, a group of people, a situation, a classical parallel that had the effect of a stereopticon viewer. But I still had no story. I still had only a picture.

I attempted to surprise a story out of the picture by simply beginning, describing the point and the light and the sound of surf and the incense smells and the graceful waiting women. But when I got the picture finished everything stopped. And every attempt I made to invent and import some action fell flat. The Penelope parallel tempted me into inventing suitors, but they were as out of place in what I had already half-conceived as Keystone cops would have been. I was tempted by the communal, enforced life the women led in the beach club to try a kind of Grand Hotel scheme, following each woman and each woman's husband to a conclusion, whether death or reunion or separation or misunderstanding. But everything I tried was off key, or involved complication enough for a novel. And I kept being pulled back to the picture, just that. After several false starts and ten days of watching, certain things began to be clear.

It was clear that these women fascinated me precisely because they did nothing but wait. The minute I started them acting I falsified them. Their proper story was not a story, but only a repetition, and the conflict proper to their lives was only the tugging on the chain that held them. Waiting itself was their essential struggle. They were all thrown out of their normal posture by the war; they lived suspended lives.

It was clear too that if I wanted to dramatize that suspension properly, the method must be repetitive. That much I might borrow from the Grand Hotel theme; the effects of waiting must be seen in more than one way and in more than one of the women. And since the conflict here was internal, the story would probably re-

solve itself down not into a clear line of action, but into a series of uncoverings, all set within the framework of the daily waiting for the mail. The problem, I finally began to see, was not to make action out of this picture, but by moving the picture slightly to reveal what was hidden behind it. This story would develop, certainly, not as a complication resolved but as what Henry James called a "situation revealed."

And if revealed, it must be revealed to someone. I had already tried, with a dismal sense of failure, to get at these women from the inside. In the end I adopted the point of view that was at once easiest and most natural—my own, the viewpoint of the external observer. I elected to make my observer a man, for no particular reason; I made him an older man to prevent any suggestion of his being interested in the women for the wrong reasons, and to avoid the necessity of explaining how a young man could be on this secluded bit of beach during wartime. In the end I decided that he had just recently returned from many years on the Galapagos Islands, because as a retired colonial he might be assumed to have a certain innocence, because he would have along with that innocence an interest in rediscovering things in the States, because he could first be impressed and then shocked or startled at the uncoverings I was intending to make. I set his earlier career on the Galapagos only because every night at that time I was playing a game called "Cargoes" with my son, and almost every night I stopped my marker at the Galapagos for a cargo of turtles.

My story was still not clear to me in detail, but by now I knew what I thought. I thought the waiting women were lovely and symbolic and touching; and I thought that their quiet could not possibly be more than skin-deep, that beneath their muted surface must be a seethe and dart of emotion like a school of small fish just under the unbroken surface of water. I suspected, though I didn't know and don't know yet, that their submission was only apparent and that they were all ready to explode with anger, hysterics, loss, boredom, fear.

Though I certainly did not formulate the notion to myself as I started to write, I had a pattern of reversal all prepared for myself.

Whether it is a complication resolved or a situation revealed, fiction normally works either toward surprise or toward recognition. Whichever it works toward, it covers its tracks, it moves by stealth, it pretends to be going the other way. Like a lever, a story needs a fulcrum of opposition on which to get what we used to call "purchase." If boy is going to get girl, it usually is rigged so that for most of the story he apparently is going to lose her, and vice versa. So in this story, since the uncoverings were going to reveal unsuspected depths of passion and resentment and resistance in these women, I began with what had been my own first impression: the enchanted point, the breathing sea, the cyclic mornings and tides and mailman, the quiet cataleptic pattern of the women on the wall, the apparent submission to their waiting.

By now I had to know more about my characters than their external appearance. Quite without their consent or knowledge, I gave to one of them, Mrs. Kendall, an adopted child, a warped and bottled-up and prudish interest in sex, and a personal inadequacy matched by her personal loneliness; I gave another an illegitimate unborn child whose father rarely wrote and was constantly in danger of death; to another I gave defiance and a corrective hostility against those outside her own life; to a fourth I gave an intense and nervous temperament, the habit of smoking marijuana, and a husband who preferred combat to his home. I had my Mrs. Corson smoke marijuana rather than punish highballs because I had recently been working with Mexican youths in Los Angeles and I had marijuana on my mind. So much of what attaches itself or insinuates itself when one is making a story is purest accident; the story growing in the mind becomes a kind of flypaper that catches everything light, everything loose.

The form the story was taking was organic; it could not be separated from the materials, it took on definiteness as the materials clarified themselves. All I had to do was to start my Mr. Palmer where I had started, have him see and admire the women, respect their withdrawal, idealize them as Penelopes, be impressed with the classic purity of their situation. I did this. I allowed Mr. Palmer to try making their acquaintance and I let him be

rebuffed, and I had him apologize to himself for their behavior. They were heroically doing what they had to do; they should not be intruded upon. He went back to his role as respectful observer.

Now I needed an incident to bring him close to them again, so that from a certain point on he could become progressively more aware of the seething under the quiet surface. Fate provided me the incident in the form of an unexplained cocker pup who appeared for one whole day in the beach club yard, howled and yipped and mourned for twelve hours, and mysteriously disappeared again. I incorporated him and his adventure bodily, using him not only as a means of characterizing Mrs. Kendall, but also as a symbolic representation *in petto* of the way everybody in the story, adult, child, or dog, was tied down helplessly and no relief for it.

Having brought Mr. Palmer into contact with one of the women, Mrs. Corson, I was in shape to have her use him as a screen for one of her marijuana binges. On the pretext of going down to take her daughter for a pony ride, she drives down to a joint and gets her "reefer." And being high on marijuana, she is in a condition to break the unspoken agreement of silence that protects the women from outsiders. She can confide in Mr. Palmer that Mrs. Vaughan, six months pregnant, has no husband but the one who was killed at Dieppe, three years before. She can give away Mrs. Kendall's secret of the adopted child and take a catlike claw or two at Mrs. Kendall's prudery, fussiness, self-righteousness. Finally she can involve herself in a screaming catfight with Mrs. Kendall, and in the course of it Mr. Palmer can learn about her too, what makes her pupils so large, what is the source of her furious and demented energy.

In that series of scenes the reversal is completed, the idyllic and wistful picture Mr. Palmer started with has been violently shoved aside and the turmoil of suffering and frustrated humanity it has covered is revealed.

And for an ending—there is no ending, actually, since there is no story but only a revelation, what Joyce called an "epiphany"—I had no choice but to drop the original picture back into place. Being cyclic, the story must return upon itself. I closed out the

catfight with the coming of the mailman, and the resubmission of all the women to the monotony of their lives. That ending recommended itself not merely as a way of getting out of the rather melodramatic scene of the women fighting, but also as a structural symbol. If the structure and intention of the story are legitimate, this ending ought to have the power of closing the circle, returning us to where we began but with the added understanding and insight that a round trip behind the scenes has provided.

The great and glorious masterpiece of man is to live to the point. All other things—to reign, to hoard, to build—are, at most, but inconsiderate props and appendages Relaxation and versatility, it seems to me, go best with a strong and noble mind, and do it singular honor. There is nothing more notable in Socrates than that he found time, when he was an old man, to learn music and dancing, and thought it time well spent.

—MONTAIGNE, 1533–1592

THINGS THAT GO BUMP IN THE NIGHT

by Joseph Wood Krutch

MANY YEARS AGO when I was still a cockney by conviction as well as by habit, I went with two companions—one male and one female—to spend a few weeks in what seemed to us a lonely house. Outwardly, at least, we were brave enough during the first twenty-four hours, but as the second twilight began to fall, a certain uneasiness could no longer be hidden. None of us was quite comfortable, and none quite willing to admit that he was not, until the time finally came when the fact was patent. “What,” each asked the other, “are you afraid of?”

“People,” said I, “thieves, murderers, escaped lunatics—call them what you will—but People; evilly disposed and strong enough to kill or maim me.” “Ghosts,” said my female companion briskly. But our friend still hesitated. “Well,” he said at last, “if you must know, it’s—panthers. I was afraid of them as a child and I am afraid of them now. They lie along the low limbs of trees, and they will leap upon my back if I pass under them.”

Then, of course, we went to work upon one another, always two against one. No murder and no theft by violence had occurred in that region within the memory of man, though both were common occurrences in that part of New York City where we all felt perfectly secure and at home. Even the fearer of ghosts admitted that she feared them only between sunset and sunrise; even the predestined victim of panthers was ready enough to grant that no bobcat, even, had been seen in that part of Connecticut for generations. And so we retired to our rooms, each deprived of his pet rationalization but not, I am afraid, much comforted in the place where we needed comfort. And when, just before dawn, a squirrel scampered over the roof, each saw in his mind’s eye what he was prepared to see: the murderer with his knife; the ghost risen from his grave; the panther ready to spring.

The country is a great deal safer than the city. Nearly everyone admits that abstract proposition and statistics support it. But no one who grew up in a town really believes it in those nerves where the fear of the lonely dark takes its rise. Reason can reach the rationalizations with which we seek to make fear respectable to ourselves, but it cannot reach fear itself.

What we should have done, as I now know well, was to get a cat, or what is much better, at least two. Nothing else will explain so convincingly almost any of the creaks and groans to which an old house is heir. Puss can tiptoe or stomp as the mood strikes him and he can send tin pots and china crashing on occasion. He is equally likely to be in the cellar or on the roof and he might cause almost any noise one is likely to hear. In actual fact he will, of course, not be responsible a third of the time but nearly always he might be, and what one needs is a possible, innocent, explanation of what otherwise seems to have none. Two cats are better for the simple reason that one is likely to be sleeping on your feet when you need him most and it is highly desirable to have a spare to fall back upon.

Of course not even a cat will explain everything which needs explanation when one is in the dark alone. When I was spending my first night in a rather out-of-the-way and rather ramshackle hotel in one of the more ancient and sinister towns of Italy, I was awakened about two in the morning by the sound of heels tapping smartly down the stone pavement. They stopped just under my window and I got up to look out. A man was peering intently at the door. After a close inspection he put some sort of mark on it and went on down to the next, which, after a short scrutiny, he left unmarked.

This was during the early days of fascism, and I had heard that afternoon the distant shouts of a mob. What could this mysterious proceeding mean? I thought of the Passover and of the Massacre of St. Bartholomew, but I could think of no other explanation. When I awoke the next morning—and I am rather proud of myself for having slept at all—I hastened to investigate the mysterious sign. It was a little sticker assuring the owner that the watchman employed by some security company had passed at 2:00 A.M. and found all

well. The explanation was as simple as that of certain strange tapings which kept my friends and me awake during our first night in the cottage. They turned out to be the result of the slow dripping from an old-fashioned icebox onto a sheet of tin outside my bedroom window. But why did I not think of that? Simply because, I suppose, when one is alone in a strange place, one does not easily imagine innocent things.

II

The place where I now am and where I spent last night alone is far from strange. I have known it for more than fifteen years and know it better than I have ever known any other place on earth. It is here and here only that I ever really feel "at home." But I have been alone in this house only on rare occasions. I need to remind myself that I am no longer the cockney I was twenty-five years ago and that I do not really anticipate attack by lunatic, ghost, or crouching panther.

The solitude I know best is the *solitude a deux* and that is the kind I prefer. Unfortunately, however, one cannot always choose. For thirty-six hours I have spoken to no human being, and that is long enough to begin to get the taste of aloneness into one's mouth. This familiar place—this most familiar and beloved of all places—begins to seem strange, at least in the sense of seeming odd. With no one to distract my attention, I get to know it better than I have ever known it before, and that in itself is pleasant. But out of the greater intimacy grows an oddness. It is like repeating a word until one seems never to have heard it before or like staring in a mirror until one seems to see a stranger. "Who," one asks, "is staring so fixedly beyond the magic pane?" "Is this," one asks, "the chair I have so many times sat in?" "Am I falling into a dream or is this the only time I have ever been really awake?" Perhaps, I conclude, man is always a stranger to himself. Perhaps only the presence of others who seem to know him makes him able to take himself for granted. When there is no one present to help him pretend, he knows that all is strange and that the strangest of all is himself. Those who are never really happy except in groups or crowds must have more

fear of themselves than those of us for whom one companion at a time is usually enough.

When I look out of the window I see that though the ground is covered with snow, the day is—or at least ought to be—bright and cheerful. But I look away from the white expanse, and when I turn on the radio, the sounds which come out have a ghostly air I have never been aware of before. Somehow I am not as sure as I usually am that there is really someone at the other end. Perhaps a transcription is being played and perhaps the engineers all died a few moments ago, along with all the rest of the human race except me. Astronomers are fond of telling us that when one of the stars disappears no one on earth is aware of the fact until thousands of years later. The mechanical arrangements of a broadcasting station provide a similar, if shorter, time lag. Someone was there not very long ago. But I cannot really know that anyone is there now. Perhaps the turntable still spins, but spins for me alone.

The two cats are a comfort. At least something besides me is still alive. But is it only a fancy on my part that they sense the fact that they are now two to one and that I have no one to back me up? Is it only a fancy that they seem, when they express a desire for something, to make it slightly less a request, slightly more a command?

Even under normal conditions they sometimes give me what I call “the silent treatment.” This means that when, for instance, they want their breakfast, and my companion, instead of preparing it, is making coffee for herself and for me, they sit motionless and silent but with their great eyes fixed upon her in a relentless stare, as though they were saying: “Don’t try to forget that we are here, don’t pretend you don’t see us; don’t think we do not know that you are ministering to yourself rather than to us. We are patient, and well behaved, and forgiving, but we know well enough how much we have to put up with.”

Is it a fancy, I ask again, that the stare is now slightly more authoritative? A few moments ago I got it, as I frequently do, in the form of a suggestion that the chair in which I am sitting is well known to be this particular cat’s rightful possession, and that if I

had any decency in me I would resign it to its real owner. But would not the matter have rested there had I not been alone and had this been one of the rare occasions when I persist in my usurpation? Would the cat have leaped suddenly behind my back, squeezed into the small place available, and indicated quite clearly that even I could see now that there was not room enough for both? Even in the existing circumstances I am not really afraid of my cats. I think that they like me and I think that if the situation were reversed, they would make a pet of me as I make pets of them. But the threat of *force majeure* is something of which they are always aware in the background of their lives, and probably in a world where cats were dominant, I should be aware of the same thing.

Once long ago when I was just in the process of learning to feel secure outside a city, I had much more strongly the sense that the animal kingdom might be about to take over. It was, as a matter of fact, on the very first occasion when I spent a night in the country absolutely alone, and I had just begun to be aware of what seemed to be the changed attitude of the three cats I then had. There was a clatter outside the kitchen door. When I went to investigate I found the garbage can upset and two beady, ratlike eyes peering at me from the head of an animal many times larger than the largest rat. It seemed to threaten rather than to show any sign of retreating and I did not know then that possums sometimes do not run away, less because they are bold than because they are dim witted and cannot move very fast at best. I retreated, wondering whether that possum knew that I was alone, and had hardly seated myself again when there was a rustle from a closet in the next room. When I opened its door, there, erect on its haunches and staring at me with eyes even more threatening than those of the possum, was a little white-footed field mouse.

When angry, mice beat a furious tattoo with their tails, just as angry rabbits, having no tail to flap, drum fiercely with their hind legs. Mice, I had been taught to believe, were timorous creatures. What, except a knowledge that the signal for the revolution of the animals against man had been given, could have caused this one to face me boldly and to say, as he was so plainly saying: "Get out,

get out, get out””? I closed the door hastily and I did not call the cats, less because of the humanitarianism which would ordinarily have restrained me than because I was sure it would do no good. By now, cats and mice would obviously be on the same side. The united front was an accomplished fact. So Alice felt repeatedly when the animals in Wonderland seemed vaguely to threaten her, and I suspect that one of the fascinations of the account of her adventures arises out of the presence, just below the consciousness of most of us, of the unrecognized fear that someday the furs, the feathers, the horny shells, and the cold scales may take over.

III

Children like to frighten themselves. Two together on a dark though familiar street at night will begin playfully to suggest, one to another, that something dangerous is following them, until, presently, both believe what neither had believed at the beginning. That, I suppose, is a form of aestheticism; the love of experience for its own sake. And it is not confined to children. Last night I did not want to be alone in a country house but neither did I want to miss the fact that I was. And I toyed with the dangerous experiment of trying to frighten myself. Was I ever at any moment really afraid? Not actually, I think, but I could almost imagine that I was. And at that point I prudently called off the experiment.

Late this afternoon I asked the cats—in the tone of voice regularly reserved for that question—if they wanted to go for a walk, and they immediately indicated that they did. The sun was low as we started along the wood-road, and the more adventurous of the two—he who had had a sportsman’s, rather than a proletarian education—ran ahead to the small pond across whose frozen surface he loves to slither and slide after the bits of wood I skim over the surface for his amusement. Often his hind legs fly out from under him though he seldom actually falls. I usually tire of the game before he does, and I do not laugh because, though he has some kind of sense of fun, he objects, as all cats do, to being laughed at. This afternoon I am not sure that I *could* have laughed. It is not some-

thing one does easily alone. There would be no more of it in the world if there were only the cats and I.

The glaze on the ice looked just a little different because I knew that no one would be waiting for us when we got back. I deliberately led the way to a relatively unfamiliar spot in the woods where we could look off an elevation across the wintry valley. But I had less sense of a strangeness than in the house—because, perhaps, I had less expectation that it would seem familiar. Under the circumstances, I half expected to feel at least the faint, faraway presence of that Panic which the ancients attributed, not unreasonably, to the unseen presence of the wildest and most inclusive of the gods. But Pan snubbed me and made himself known only to the cats, whose fur bristled savagely and in whose eyes a new gleam appeared. Perhaps, like Minerva, he comes only uninvited. And on the whole I am not sorry that I did not meet him there in the twilight woods.

In a few hours now—long before midnight—I shall get out the car, drive to the railroad station to meet an incoming train, and in a few minutes after it has arrived, I shall not be able to remember why the last thirty-six hours have seemed so strange. What it is that my companion and I are able to protect one another against, I do not know. Neither has more power than the other to exorcise ghosts, and I am afraid that neither would be more effective than the other in dealing with any human aggression. And since it is not really the revolt of the animals that I fear, there seems only one possibility left. Pan rarely shows himself to more than one person at a time; for I, at least, am convinced that the panic of mobs is inspired by another and much more unpleasant god.

QUEEN CITY OF THE PLAINS AND PEAKS

by Bernard DeVoto

"Under these skies resplendent in September beauty—amid the peculiar landscape you are used to but which is new to me—these interminable and stately prairies—in the freedom and vigor and sane enthusiasm of this perfect Western air and autumn sunshine—it seems to me a poem would be almost an impertinence."

MAY WE AGREE that an idea is an act of personality? Some years ago a writer was lecturing in Utah, where I grew up. When he finished his lecture and submitted to the usual questioning, one of the audience who had been a friend of mine and knew that the lecturer had been too asked him about me. Was I a good writer? Just what was wrong with me?

How good a writer the lecturer said I was has not been reported. He answered the other question, however, by saying that I had made an irretrievable mistake. I had moved away from Utah and done my writing elsewhere and that, he said, was wrong. I should have stayed in my own country and grown up and grown old there; I should have submitted the shaping of my work to its life and landscape. When I went East I destroyed myself. For, he said, a writer's roots are where his childhood was and to go away is to sever them. Oh, the bush may flower pleasantly enough but it can bear no fruit, it is sterile. Exile from the writer's home kills; self-exile is suicide.

The lecturer was Robert Frost. The author of *North of Boston* had forgotten for a moment that the author of *A Boy's Will* was born and came to know about a boy's will in San Francisco.

I have only one thing to say, explicitly, about myself: that my leaving the Utah of thirty years ago was an act of self-preservation as instinctive as the first strokes a man takes when he falls into a river. We may be confident that no environment is very favorable for any writer, and some have wondered whether a good one may not be worse for him than a bad one. But clearly he must live where he can both write and stay alive, and a serious writer could not have survived in Utah a generation back. The

ecology has changed; some serious, even good writers live there now, though others still sever their Utah roots, undismayed by the fantasy of suicide. I do not know if outland writers move to Utah now, but they certainly move to other parts of the West. They go from Iowa or York State or Georgia to Colorado or New Mexico, to Montana or Oregon, and especially to California, and there they file homestead claims on the local culture in a belief that they will remain potent enough to prove them up, though their childhood was spent elsewhere. I do not know if there are enough of them to balance the eastward emigration of writers who were born West.

If there are, then it is for the first time. Ever since the West was settled some writers have gone there like goldwashers, to mine it, and some, a few, others to stay. But they have never equalized the exports, the writers whom, like gold or lumber or any other unfabricated wealth, the East took to itself. The net deficit has implied something about the East. It has implied something about the West too, and writers, understanding themselves to be part of the West's exportation of intellectuals, have always been willing to explain what. They may be wrong: they may not be.

Some of the reasons are obvious enough. The West is even younger as an economy than as a society, though as a society it is the youngest of the sections, and economic facts have tended to force writers East. Magazines and publishing houses are concentrated in the vicinity of New York even more densely than colleges, libraries, museums, and galleries. Writers congregate in the vicinity of Sutton Place (as once in Chelsea and the Village), on both shores of Long Island, and on both banks of the Hudson as a trade convenience. There they are able to exploit their markets effectively and intelligently. This does not mean merely the advantage of being able to judge current market needs on the spot—though because essays such as this are usually austere, we had better remember that a writer has to support his family and can't support it without selling his work. More important is the fact that when a writer is on the scene he can make himself felt in the disposition of it. He can give it timing, he can have a voice in the design and typography of books, he can utilize his special knowledge in co-operation with editors and publishers more effectively in person than by mail. And associating with editors and publishers, who can be reached on Madison Avenue at any time whereas they go West but rarely, is important in the development of his talent. A

writer is quite as likely to find his best themes, even his true style, as the result of a publisher's suggestions as he is by the sure promptings of instinct that the romances talk about.

Concentration of the publishing business on the northeast coast has concentrated in the same vicinity the professionals who do the bulk of any period's writing. The professional writer is not exclusively a figure of the Eastern seaboard but he is scarce anywhere else. Conversely, because the magazines which have a national circulation are there, the press elsewhere survives by devoting itself to regional and local interests. This reinforces other influences that predispose its contributors to exploit regional and local interests. Thus the writer whose interests are primarily national is drawn East.

Writers who live in the parts of Connecticut, Westchester County, and Bucks County that are almost literary housing projects say that they are nourished or sustained by constant association with other writers. I think they attribute to one aspect of the environment a quality that is really the virtue of another aspect. It is true that a writer needs the understanding of his craft which only fellow-initiates have, that shoptalk and some feeling of guild support are essential to him. But overindulgence in them is easy and dangerous. The poison of literature is the purely literary approach to life and it comes of an anaerobic bacterium. It develops in isolation, which a gang of writers in Westport can effect as easily as solitude on Wolf Creek. Gangs encourage a writer to overvalue himself and his calling, they distort the relationship of both to mankind at large, and they increase the subjectification of experience, the natural solipsism, toward which the literary temperament tends. A writer needs continuous touch, even friction, with other kinds of experience and emotion than his own, and he needs the corrective realism about himself that contact with nonliterary, not to say normal, people imposes. Too close association with other writers begets specific kinds of arrogance and pride and unreality; they impair the only thing a writer has that is worth having, his feeling for the primary experiences of life.

Nevertheless a writer must have surroundings which if not favorable to writing are at least tolerant of it as such, a society which respects his calling enough to enable him to respect himself without being self-conscious or defensive. That, I think, is what writers are really praising in the Eastern areas they inhabit. There are such things as urbanity and cultural maturity, after all. They may mean no more than indifference,

they may even mean the social weariness that is a prelude to decay, though on the other hand they may simply mean civilization. Whatever they mean, the East has more of them than the West has ever shown. The fundamental reason why writers leave the West has always been to escape the vigilantes.

Literary housing projects along the Eastern tidewater are full of emigrés from other sections besides the West. If severing one's roots is so evil as Mr. Frost said, that may be what is wrong with American literature as a whole. But I doubt it. I am not clear just what the roots spoken of are or just why they can be healthy only in the town or landscape of one's boyhood. I have seen a good many writers turn out to be less than I had expected, a good many fair promises peter out, a good many lives and careers go to pieces. Estimating one's own capabilities too generously is not confined to writers, however, and mortality comes upon even the nonliterary. Year by year everyone who survives, who holds together and goes on, sees more of his friends fail to. Strength, endurance, resolution, character, talent reach their limits, circumstance proves too powerful, fortune looks away—and I doubt if anyone can build up immunity in his boyhood home. I think that this idea, a fantasy of protection within the amniotic waters, is one of the subterfuges men use to grant themselves pardon, and is also a bit of low-grade mysticism. We may wish a writer moderate psychological comfort, confident that if he gets it he will destroy it on his own behalf. We may wish him physical surroundings—city or town or country—that he finds pleasant or stimulating. We may wish him some friends who will warm his loneliness and whose lives may teach him wisdom and compassion. Beyond that we may wish him access to ideas and experiences that give his talent appropriate stuff to work on. Most of all, if we are realistic, we will wish him good luck.

Belief or proof that such matters are not to be had in his home town will be enough to take a writer elsewhere—out of the West. Moreover, some writers who were born in the West but have never revisited it since they first raised the price of a ticket East are good writers. They appear not to have been impaired. The severance of roots—perhaps a symbol of the castration anxiety?—appears not to have occurred; their roots are drawing sustenance from soil that is not Western but obviously is fertile. Some of them are among the best Western writers; they write about the West and in the Western spirit quite as well as any who stayed

home. Some of them would have been lesser writers if they had stayed West, and some would not have been writers at all. Of one I can say with certainty that he became a Western writer solely by living in the East.

We should be more concerned here, however, with writers who stayed in the West. Taxonomy, I think, divides them into two classes—those who had less courage or resolution or self-confidence than the ones who got out of the West, and those who had more. There is not much to say about the former class. If chance works out favorably, some of them may become writers of quality, but they are withdrawn from the friction and competition from which a whole writer may by no means absent himself. The home town is not topsoil and subsoil for their talent but a shelter from the world which it is their first duty to grapple with. The second class have not avoided friction and competition but have chosen to take them in the first instance, in the immediate forms which the West itself provides. They need more fortitude than most writers, for they voluntarily engage in an additional struggle above and beyond the struggles with circumstance, failure, and their own limitations that all writers must engage in. They choose to engage in the struggle which writers who left the West chose to avoid because they believed that it was not worth their time and strength. A struggle against the West.

For let us make no bones about it, the West is a less favorable place for writers than any other section, even, God help us, the paleolithic South. I am writing for fellow-Westerners and I must remind them that we are gifted beyond other Americans with a talent for deluding ourselves. The Western ways of life are often admirable; they are attractive, enjoyable, rewarding, full of promise for the future of the American nation. But we delude ourselves when we deny that those ways of life limit the kind of freedom which writers must have if they are to be writers at all and that they proscribe the minimum of common respect which writers need in order to respect themselves.

We Westerners are an engaging and friendly people, richly tolerant of behavior and standards and ideas to which our own conform, and suspicious—or afraid—of the variations from pattern, the conflicts and dubieties, the interior explorations, the appraisal and criticism of values, the anatomizing of experience, that make up a writer's life. Let me be wholly clear: I am not speaking from the literary cliché of thirty years ago which told us that America was an unfit place for The Artist—if I were,

I should be in harmony with one of the more reminiscent schools of Western writing today. I am talking instead about a fact of history: that the forces which produced the West operated to prevent the development there of a margin of social neutrality, the complaisance that tolerates deviation and variation. The vigilantes are not specifically antiliterary, as any victim of a school board, a Chamber of Commerce, or a farmers' association can testify, and the vigilante state of mind is not a Western monopoly. But it disturbs the functioning of precisely the nerve centers that writing employs, and it is in the West, as it is not elsewhere, the strongest resistance that writers must overcome. In the earlier West there was only one area where writers could live in an awareness that their neighbors regarded them as normal, not to say useful, people and that area never extended far beyond the corporate limits of San Francisco. Today there are a number of areas but the obvious thing to say about them is that they are not the West but only islands or oases in it.

The vigilante state of mind need not be overt in order to do its job. Every Western writer knows its passive manifestations. Usually he can report experiencing it in an elementary form, say the assumption that because writing is not male as maleness goes in the Western fantasy he must be a homosexual. Or a kindly indulgence, amounting sometimes to actual admiration, which men occupied with stern tasks like warehousing crops may feel for a luxury article like literature. Or the protectiveness which a business club may sometimes extend to him as a local asset, as someone who gets the town's name into print. This is deadly enough; generalized as condescension to him and his trade it is an influence which the Western writer must waste strength resisting.

Nevertheless the attitude is less serious than the hostility in which it arises. That hostility is a threat to deviation from orthodox thought and feeling and especially to critical exploration of them—that is, to the primary activity of a writer. The West forbids critical inquiry, it forbids criticism, it desires the critical faculty not to exist at all. The only good writer is a dead writer, one who never crosses the margins of its taboos. Since the indispensable preliminary to any writing that is worth a damn is an inquiry into experience, the West is instinctively hostile to any writing that is worth a damn. The viciousness of this hostility is not that it may occasionally explode overtly but that a writer, temporizing more as he grows older, growing into his circle and community, growing tired and disheartened, must realize always more vividly that the con-

formity which would diminish him as a writer would comfort and assuage him as a person. This fixed condition of writing in the West requires writers to fight for the identity and individuality for which in the East they need make no fight at all. I honor those who stay: they have more guts than I have. I hope they earn in the end the reward due to valor, a deeper knowledge of the life about them, a more complete identification with the soil where, the fantasy tells us, their roots are nourished. But I know that it destroys some who might have had rewarding careers where I live. And in some who achieve effective functioning because they fight well I see scars I cannot like.

The necessity, even the habit, of such resistance tends to drive a man in on himself. Other forces work in the same direction. It is unhappily true that, however self-reliant the Western writer may be and however content in his decision to stay West, he is under some pressure to feel inferior simply because he is not East. There is some mirage of the capital city in the minds of all who do not live in it. That mirage is a mere by-product of the advertising business but it may stimulate the reflexes of doubt. A writer's name shows up too seldom in the gossip columns of literary weeklies—his publisher gives no cocktail parties for him and meets him at no airports—some symposium of what really counts in the literature of this half-hour gives him no mention—they are not teaching him at Vassar—he is not named on this one's inventory of significances or that one's check list of portents. Now this is as trivial as possible. It links him with the Denver millionaire's daughter ecstatically remembering that Sherman Billingsley greeted her by name in the Stork Club, or the millionaire's wife who transcends the provinciality of Denver because she has on precisely the ninety-five-dollar corset from Bergdorf's that her townswomen can know only in the inside cover of *Vogue*. But who said that the trivial cannot wound? The trouble is that below consciousness a writer may be led to mistake advertising for realities and so may overreact. He may too vehemently champion the local compensations and, in his ninety-five-dollar *chaparejos*, come out even with the Chamber of Commerce: what have you got in the East to match our Navahos' knowledge of the life force? Or he may find comfort down another path. A friend of mine who is one of the best writers in the West and the United States at large has a way of writing me a droll gratitude whenever I say publicly that he is just that. He is grateful, the joke runs, to be called a writer. Not very funny, I think.

Or still different responses. If it was natural to speak of local aggregations of writers in the East as housing projects, God knows it is inevitable to speak of certain Western aggregations as colonies. Some men are tough enough to withstand a life that is for most a flight into diletantism, or to make without meaning them the postures of barren caste-consciousness, or to tolerate in health the virus of preciosity or dedication that kills the talents of the rest. Some—a few—occasionally. Mostly the colony is a swarm of phony egos infinitely dear to themselves but without value to literature. Yet there must be some end to loneliness and some combination against the hostility of the environment. Colleges supply most of the oases I have alluded to and may they be therefore praised. They are developing for Western culture the necessary margin of toleration where the writing of books is as indifferent as the merchandising of shirts, and they extend their welcome to good as well as bad writers, as Eastern colleges assuredly do not. But they too impose strain and wariness on writers. A writer who joins one may find his energies engaged in preventing the campus from becoming a coterie. If not, he is certain to meet the hostility of at least English scholars. This last of course is universal, not Western, and derives less from the scholar's envy, though there is always that too, than from his discovery that accessory service to the luncheon clubs pays well. But it is an additional burden.

I do not suggest that these impositions on a Western writer are often in his consciousness. On the contrary, they exert their force below consciousness. And if I, who read most Western writing, read it correctly, they tend to warp him in one or the other of two ways. I say, tend to warp him. If they do warp him, then they impair him. If he successfully resists them, he has nevertheless had to expend strength on them that should have had a better use.

The first pressure warps toward the kind of regionalism that capitalizes its initial. Now the whole duty of a writer is to explore his experience and so much of the experience of those about him as he may be able to understand, and to report on it as honestly and as well as he can. And to explore the variations or colorations of experience that derive from local circumstance, the local patterns of life, the conditions of the natural environment, the problems and necessities of the human environment in adaptation to it—this is as valid as any other literary undertaking and will be the more important as the writer may feel deeper emotions about the country he has identified himself with. Of his love—whose twin is hate—

shall his books be born. Moreover there is the local self-consciousness to heighten and the local way of life to clarify to itself and perhaps to enrich. Any writer's appointment as an appraiser of society carries most weight where appraisers are fewest. The Western writer as a citizen is obligated to anatomize the truths about his region, the patterns of its experience, the shapes it gives thought and feeling, the possibilities for individual and social life implicit there and what may endanger them, and man's pain as the West may be the wound.

Even here, however, regionalism runs risks simply through being deliberate. There is no more local literature than *Huckleberry Finn*, but who supposes it was regional in origin or intent or is thought of as regional by anyone who reads it? The risk is that a first-rate writer may be content with second-rate ends. Another danger is arrogance, whether defensive or not. That one shall think writing about Nevada superior simply because it is not about Maine. Or that there shall be greater virtue in distilling some ultimate essence of Nevada than in writing about the United States. What of the writer who would explore murder or adultery or old age as they happen to mankind, careless whether Nevada has tintured them at all? The writer who concedes that the cultures of the United States are as fascinating as you say but finds himself more interested in American culture? The writer who chooses to inquire whether there may be a national quality in matters which the regionalist will follow no farther than his local ridge? The writer who lets his choice take him wherever it may lead, without reference to an address in Carson City? Regionalism may come to disdaining him as a lesser man. To setting up its own orthodoxy.

But the greater risk is that regionalism may decay into Regionalism.

It has done so too often in the West, and where it has I am afraid there is no hope but to be born again. Self-conscious regionalism has never been anything but a mildew on literature. Its preoccupations are frivolous, which would be gay if only they were intended frivolously but they never by any chance are. They become solemnities which are a good man's poison and dogmas which go the way of all cults. On the one hand the coteries lead to a kind of jurisdictional strike: prayerful to derive the purest essence of the Coyote County consciousness, promising you that the most local will be the universal when filtered out, and scrupulous not to cross the boundary into Elk Creek because someone else has authority there and love as well as soil is foreign. On the other hand its effect,

when not in fact its intention by manifesto, is to sanction writers to write for one another only or even for themselves alone. Here comes the Artist, whose integrity is so precious that he is exempt from discipline, exterior or interior. The semiliterary, the amateur, the phony, the dear soul takes over. And what the devout write is shapeless, a doughy mass, literature as pure, literature as momentous and infinitesimal—and be damned to it. Down this highway to the inane, recurrent fashions among small talents march with banners in every period, but the fashion is not even comic in the West, where it has curiously undertaken to rebuild the Greenwich Village of 1910 on the left bank of Muddy Creek in 1947. Not comic, merely a Bergdorf corset from the inside cover of *Godey's Lady's Book*. The purple whiskers of that innocent day are simply grotesque when one comes straight from the irrigation ditch to crimp a curl in them. Coterie writing is a good culture-jelly for young green minds. The blight is that Western coteries will not see why.

For the second warping that must be withstood I have never found a name that satisfied me, though the word used by writers who do not withstand it is "mysticism." It is a capacious word; it loosely designates innumerable vague things. Mysticism as certain saints have experienced the immediate personal presence of God, however, does not show itself in Western writing. What does appear too often is a rapt formlessness of emotion offered us in abdication of thought. Clearly its authors intend it to mean something. Or do they, may there not sometimes be a belief that meaning is unworthy if significance can be had? Significance to be communicated from mind to mind by induction, carried along by type but not translated into words, finer than idea and above it in the scale. If you can feel portentously enough, then let who will be clear. It is writing by accord of sentiment—the spark is to cross the gap by its own voltage, with no vulgar bylaw that it must say something. Behind it are feelings subtle or noble to an extreme, no doubt, if only you could find out what they are, and manifestly intense, but they relate more to the universe or eternity than to the temporal inanities of this world. And it is their characteristic to perish of a blur. Earthbound readers, who are the majority, ask meaning of them and, finding none, give up.

Spores of this mysticism infect much Western writing about Indians, if Amerinds is not the word called for. Indian thought and feeling are the thought and feeling of a people who remained neolithic five thousand years longer than European man and therefore have evolved—with dis-

may be complexity—along paths much different from the evolution of the European thought and feeling which, beginning with the sixteenth century, came to complicate them still more. Whether this fact is intolerable as literary ethics or merely as hard work I do not know, but Western writers seem to find it intolerable. They tend to write about Indians badly and all too often incomprehensibly. When they are sentimental there may mingle with mystical notions a guilt out of the white man's past. But also it has proved necessary to endow an interesting and abused people who are fully as human as the rest of us with subtlety beyond our apprehension and means of access to truth that we may by no means use. The Indian, it appears, has gone deeper into the mystery of life than we have. That may be, but if so then the writer who follows him there ought in honor to tell us wherein and to what end, and no writer has so far. Also the Indian perceives truths beyond our rationality and by processes finer and more instant than we clogged souls use, who are confined to commonplace discharges of the nervous system. That too may be, but if so then a scrupulous writer is bound to tell us what the truths are, as no writer ever does. Apparently the utmost possible is to allude to spiritual perception in prose that may stimulate but says little. Not much of what the West has written about Indians is very good and one comes close to deciding that nothing sensible can come out of Santa Fe.

Spongy mysticism about Indians is in part a reflex of a commoner one that is begotten by the landscape. Here we reach a problem that would be formidable enough of itself if there were no predisposing influences at work on Western writers. The immensity, emptiness, grandeur, and beauty of the West's landscapes assault personality, tending to diminish it, to leach the ego away, to narrow or generalize consciousness—and this tendency is reinforced by their potential power to create loneliness, anxiety, and terror. A condition set for Western writers is that they must work with a country that is always threatening to overwhelm their identity. There is a quick escape into mere rhetoric which leads nowhere—except to a bulk of bad writing. A stubborn mind may persist farther only to break up in corrupted poetry, and much Western writing that started out to tell us how man lives in the Western setting has ended in what amounts only to a conceit, the pathetic fallacy. Tragedy turns out to be the agony of malign deserts, or regeneration may be earned or faith justified because a river breathes, or the high country will medicine our wounds. This is shallow enough though gifted men have often labored

it for a lifetime, earnest to drive a metaphor through all the levels of consciousness. But many who have got beyond the pathetic fallacy have fallen away in a mysticism quite as unsatisfactory.

Lately Mr. Frank Waters published *The Colorado* in the Rivers of America series and the book is a specimen of what I mean. I know nothing about Mr. Waters, but his book shows that he is a good writer and that his life in the West has gone deep. He deals excellently with many Westerners, a variety of their experiences, the ways of their lives, how the Western country has affected them, what they crystallize out of fate's mother liquor. Clearly he knows the West and it has given him a compassionate understanding, deep as love or deeper, of the lives he here chooses to explore. Reading him one feels repeatedly the final response beyond which criticism cannot even try to go: yes, this is said.

But his people and societies are, as the West is, framed by the mountains and deserts and Mr. Waters repeatedly undertakes to tell us that in the mountains and deserts there is . . . well, Something. I do not know just what, for Mr. Waters never says. A mind predisposed in his favor and made admiring by his wisdom and skill tries to close in and seize his meaning—and slips off, is puzzled, is cloudbound, is mired down. What is this Something, what is Mr. Waters talking about? It is immaterial certainly, it is spiritual, it is interpenetrating, vast, immense, tremendous, eternal, as important as birth or death, more important than either—transcendent. But what is it? Are we reading an animism, a pantheism, some refraction through that dome of glass, some immanence of unearthly and eternal power—or just what else? There is no knowing and the reason we cannot know is that Mr. Waters does not know. There is no meaning, for he does not even mean to mean. Enough to vibrate with a reflex from the inexpressible. The Something is big but it is never said.

But for a writer there can be no such thing as the inexpressible. There is no soundless music, and if you leave the canvas blank you have not made a picture but only put a frame around space. Either Mr. Waters has flunked his job or the West has betrayed him into lying. It does not matter in the least if the lie be honest and come from a clean heart.

Meaninglessness begotten of immensity is a quicksand sucking at a Western writer's feet—and he will have less chance to escape it as the predisposing influences I have mentioned may have wrought upon him. The step from man to landscape is short, easily taken, and once taken fatal.

A depressing amount of Western writing is blighted by just this willingness to endow inert matter with a significance much too great to be given precise utterance. Blighted—for the result is dead, an evasion, an illusion, a folly, a lie, worse still a sentimentality. So in staying West also there seems to be some danger of impotence—that though the bush may flower it will not bear.

The Rocky Mountains are as barren as the mountains of the moon except as men live in them. The West can be nothing at all to Western writers except as men living in the West. The Western setting, deserts and mountains, perils and beauties, is only stuff for chemists except as men and society become engaged with it. A writer who goes, or is forced, at it the other way may experience emotions as noble as they are vague and may write prose or poetry that clangs resoundingly upon an empty mind, but he has lost out. The sunset on the peaks is like a fire but you will burn no fingers there. It's pretty to look at but a writer had better be getting on home to dinner. Where the children are.

It is a good idea for writers anywhere to shorten the radius which the optimism of their estate leads them to begin on. A writer anywhere matures when he comes to realize that, happily, his trade lays on him no obligation to be great. Greatness does not come by assignation and if, from making the world over or solving life's ultimate mystery, we broaden down to writing something which we feel is honest and which some of our friends respect, then there is some small chance of doing a little more. Specifically, the Western writer is not obliged to write on the scale of his geography. For him, with all the threats of failure that menace him—for him as for the rest of us, a short rope and a small loop. The story of how men came to the West is one of the American stories, and the drama of their society surviving there always in the shadow of destruction by natural cataclysm is one of the American dramas. It would be foolish, simply because the stage is big, to concentrate on the stage properties and let the actors go.

INDIA'S POPULATION PROBLEM

by S. Chandrasekhar

ONE of the gravest problems of our times is presented by uncontrolled human fertility. The world's population today is greater than it has ever been. It has grown from about 540 millions in 1650 to 2,300 millions in 1950. It is increasing by about 68,000 people every day, about 25 millions every year.

Moreover, a great majority of the world's population is today denied even the bare necessities of civilized existence. Despite the great advancement of modern science and technological skill, total food production, not to speak of other necessities, has not kept pace with the growth of population. On the contrary, natural resources are not only not increasing with the growth of population, but are actually dwindling on a global scale, resulting in what Aldous Huxley calls "a double crisis."

Nowhere is this "double crisis" more in evidence than in India, where the population increases by nearly 5 millions each year. India's population problem arises primarily out of an extremely high fertility accompanied by high but slowly declining mortality. The resulting increase, apart from the very low survival value, would not constitute a problem if the Indian level of living were high enough to absorb the additional population without reducing the standard of living. But the level of living is so low that any further addition to the number of poor families may well be disastrous. India's density of agricultural population, as well as of the poorer strata of urban society, though not as considerable as in some other overcrowded parts of the world, is too great to permit an attitude of *laissez faire*; it is difficult to see how more people could be taken care of.

The net addition of 50 millions in a decade would not constitute a problem if an overwhelming majority of the population enjoyed the irreducible minimum requirements of decent human existence—food, health, clothing, shelter, education, employment, and leisure for recreation. But this is not so in India and, what is worse, the

quality of the people produced progressively declines. Hence, there is real danger in the number of India's teeming millions to her overall economic and social development and to her place in the modern world.

In the sixteenth century, according to some rough estimates, the population of the Indian subcontinent was about 100 millions. In the middle of the nineteenth century the figure reached about 150 millions. In 1881 when the first regular, although incomplete, census was taken, the population stood at 254 millions. In 1931, fifty years later, the census revealed 353 millions, representing an increase of 10.6 percent over the 1921 figure. The census in 1941 showed an increase of 15 percent over the 1931 figure, or an increase of 50 millions. The 1951 census has shown a similar increase. The population of the Indian Union today is 362 millions. This represents an increase of about 13.5 percent over the population in 1941, which was 318.86 millions adjusted to the present area (i.e., excluding Pakistan). Thus, the population has increased by some 43 millions in the last decade, 1941-1951.

The rate of increase of the Indian population, though high, has not been abnormal. For instance, between 1872 and 1941 the population of undivided India grew by 54 percent. Britain during the same period increased by 56 percent; Japan increased by 136 percent. But the growth over the years has not been uniform, for the controlling factor has not been increasing fertility but fluctuating mortality. The population has responded to the presence or absence of wars, famines, and epidemics. As these checks appeared or disappeared, the population grew and declined accordingly. Voluntary limitation of births has not played any significant role in determining the size of the Indian population. Until 1901 the population was almost stationary. The years between 1901 and 1921 witnessed an irregular and spasmodic growth of population. In the three decades between 1921 and 1951, the country registered a growth of 10.6, 15, and 13.5 percent, respectively. And if the present public health conditions continue unaccompanied by any famine, the 1961 census may show yet a larger addition.

But the problem in India is not the *rate* of increase but the *net*

addition to the existing population every decade. Because of the large number of the existing population, even a modest rate of increase of 10 or 15 percent yields a net gain of some 50 millions (as during 1931 to 1941), in itself larger than the population of any European country, except Germany or Russia, or any Latin-American country. And it is this large net addition that constitutes the problem because it nullifies all efforts to improve the low standard of living of the Indian people.

Among all demographic factors, the rate of fertility is the most important, for lack of balance in international fertility levels constitutes the crux of the world population problem. If Indian vital statistics are accepted as somewhat reliable, despite their well-known inadequacy due to underregistration, the birth rate is between 45 and 50. The figure for 1941 is 43 and this is comparable to high birth rates in Egypt (47 in 1940), Palestine (40 in 1935), Puerto Rico (40 in 1942), and Mexico (42 in 1940). The significant fact about the Indian birth rate is not that it is one of the highest in the world but that it has shown no signs of declining during the last fifty years.

In its rural-urban fertility differentials, India conforms to the experience of other countries, but for a different reason. In Western and industrialized countries, the decline in fertility began in urban areas, and the rural areas tended to follow the downward trend after a time lag. The lower fertility in Indian urban areas is explained by the adverse sex ratio in the cities, where there is a relative paucity of females. Indian industrial workers have a rural background, and they come to cities in search of employment only when they are faced with agrarian distress. Hence, they come to the cities single, unaccompanied by their wives and children. When agricultural conditions improve, these industrial workers return to their villages. Another reason for this rural-urban fertility differential may be the high infant mortality rate in the cities.

An examination of the fertility rates by occupational and income groups reveals, however, a slight decline in the high-income group. This group generally embraces the so-called higher castes who have better educational qualifications, better jobs, and, consequently, a

higher standard of living. But here again, the lower fertility cannot be explained in terms of birth control. Though adequate data on the question are lacking, the real factor behind this is the social ban on widow remarriage, which withdraws many women from potential motherhood. As this ban on widow remarriage is not generally observed among the lower-income groups (which roughly correspond to the so-called low castes), the fertility of this group is high.

Thus, the slight decline in fertility that is registered for certain groups of the Indian population has not become a marked trend and the differential is not large enough to limit the future growth of population. So unless a change occurs, the only factor that will contribute to the reduction of the future growth of the Indian population will be, not the deliberate control of the birth rate, but high mortality. And this is something that cannot be looked upon with equanimity.

During the last century, India's population growth has been conditioned mainly by the high fluctuating death rate. Famines, epidemics, the general insanitary environment, and wars have all contributed to it. During normal years, the death rate has been consistently high because of the lack of public sanitation and hygiene, and widespread mal- and undernutrition of the population. It stands today at 30 per thousand. This means that 10 million people die every year in India. If the all-round death rate is depressing, the death rate by various age groups is appalling. Nearly one-fourth of all Indian babies born die during their first year. According to official estimates, about half the deaths among infants occur in the first month and, of these, nearly 60 percent in the first week. Mortality remains high throughout early childhood. About 49 percent of the total mortality in any given year is among those below ten years of age, while the corresponding figure for the United States and England is below 12 percent.

Maternal mortality figures are equally shocking. Sir John Megaw, when he was Director General of Medical Services in India, made a random sample survey and arrived at the maternal mortality rate of 23.5 per thousand births. That is, at least 200,000 women die every year during childbirth. In brief, out of every hundred

Indians born, one quarter die by the time they can reach their first birthday. When the fifth birthday arrives, 40 percent have disappeared through death, and when the twentieth birthday is at hand only 50 percent are left. By the sixtieth birthday only 15 percent survive.

During the last two decades there has been, however, a steady fall in the general mortality rate. A further fall is bound to occur if the large-scale programs for improving the health of the country by various planning committees are effectively put into operation. It has been calculated that even a slight improvement in the present health conditions can save 3 million infant lives. When this is done, India's population will increase not by 5 but by 8 millions a year. And it is possible that the increase of 43 millions that took place between 1941 and 1951 could take place between 1951 and 1955. This serves to re-emphasize that a planned and purposeful control of mortality, without a corresponding control of the birth rate, can only have disastrous consequences for India. Today the death rate is the decisive factor in Indian demography. No comment is necessary on this inordinate and tragic loss of human life.

The demography of India, as of any other country, is largely the product of its peculiar social characteristics. Conceivably, its population problem could be very different if early marriage, universality of marriage, the social ban on widow remarriage, the joint Hindu family and other institutions and attitudes did not exist.

Indian girls attain puberty between the ages of twelve and fifteen and though often physically immature they are physiologically ready to bear children. And cases are not wanting where reproduction has begun at the age of fourteen or fifteen. The *Report* of the Age of Consent Committee and the *Reports* of the All-India Women's Conference have estimated that nearly 50 percent of the girls married in India are below the age of fifteen. While child marriage has largely disappeared, a majority of girls between fifteen and twenty are today in the married state. Girls in rural areas marry as soon as they reach puberty, begin bearing children early, and reduce the period of lactation, thereby shortening the intervals between child-births and inviting premature death.

Everyone in India, moreover, gets married sooner or later. It is a quasi-religious duty. As an individual's economic security is not a prerequisite to marriage and as there is no individual choice, by and large, in obtaining a partner, there is no economic deterrent to marriage. For a representative census year like 1931, we find that a statistical 467 males and 492 females out of every thousand were married. That is, taking into consideration all widows, widowers, ascetics, and mendicants, almost everyone of marriageable age was actually married. When factors favorable to the postponement of marriage—like prolonged education, lucrative employment, eagerness for personal and social advancement, free choice of life's partners, and other considerations that operate normally in Western society—will come to operate in India, it is difficult to say. But the sooner such considerations prevail the easier will be the solution of India's most serious problem.

A third striking characteristic of the Indian social situation is the scarcity of females. There has been a deficiency of women in the Indian population throughout the span of her regular census history. In 1941 there were only 934 females for every 1,000 males. In 1931 and 1921, the ratio was 940 to 1,000. The sex ratio in England and Wales in 1940, for instance, was 1,000 to 940, revealing a contrasting deficiency of males. The steady fall in the proportion of females to males has been going on in India since 1901, and the 1951 census may not reveal any significant change. Some try to explain the deficiency of women as the result of underenumeration. This is possible, but during the last fifty years the efficiency of the Indian census organization has consistently improved while the adverse sex ratio has increased rather than decreased. Some argue that excessive masculinity is an index of racial decadence, but the sex ratio is more unfavorable in the north and northwest regions—parts of present Pakistan—where the so-called "martial races" live. If there were any truth in this explanation, the virile people of the northwest must be the most decadent people. The key to this problem can be traced in statistics.

India has an excess of girls between the ages of one to five, and only at the next age group is the sex ratio reversed in favor of males.

As Hindu parents put greater premium on male children, they are likely to treat female children with relative neglect, especially when they are assailed by infantile ailments. This, coupled with early marriage and excessive childbearing, results in greater and early deaths among women. We have some comparable evidence in China that supports this view. Dr. Ta Chen, discussing the sex ratio in the Kunming Lake region, observes: "In the Far East generally, and in China particularly, parents usually put higher value on male children for the perpetuation of the family line and for the observance of filial piety. Thus female children are unconsciously neglected, thereby leading to the higher death rate among them."

The ban on widow remarriage is yet another reactionary feature of Indian demography. The Hindu practice of "socially sterilizing" the widows results in considerable disparity in age between husbands and wives. Since most widowers remarry and since they cannot marry widows, they have to seek wives among girls much their juniors. This unequal combination from the point of view of age itself leads to an increasing number of widows, for the old husband passes away, leaving behind his young wife, a widow. And, of course, she cannot remarry. Thus the vicious cycle whirls on!

Four hundred million people or even more in India need not constitute a population problem if all are provided with a fair share of the minimum human needs. But millions of Indians are always close to the famine level. The per capita consumption of cloth is less than seventeen yards per year. There is no housing policy. Millions exist in rural hovels and urban tenements, deprived of even the basic necessities of civilized living. Thousands live on the pavements, leading a parody of life. The terrific rush for seats in colleges and universities and the heartache of the rejected applicants at the beginning of every academic year; the crowds that throng the gates of our hospitals and clinics—all these phenomena mean only one thing—too many people.

Nearly 70 percent of the population is dependent on agriculture for a livelihood. As the mouths to be fed every year increase, the area of productive land diminishes. There is great and mounting pressure on the land. Moreover, the primitive technique of Indian

farming results not only in a low yield per capita (even when compared to countries like Japan and China), but also in the gradual deterioration of land, soil erosion, and deforestation. This does not mean, however, that there is no scope for improving Indian farms and their yields. According to 1939 official statistics one-third of the cultivable land in both the dominions lies idle—not fallow. According to the latest available statistics for the Indian republic for 1950 the cultivable waste is about 11 percent of the total available land. Thus, of a cultivable area of 417 million acres, only 66 percent is sown with crops, 13 percent is fallow, and no less than 21 percent of land is cultivable but left waste. India has, therefore, apparently not exhausted the supply of her cultivable land, though such land is admittedly of an inferior quality. And what is cultivated appears to be eroded and exhausted because of our primitive techniques of farming. With modern methods of agricultural science, the cultivated land can be made to double its present yield; and much of the so-called uncultivable waste can be brought under profitable cultivation. Such an improvement is welcome but cannot by itself afford a better standard of living to the Indian population or completely solve the population problem, unless and until a substantial number of people now dependent on land is transferred to some other productive employment.

This is the reason why industrialization is often offered as a stock remedy for Indian population problems. The basic prerequisites for industrialization, namely, raw materials, capital resources, skilled labor, a market, and technological “know-how,” are available in India to a greater or lesser degree. But the industrialization that has taken place in India during the last thirty years has not helped to ease population pressure. It has been piecemeal and unplanned. The percentage of population gainfully employed in modern industry is less than one percent of the total population. This haphazard industrialization has also led to the decay of cottage industries, causing further unemployment. Only planned large-scale and rapid industrialization and the development of cottage industries—there need be no conflict between these two—can keep pace with the growing population and siphon off the surplus popu-

lation from the overcrowded land to factories. India's industrialization is important in the solution of her population problems for two reasons. First, it will increase the productivity of labor and create an abundance of badly needed commodities and services and transform the present economy of scarcity into an economy of abundance. Second, industrialization will encourage the development of new urban patterns of living which lead to the control of the high birth rate. This has been the experience in the United Kingdom, the United States, and the West generally, and Japan, where industrialization has been accompanied over the years by declining fertility.

What about migration as a solution to the India population problem? There are no empty spaces within the geographical confines of India unless it reclaims the Rajputana and other deserts, which at present are gradually encroaching upon their surrounding territories. During the last fifteen years, half a million immigrants went to Assam from other provinces, particularly Bengal. But they got only inferior land, and half a million in fifteen years is only a drop of relief in an ocean of increase. And, in any case, the Indians are traditionally a stay-at-home people.

Still, emigration has occurred in the past to Ceylon, Malaya, East and South Africa. Today the world's land area and resources are not distributed according to the numbers and needs of various nations. The world as a whole presents the spectacle of hungry and overcrowded people on the one hand, and rich and relatively thinly populated lands on the other. But there are countless difficulties and obstacles in the path of population transfers, especially for Asian populations.

At present, there are no actual emigration outlets available to Indians. Some day in the distant future, countries such as Australia or Brazil or Canada may throw open their doors. But even if they do they will offer to admit only a small quota as a token of good will. It is very doubtful if any country could receive 4 million immigrants every year. And the financial implications of such a population movement would be formidable. The total number of Indians settled permanently abroad is only about 4 millions and

their lot is not always a happy one. India's population problem, it seems, must be solved within its own geographical confines.

The last and the most important solution is birth control. Only now has contraception begun to be respectable in India. Even today opinion is heavily and fiercely divided. But the chief difficulty is extremely practical—how to adapt the use of contraceptives to the low economic and educational standards of the Indian people.

The chief opposition to birth control in India came from Mahatma Gandhi, until his death in 1948. To him, "there can be no two opinions about the necessity of birth control. But the only method handed down from ages past is self-control or Brahmacharya. It is an infallible sovereign remedy, doing good to those who practise it. The union is meant not for pleasure but for bringing forth progeny." He also wrote: "It is one thing when married people regulate so far as it is humanly possible the number of the progeny by moral restraint, and totally another when they do so in spite of sexual indulgence and by means adopted to obviate the result of such indulgence. In one case, people gain in every respect. In the other, there is nothing but harm." And elsewhere: "I have felt that during the years still left to me, if I can drive home to women's minds the truth that they are free, we will have no birth control problem in India. If they will only learn to say 'no' to the husbands when they approach them carnally . . . the real problem is that they do not want to resist them."

It is clear that Gandhi believed in the need for controlling births but did not approve the use of contraceptives. He granted the ends but objected to the scientific means. To him human sex intimacies without the end result of children were a crime. While he was anxious to give relief to women from excessive childbearing, he felt contraceptives dangerous to the moral and nervous health of the community. For him the best means to the desirable end of family restriction was sexual abstinence. He, therefore, advocated moral restraint as the only solution.

His views are not supported by Hindu writings. There is nothing specifically against birth control in the Hindu scriptures. In fact, they actually recognize the need for planned parenthood. Vats-

yayana in his Kamasutras (fourth century after Christ) and Manu in his Dharmasasturas lay down clearly when a husband should meet his wife physically. The Kamasutra describes both chemical and occlusive methods of birth control. The Brihadyogatarangini (eighth century) offers specific recipes for the occlusion of the cervix. In Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad (eighth century B.C.), we are told what rituals to perform to beget intelligent and lovely children and what mantras to be uttered to prevent conception.

It is true that there is a Vedic injunction demanding a Hindu mother to bear ten children (*Desasyam Putran adhehi patim ekadasam kridi*), but a later verse says that only the first child is the product of *Dharma* (duty) and the later children are the product of *Kama* (lust). The Sanskrit word for son is *putra*, meaning one who delivers the parents from a hell called *puth*. So, if a Hindu wants to escape hell he must have a son, but not a dozen children, of whom only five or six will survive. To the Hindu religious sentiment that one should have at least a son to perform religious rites at one's death, the superstition of the desirability of a large number of children was later added. As the Mahatma himself pointed out, "The superstition of a large family being an auspicious thing and, therefore desirable, still persists in several parts of India." The real truth is that the Hindu religion is not opposed to planned parenthood, though many Indian obscurantists would like to summon its aid to support their reactionary attitudes. All great Hindu reformers have been in favor of planned parenthood; and today no Hindu need run afoul of his conscience by practicing contraception.

The economic problem, however, remains. From this point of view sterilization is the cheapest and safest method for India. It would be also the easiest for the government to implement. Meanwhile, India has few or no birth clinics. The dilemma is that whereas birth control is needed to check the threatened decline in the already poor living standard of her people, successful practice of birth control methods requires a far higher general living standard than is the case in India. The only way out of this vicious circle is, in the first place, to have birth control form a part of an over-all program of economic development.

Second, this movement must start with the villages, the base of the socioeconomic structure. It is the poor end of the socioeconomic ladder that is multiplying fast today, and this affects the quality of the population. Taking the message of birth control to the villages is more easily said than done. The villages are starved for medical and health facilities. Large hospitals and specialized clinics are located only in big urban centers. Since the average rural mother cannot afford to come to the city clinic, the contraceptive service must be taken to the village. One birth control clinic for ten villages would be a fair distribution. Or a medical contraceptive unit could visit a village once a month.

Third, there is the question of finance. The average Indian mother cannot afford the cost of a clinical consultation or the services of a gynecologist, or even the cost of an imported contraceptive—say, a diaphragm and a tube of jelly. The government must explore the possibility of distributing free contraceptives to needy mothers through women's hospitals and Red Cross centers. The financial implication of this suggestion is staggering, but it deserves serious examination at the hands of the authorities. For it may be cheaper in the long run. Once the population growth is arrested, the total national medical bill can be cut down.

Fourth, the illiteracy of the women is a formidable obstacle. One cannot entrust an Indian mother with a contraceptive and some printed instructions. Like conservative and illiterate mothers all over the world, they are notoriously ignorant of the structure and function of their genital organs. Here a modicum of sex education is in order, both in girls' schools and women's colleges, as well as for uneducated adult women. Without a clinical demonstration of the application of a contraceptive and without absolute cleanliness, the device may do more harm than good.

Finally, there are certain other minor difficulties inherent in poor living standards. These are the questions of cleanliness and neatness, bathrooms and privacy, lights and running water. Only those who are familiar with the blighted Indian countryside can appreciate this problem.

Paradoxical as it may seem, the primary objective of birth con-

trol as a health measure in India will not be so much to reduce the birth rate as to reduce the high death rate. Birth control will bring the over-all death rate down to a civilized level by controlling the terrific infant mortality. The spacing of children will reduce maternal deaths also. And by eventually reducing the total population it will drastically cut down the general death rate.

Today rural Indian mothers get little out of life. They oscillate between gestation and lactation until a premature death winds up the sorry tale. The premature deaths of thousands of babies and mothers represent not only a national, social, and economic problem of fundamental importance, but on humanitarian grounds alone a problem that cries for solution because they need not have died when they did.

Fortunately, the question of birth control has not been completely ignored by the government. The authoritative Health Survey and Development Committee appointed by the government of India observe in their *Report* (1946):

All of us are agreed that when child-bearing is likely to result in injury to mother or infant, there is every justification for the practice of contraception. In such cases, it should be the responsibility of governments to provide instruction regarding contraception in maternity and child welfare centres, dispensaries, hospitals and any other public institutions which administer medical aid to women. We also consider that the supply of contraceptive requisites should be made free of cost to necessitous women when the practice is advocated for reasons of health. There is also unanimity among us in respect of State action in two other directions, namely, (1) control over the manufacture and sale of contraceptives, as in the case of food and drugs, and (2) assistance from public funds towards research for the production of a safe and effective contraception.

But the most important need in India is to provide contraceptive advice on *economic* grounds. Even this authoritative committee could not shake off India's traditional obscurantism to the point of including poverty and the low standard of living as pressing reasons for adopting contraception and limiting the size of the family.

The Indian National Congress, however, set up during the second World War a National Planning Committee under the chairmanship

of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. One of the committee's resolutions recommends, "In the interests of social economy, family happiness and national planning, family planning and a limitation of children are essential, and the State should adopt a policy to encourage these. It is desirable to lay stress on as well as to spread knowledge of cheap and safe methods of birth control. Birth control clinics should be established and other necessary measures taken in this behalf and to prevent the use of advertisement of harmful methods " The resolution is significant enough thus far, but goes on to add, "A eugenic program should include the sterilization of persons suffering from transmissible diseases of a serious nature such as insanity or epilepsy." This resolution was adopted by the National Planning Committee when India was not free and the committee had not the force of governmental authority. However, the Planning Commission which was set up recently (1949) by the government of India, under the chairmanship of Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, in its *Report* (1951) takes a courageous stand on the imperative need for family planning. They point out: "While it may be difficult to say what the optimum level of population for India should be . . . it is clear that under present conditions, an increase in manpower resources does not strengthen the economy but in fact weakens it. . . ." The fact that Mr. Nehru himself sent a message of acknowledgment to the recent Family Planning Conference in Bombay is a sign that governmental action may not be far off—though at present the cost of a comprehensive program may well prove prohibitive.

To a degree, Indians are so saturated with misery and degradation that they cannot imagine that life could be different and better. They have so much useless and unwanted human life around them that they have neither respect nor value for it. Here is a challenge to them and to the world to change this sordid order. Human conservation is an invitation to think and act as the custodians of the precious heritage of human life and fertility, and to hand it on unimpaired, and if possible enriched, to generations yet unborn.

WHOSE DAM IS PINE FLAT?

by Paul S. Taylor

ON MAY 22, 1954, Pine Flat Dam on the Kings River in California was dedicated. The ceremonies marked completion of the first of a pair of great dams—the other on the Kern, called Isabella—that serve the southern portion of the Central Valley. “In a voice choked with emotion,” records the *Fresno Bee*, Major General Sturgis, the chief of engineers, spoke these words: “On behalf of the people of the United States, I hereby dedicate Pine Flat Dam to the service of the San Joaquin Valley and of this great nation of ours.”

All can admire the magnificent structures the engineers have built, can believe that they will control floods and serve irrigation, and can agree that a pause to symbolize the harmonious merging of diverse interests in the common good is appropriate to a ceremony of dedication. But informed persons, after the pause in which the chief engineer’s words were uttered, will still face the fact that these rivers remain today, as for two generations, the scene of some of the bitterest water fights of our national history. Monopoly and speculation are central issues now, as always.

The Kings and Kern have been famous for a long time, not only for the beauty of their canyons in the Sierra, where hikers love to “pack in” during summer vacations, but for the energy that men have expended to acquire title to huge blocks of the fertile lands on the valley floor below. Here the public domain passed into private hands during the latter half of the nineteenth century under circumstances that historian Paul Wallace Gates describes as “enormous monopolization.” This process of land acquisition long ago literally laid the groundwork for today’s battles over water.

Newspapers of the time were outspoken. The *San Francisco*

Chronicle said on May 31, 1877, "If those who call themselves statesmen and lawmakers continue much longer to disregard the rights and interests of the great body of the citizen class—to promote the absorption of the land of the nation by a few wealthy and unscrupulous capitalists, aided by corrupt officials and perjured locators at the Government Land Offices, depriving the poor men of small means of the opportunity of obtaining homes, and white laborers generally of all chance of securing work at fair wages the oppressed millions will be impelled to the last resort of revolution to redress their wrongs." The same year the *Tulare Times* declared, "The Desert Land swindle is causing some of the honest farmers on Kings river to be fearful lest it might sweep their rights to the four winds. Let them organize and fight for their rights. Poor men and laboring men must begin to protect themselves. Corruption held up and backed by capitalists will never benefit the tillers of the soil." The *Chronicle* talked about "The Grand Khan of Kern," and newspapers were filled with phrases like "land-grabbers," "dummy entries," "monstrous monopolies," and "dead to the welfare of the people, to the public good, to the honor and glory of the country, and to the preservation of its beneficent institutions."

The *Visalia Delta* prophesied that the monopolists of an "already extensive dry domain" would attempt later "by an array of force and talent to secure to capital the ownership of the water as well as of the land, and the people will at last have it to pay for. . . ." Land monopoly became the biggest single issue before the California Constitutional Convention of 1879, and filled the debate with its reverberations. The Convention declared the public intention (locking the barn after the horse was stolen) by writing a 320-acre land limitation into the State Constitution. The question of water monopoly was left for a later day—our day.

Late in the nineteenth century leading citizens of the West began searching for help to develop Western water resources. Their efforts culminated in the National Reclamation Act of 1902, passed with the encouragement of President Theodore Roosevelt. This law became the first pillar of his conservation movement and the epitome of the program he came to call "The Square Deal." His

purpose was to use the federal government to develop water resources for the greatest good of the greatest number for the longest time. The legal devices within the reclamation law for assuring proper use of resources and prevention of monopoly were, respectively, a grant of interest-free money for constructing dams and the excess lands provision. This provision sets a maximum of water deliveries to any individual; no one may obtain more than enough to irrigate 160 acres. The excess lands provision curbs monopoly and speculation at a stroke. The reader should remember that one irrigated acre equals in production perhaps three acres in the humid parts of the nation. He should remember also that the reclamation law is generous to all private landowners and takes nothing from anybody except by consent.

Theodore Roosevelt and the Congress were following one of the pioneers' most dearly won and dearly held traditions. The first settlers beyond the Alleghenies had struggled against the twin evils of the land monopolists and the speculators, and had written their political victories into the language of the Pre-emption Law of 1841 and the Homestead Law of 1862. It is said to have been T.R. himself who insisted on perpetuating this tradition in the Reclamation Act; at any rate, Congress proclaimed the excess lands provision as one of the principal justifications for voting passage of the bill, and T.R. signed it with pride.

When Congress was debating whether to authorize construction of Pine Flat and Isabella dams, Overton of Louisiana, the senator in charge of the bill, gave emphatic assurance to Senator Lister Hill of Alabama, and to the Senate, that the reclamation law would be applied. Without this assurance the bill would certainly have failed. Congress was willing to authorize construction of these dams only under the established principles of the Square Deal.

Reasonable men would suppose that Congress had settled these issues of monopoly and speculation in 1944. But writing a law is one thing, and administering it sometimes turns out to be quite another. Complaisant administration by Secretary of the Interior Douglas McKay is in a fair way to make true the gloomy prophecy of water monopoly at public expense made by the *Visalia Delta*

in 1877. In the language of the sports page, he is KO-ing the Square Deal on the Kings and Kern.

The cost of Pine Flat and Isabella dams is around \$39 million and \$21 million, respectively. Most of this outlay turns out to be a free gift from the taxpayer. If and when administrators get signatures from beneficiaries on a contract of repayment, the amount returned to the Treasury will be only about 36 percent of the cost of Pine Flat Dam. The public will be left holding the bag, paying for the other 64 percent. McKay, it is true, did not set this low repayment figure, but he could review it if he chose to do so, or ask the Army Engineers to review it. Evidently, as the *Delta* said, "the people will at last have it to pay for."

Loss of a few million dollars to the Treasury to build a dam is by no means the worst prospect. Far more disturbing is McKay's willingness to validate the rest of the forecast, viz., that the large landholders would secure "the ownership of the water as well as of the land." He has chosen to open the door to complete and permanent nullification of the excess lands law.

Secretary McKay is now negotiating a repayment contract with Kings River water users that should have been signed before the dam was begun. Reclamation officials tried, but failed mainly because excess landholding interests were able to persuade Congress year after year to appropriate money to build the dams, while their spokesmen went through the motions of negotiation but never signed. Probably they hoped that by stalling long enough a way might turn up to let them out of compliance with the excess lands law. McKay now shows them the way. He offers to accept lump sum prepayment for the dam, and as soon as the cash is laid on the barrelhead, to relieve all excess lands of the obligation to comply with the law now and forever.

How does the Secretary arrive at this curious position that would strike most observers as a complete inversion of the intention of the law? By building a house of cards, with a joker in the deck. In 1944, at the very time Congress was making certain that the excess lands law would be enforced at Pine Flat, it gave the executive an option in procedure, to accept either lump sum or

annual installments in payment, at discretion. Three years later, in 1947, subordinates in Interior expressed the opinion that making the final repayment of construction charges relieves excess lands of the law. No statute says this. Other subordinates then said that lump sum prepayment relieves excess lands of the law entirely. No statute says this. McKay is willing to regard both as the law.

Now comes the joker. Unsound as these subordinates' opinions are, and unknown to a determined Congress in 1944, they do not require McKay to act as he does. No opinions, rulings, or statutes bind him to accept prepayment. To offer to let the excess landholders on Kings River escape the law by buying their way out is his own personal choice and responsibility.

The excess landholders, representing great power and influence, are massed heavily behind McKay's offer. They have been battling the excess lands provision for fifteen years. They are often men of energy and ability; some of them have farmed their lands skillfully with meager and uncertain water supplies. They feel they are entitled to whatever gains they can get. But the stark fact remains that they sought help from the federal government to develop their water supply, and the excess lands provision is the standard condition under which public aid is given.

Landownerships on Kings River are very large. In one water district alone, known as Tulare Lake Basin, 25 corporations own around 165 square miles, or 105,000 acres. Single holdings reach 12,000 and 19,000 acres each. There is virtually no farm home on the entire fertile 300-square mile district. There could be many when reclamation is completed, but probably there will be few if the great landholders of Tulare Lake Basin can press their way through the door that McKay is now holding open for them.

The financial stake of excess landholders is roughly measurable. The incremental value of a full water supply to nonirrigated but cultivated land is around \$460 an acre. The value of adding a half-supply, which comes closer to actual conditions on much of the Kings River and Tulare Lake project, is around half that, say, a couple of hundred dollars an acre, more or less. A 10,000-acre landowner might stand to gain as much as a couple of million dol-

lars. These bounteous incremental values serve to explain why large landholding individuals and corporations are so insistent on circumventing national reclamation law. They explain the pressures put upon officials who administer the law. They are of generous enough proportions to justify description as a "give-away."

It is curious how persistently people will misrepresent the facts about a law they do not like. The record of false description by opponents of the excess lands provision is impressive, too long to recite here. Repeated exposure of errors of fact seems not to affect greatly either the repetition of errors or the ardor with which the law is opposed. The latest example is from no less a public figure than former President Herbert Hoover. Perhaps following in the footsteps of newspapers that called the excess lands provision communistic in 1944 while it was under unsuccessful attack in Congress, he interrupted his address on "Federal Socialization of Electric Power" at Case Institute last year to advise his nation-wide radio audience that "apparently," in the view of the excess lands provision, holders of excess lands seeking water from public sources are "Kulaks." Kulaks, as everybody knows, were Russia's expropriated large landowners.

How differently his Republican predecessor President Theodore Roosevelt described the same law! At the Commonwealth Club of California in 1912, T.R. said in debate, "Now I have struck the crux of my appeal. I wish to save the very wealthy men of this country and their advocates and upholders from the ruin that they would bring upon themselves if they were permitted to have their way. It is because I am against revolution; it is because I am against the doctrines of the Extremists, of the Socialists; it is because I wish to see this country of ours continued as a genuine democracy; it is because I distrust violence and disbelieve in it; it is because I wish to secure this country against ever seeing a time when the 'have-nots' shall rise against the 'haves'; it is because I wish to secure for our children and our grandchildren and for their children's children the same freedom of opportunity, the same peace and order and justice that we have had in the past."

It is nothing new for Presidents, Republican or Democratic, to turn against the principles of their predecessors. It need not have surprised anyone when Herbert Hoover joined with President Eisenhower in dedicating Sagamore Hill as a national shrine to Theodore Roosevelt's memory while, together, they were engaged in undermining one of the greatest monuments of statute and principle that T.R. had himself set up.

If the excess landholders can breach the reclamation dike on Kings River the day when all excess landowners can escape the law will be brought closer. The prospect can be spelled out. In the southern San Joaquin Valley alone, within the Central Valley of California, some 30-odd corporations and individuals own about three-quarters of a million irrigable acres in the present or prospective service area of the Central Valley project and its extensions. The smallest of these holdings is 5,000 acres. In a single west side water district of about 400,000 acres, a single owner holds 65,000 acres. Unless McKay interprets the law correctly, and/or changes his own policy, it is likely that any of these excess landholders who can first persuade the public to construct projects to bring them water will buy their way out of the law. Why not? It will pay them well.

As the gains to excess landholders from defeat of the excess lands law are measurable in dollars, so also are a part of the losses to the public. Aside from loss to the federal Treasury under the prospective repayment contract, the merchants of the new local communities in the southern San Joaquin will have to make out with an annual dollar volume of trade smaller by about 40 percent, if the large landholders are allowed to have their way. This estimate rests on the famous comparative study of Arvin and Dinuba, two towns between the Kings and Kern, founded respectively on large-scale agriculture and on working farmers. Opportunity for professional men in law and medicine, for dealers in real estate, and for members of service trades will be reduced correspondingly. If new farmers ever do buy their way into the area, they will begin their operations saddled with the weight of indebtedness for incremental values that the reclamation law was specifically intended to

spare them. And they will be poorer customers because of the load they will have to bear.

The price paid by local communities will be even greater and more pervasive than dollar figures can measure. They will have a more floating population, fewer and less stable churches, higher annual turnover of schoolteachers, fewer civic associations, such as clubs, PTA's, and veterans' organizations that enrich daily living and bind citizens together. The Biblical admonition, as you sow so also shall you reap, applies not only to individuals and crops but also to communities.

Americans have always known the dangers of a highly stratified society, and have sought to avoid it. Perhaps Secretary McKay forgets this, now that he has it in his hands to preserve or to destroy. If so, he ought to be reminded. The tradition is bipartisan, and has the names of the greatest Democrats and Republicans alike associated with it.

In the year 1776 Thomas Jefferson secured passage in the colonial legislature of Virginia of his famous bill to abolish entailed estates. His language bears repeating. "In the earlier times of the colony," he said, "when lands were to be had for little or nothing, some provident individuals procured large grants: . . . desirous of founding great families. . . . The transmission of this property from generation to generation, in the same name, raised up a distinct set of families . . . privileged by law in the perpetuation of their wealth (and) thus formed into a patrician order. . . . To annul this privilege, and instead of an aristocracy of wealth, more harm and danger than benefit to society, to make an opening for the aristocracy of virtue and talent, which nature has wisely provided for in the direction of the interests of society, and scattered with equal hand through all its conditions, was deemed essential to a well-ordered republic." Primogeniture went out the same way, and Americans of a former day felt secure that monopoly of the land and of the power over the lives of other men which it confers never would survive in America. In 1820, in an address commemorating the two hundredth anniversary of the landing of the Pilgrims, Daniel Webster told how the New England ancestors had

left behind them "the whole feudal policy of the other continent." "They were themselves," he declared, "either from their original condition or from the necessity of their common interest, nearly on a level in respect to property. Their situation demanded a parceling out and division of the land, and it may fairly be said that this necessary act fixed the future frame and form of their Government. . . . The consequence of all these causes has been a great subdivision of the soil and a great equality of condition; the true basis, most certainly, of popular government." In the spirit of this tradition Abraham Lincoln signed the Homestead Act in 1862, and Theodore Roosevelt approved the excess lands law, to give families an opportunity to own the land they tilled.

Handing out huge water deliveries to a few will not add a cubit to our claims to moral leadership of the free world, nor enhance our reputation for knowing how to relieve agrarian distress. It will not elevate our prestige with the masses toiling on Asian lands, whose confidence we need so urgently.

The issue whether an administrator is to be permitted to scuttle the historic excess lands provision is not of concern to Californians alone, nor to the present generation in Central Valley only. The same, and similar, devices will be used to destroy national water policy and turn its benefits to the few in almost every part of the United States. Arkansas has prospect of irrigating several million acres, and faces first on Grand Prairie project and later elsewhere, the question whether a plantation form of agriculture is to be perpetuated and strengthened. Will its farm youth, recently driven by drought from the hills to California or Arizona, be limited to similar dubious refuges in the future, or will they be provided farming opportunities at home? Through the Missouri Valley, the East, and the Southeast, the harnessing of water for irrigation in the future raises the same question in places where it has not been thought of before. The issue is truly national now. The spotlight is on California today, but it will move back and forth over the nation as first one locality then another seeks federal support for its project.

There are several bills in Congress to lift the excess lands pro-

vision here and there, by one device or another. The Administration itself is now publicly on the side of evasion rather than enforcement, and favors legislative as well as administrative devices to get around reclamation law. On April 9, 1954, the Bureau of the Budget gave the green light to an Interior Department proposal in support of H.R. 5301, to extend federal financial aid for irrigation to local districts, with the excess lands provision severed from the transaction. This splits the Square Deal concept of reclamation in two, and tosses the antimonopoly, antispeculation half of it into the discard. It turns a half century of national effort to use water to provide opportunity for poor men who need it, into a program for the rich. We are being pushed to the brink of the end of the reclamation era.

The Undersecretary of Interior sought to minimize the evasion proposed in April; he said, as reported in the press, that it would not be widespread. His remark resembles the defense of the young woman whose child was born without benefit of clergy, "But it's such a *little* baby!"

Of course Secretary McKay gives reasons for his emasculation of the excess lands law, but these, as indicated earlier, are no more than a succession of recent shabby administrative opinions and interpretations that have not been subjected either to the sharp challenge from without, or the scrutiny from within, that their momentous public importance requires.

Except that McKay may be easily impressed by powerful people, or his staff may not have informed him very well of the facts, it is not easy to explain his clear preference for excess landholders. He is Republican, but so was T.R., who signed the law restraining their monopolization of water and limiting their speculative gains. He identifies himself as Presbyterian, but his national church organization supports the excess lands law. More than that, the California-Nevada Presbyterian Synod, after restudying the Kings River thoroughly for a year at request of Kings River spokesmen, refused to withdraw its staunch support of the law. The Secretary is a member of four national veterans organizations, all of them on public record favoring the excess lands provision. One of

them, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, through its California Department, has attacked prepayment on Kings River publicly as an injury to the interests of veterans. A veteran of proved physical courage, McKay is not moved to brush away the weak and unsound counsel of subordinates, and like a courageous predecessor in 1913 to declare: "I am satisfied that Congress did not intend those reclaimed lands, upon which the Government is expending the money of all the people, should be the subject of corporate control. These lands are to be the homes of families."

If McKay was more in sympathy with the purposes of the reclamation law, i.e., if he was interested in the heart of the problem, he would withdraw his offer to accept lump sum prepayment while ordering a thorough review of his subordinates' opinions. He would take a serious look at the real issues on which he has chosen to line up beside large and powerful interests. He would give thought to the long and close relationships between large landholdings and landless people, heavy rural relief loads, hordes of migratory laborers, labor conflict, and wetbacks. Then he could make up his mind whether to use the powers of high office to strengthen and perpetuate this situation.

Citizens who know American history and the struggle to achieve a society not dominated by the privileged few will have deep concern over the "to the rear, march" maneuver now being executed by the national administration in an effort to bypass Theodore Roosevelt's most farsighted and principled legislation, as inconspicuously but effectively as possible. While our eyes are glued to TV, watching to see if Congress can usurp the functions of the Executive, shall we overlook it when the Executive invades the domain of the Congress?

California newspapers said in advance that 15,000 persons were expected to join the dedication ceremonies at Pine Flat Dam on May 22. The weather was fine and the day was Saturday. The papers reported afterward that only about 3,000 came. Perhaps more citizens would have been present if they had felt that it was really their dam, that they had more to celebrate.

THE HISTORIAN AS CULTURAL AGENT

by Dixon Wecter

TO THE PRESENT AGE of technical truce, cold war, diplomatic deadlock, and bewildering anxiety, that noble old liturgical phrase, "the peace that passeth understanding," might be applied with a sense of grave irony. Though most of us lack John Dewey's ninety years of experience, at least we have seen enough to confirm his recent remark that between yesterday and today the chief difference lies in the ending of an age of confidence, and its supplanting by a corrosive spirit of fear. Ours is no era of stability. The great Edwardian garden party, the bully times of Teddy Roosevelt, now seem as remote as Ninevah and Tyre. How adolescent the Red Scare of 1919 beside the issues of today! How easy to keep cool with Coolidge, when Al Capone and the Nicaraguan bandit Sandino were chief disturbers of the peace! How serene the age of innocence which rationed dreadnaughts, and dreamed of felicity made tangible as two cars in every garage—even though the sequel, as Truman dryly remarked, came nearer two families in every garage. How comparatively simple the early days of the New Deal, when truly we had nothing to fear but fear itself—when responsibilities for priming the pump were domestic only and not global, and most people believed that only merchants of death caused wars. Those quaint days are long since done, and gathering the dust of history.

Meanwhile we fought and won our greatest war, but had no time for normalcy or even jubilation—save for a brief swirl of confetti on V Day—before new and more complex challenges were rising grimly along the path of our survival. For security—the heart's desire and talisman of modern man—seems ironically to have grown the most elusive of all mirages.

Among the shadows of this confused picture, beyond the immediate needs of defense, I venture to think the only lasting remedy

lies in what somebody has called the peace that comes *from* understanding. If the people of our present adversary, Soviet Russia, were able to break through the ring of cultural isolation and calculated ignorance which their leaders have built to shield themselves, the feud between Russia and her satellites against the rest of the world would cease abruptly. The ideal which our OWI used to call "peoples speaking to peoples" can be realized only in democratic governments, where free speech is exercised through all the channels of communication. Otherwise, peoples remain voiceless. And under repression they are led easily to distrust their neighbors—in a world where all nations are neighbors. That way lies the road to war. Just as clearly, the path to peace runs in the direction of unimpaired communication, the exchange of ideas, cultural interplay, and such technological skills as are offered in President Truman's Point Four program. Peoples that are truly on speaking terms with each other do not go to war.

UNESCO—whose activities all the major powers have fostered, with the significant exception of Soviet Russia—is plainly a step in the right direction. Its preamble declares, "The peace, if it is not to fail, must rest upon the intellectual and moral solidarity of mankind." Its essence is the sharing of knowledge, the pooling of non-material resources for the common good. The chief difference between bartering goods and ideas has lately been pointed out by Secretary Brannan: "If you and I have an apple, and we swap apples, we each end up with only one apple. But if you and I have an idea, and we swap ideas, we each end up with two ideas." In cultural and technological commerce, this is a manifest bargain for all. Meanwhile each nation has its own story to tell the world, its contribution to a spirit of free co-operation. Pending the development of UNESCO into a cosmic clearinghouse for educational, scientific, and cultural progress, it is meet and right for peoples of good will to supplement the world program by doing what they can to widen the highways of informal traffic one with another.

Let us glance a moment at the history of this movement—this still imperfect technique in the direction of peoples speaking to peoples. In the annals of peaceful intercourse between nations, it

is much newer than the prim traditional doorway of diplomacy or the tradesman's entrance of commerce.

France, so often the pioneer in things of the mind, was the first modern power to see clearly the value of international cultural relations. In the latter nineteenth century enlightened self-interest led her to devise such a program—mainly through official channels in the Near East and Far East, sponsoring French-language schools and cultural missionary programs, and in the Western world working largely through private ones like the Alliance Française, and the granting of scholarships for study in France. Imperial Germany and its heir, the Third Reich, entered this field in force, seeking to make every person of German birth or blood living abroad an aggressive evangel for a *Kultur* that took on the hues of propaganda, and thus (like so many Prussian schemes) out of sheer myopic efficiency defeated itself. More subtle and effective was the British penetration, which has long supported English-language schools and cultural liaisons throughout the world, and still grants them generous government subsidy. As Ruth McMurtry and Muna Lee of our own State Department note in their recent book, *The Cultural Approach*, Italy, Spain, Russia, and Japan all developed international cultural schemes before the last war, setting up information bureaus, maintaining co-operative study clubs and alliances of hyphenated friendship, in an atmosphere of growing competitive tension—invariably with a well-whetted axe of ideology to grind.

The latest to enter the field was the United States. Not until 1938—after years of valiant effort by Rockefeller, Carnegie, and other American endowments to do practical good abroad—did the federal government begin to take stock. At last, under the lowering clouds of another world war and the urgency of Western solidarity, a Presidential order created the Interdepartmental Committee on Cooperation with the other American republics. In midsummer of that year a Division of Cultural Relations was set up within the State Department, still peering no farther than the horizons of our hemisphere. In the critical summer of 1940 the President named Nelson Rockefeller, great friend of Latin-American amity, as Co-ordinator of Commercial and Cultural Relations, his title later

changing to Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs.

Expansion of this program to global dimensions occurred soon after Pearl Harbor. In June 1942 the Office of War Information was established in charge of radio commentator Elmer Davis, whose horse sense, forthright honesty, and Hoosier accent reassured many who formerly distrusted—whether as idealistic moonshine or Machiavellian propaganda—any attempt to sell our American cause and culture to the world. On the same day was created the Office of Strategic Services under General William J. Donovan, which sought still more explicitly to prove that ideas are weapons. Meanwhile, as the war went on, within the permanent framework of the State Department an Office of Public Affairs was set up, under the care of Assistant Secretary Archibald MacLeish.

A month after V-J Day, William Benton, now Senafor from Connecticut, was appointed Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs, and turned his energies to launching an overseas postwar program of both information (or propaganda) and culture. But as a lasting arrangement it seemed unwise to place all our exportable eggs in one administrative basket—the “Voice of America,” supplementary press services, platters of recorded oratory and swing and folk music, documentary films about malaria control and dentistry and how to hold democratic elections, along with the doings of public affairs experts, cultural attachés, exchange students, and visiting professors. The result was too complicated an omelet. Nevertheless, the Mundt Bill in 1947 proposed to continue it, demanding a single overseas shipment of so-called propaganda and culture, packaged like the output of totalitarian officialdom. But to have American education and culture served up to the world, as it were, with Russian dressing, proved little to the taste of many. A vigorous protest arose. Those protesting pointed out that “propaganda,” however true to fact, however useful to national policy, must necessarily be cooked for mass consumption, have only ephemeral value, and be unilateral in its address—whereas the essence of our scientific, educational, and cultural activities among other nations is selective, durable, and above all reciprocal.

Luckily, therefore, the amended Smith-Mundt Bill, as passed by

Congress early in 1948, took steps toward divorcement. Under an Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs, it set up an Office of Information charged with broadcasts, news stories, press relations, documentary films, and the like, and also a quite separate Office of Educational Exchange. The latter supervises the cultural program which concerns us here: namely, the sending of American books and magazines to appropriate libraries overseas as aids to the study of our language and literature and history, and the international exchange of students, research specialists, teachers, and lecturers, including administration of the Fulbright grants.

I have dwelt upon this theory of separation, because in its lack it is unlikely that American scholars—scientists no less than historians—would choose to have much part in the program. To go abroad in peacetime among countries traditionally friendly with the United States, moving among one's professional colleagues in the role of propaganda salesman, peddling a kit of ideas officially stamped for export—for most of us, this would not seem a happy lot. And yet some Americans still think that such is the spirit of our cultural program. When I was getting ready to visit Latin America last summer to lecture under a federal grant on history and literature at various cultural centers, I was startled at being asked by two or three friends, over a stirrup cup, whether the State Department had yet told me what to say. It was easy to reply that my only reminder was that I traveled as a private person, not impersonating an officer of the Foreign Service, and what I said was strictly my own business. This modest mission carried no bureaucratic seal, although an unwritten obligation to behave as a creditable citizen abroad went without saying. I daresay my competence and personal record were investigated beforehand—as a taxpayer helping to support the program, I hope so—but of this I know nothing. Nor, let me add, was I ordered to sign an oath denying support of the Communist party, or pledging myself not to “teach” communism, whatever that may mean. Apparently the federal authorities in respect to cultural grantees follow a policy whose soundness may commend itself to other employers—namely, to satisfy themselves of the integrity of those they plan to appoint, and once the decision is made, to

refrain from taking periodically the blood temperature of their patriotism.

I was particularly proud, as the citizen of a free government, to find myself briefly in Argentina. In that country it is easy to see by contrast the evils of an imposed orthodoxy, the outgrowth of a Party committed to a fanatic nationalism and nativism. A recent speech by Perón had mentioned the name of Spruille Braden, American ambassador fourth-removed from the present incumbent, who had worked valiantly if clumsily to stem the rising tide of Naziphile *Peronismo* during the war. This was the signal for press and Party to go into a retrospective hate session—the walls of Buenos Aires breaking out into a splatter of posters captioned “*Los Cuatro Hijos de Braden*” (the four bastard sons being Radicalism, Syndicalism, Capitalism, and Communism—in fact, everything save Peronism). Not without significance is the fact that in this city General Mende holds the title, Chief of Police and Culture. Recently the Perón Government drew up but has not yet promulgated a Statute for the Intellectual Worker, much of its language taken verbatim from a similar Nazi decree in 1937—even to the detail of fixing the age of all literary and art critics at a minimum of thirty years, apparently through fear of hot-blooded irresponsible youth. This statute proposes to create an elite corps of scholars, writers, and artists, whose sworn loyalty to the State will be rewarded by direct subsidy. The government will purchase two thousand copies of every book they publish for distribution among public libraries, and compel every foreign ship calling at Argentine ports to buy on each voyage ten books by living Argentine authors, “with the object [so runs the decree] of carrying back to their home lands, along with material riches, something of the Argentine spirit.” Ships of the local merchant register must not only stock a minimum of fifty such books but also at least one work of Argentine plastic art, while every big industrial concern must equip for its workers a cultural center featuring Argentine books and recorded music, from time to time distributing free such cultural dividends among employees.

In fairness to the other Latin-American republics, let me add that Argentine zeal in such matters, along with the official hatred of the

United States and the coddling of Nazi refugees, is unique. The two remaining ABC powers offer a reassuring contrast. Chile worries over the possibility that our copper-state senators may build a new tariff wall against her, but wants earnestly to be our friend. Brazil—that land of magnificent opulence and heart-breaking poverty, a civilization whose devotion to the *mañana* spirit led one of her statesmen lately to remark, “Brazil is not the nation of tomorrow, but of day after tomorrow: because tomorrow is a holiday”—is doubtless the best neighbor we have to the south. Beyond the friendly temper of her people, it is plain that her tropical economy complements that of the United States, while that of stock-raising, industrial Argentina potentially rivals ours.

There is little space to mention here those enterprises, outside the stricter definition of cultural projects, now doing so much to knit good relations between the one-time “Colossus of the North” and our Latin neighbors—the Pan-American Union, almost sixty years old; the diplomatic ties that owe so much to that great Latin-American hero, Franklin D. Roosevelt; the Organization of American States formed in riot-torn Bogotá in 1948; and the more than three hundred co-operative agricultural projects, started by American initiative but now supported mainly by local funds. Among other gestures of help, American experts recently gave Brazil a careful survey of its national economy and made important recommendations. In another field, the huge 1950 Census of the Americas—first complete job in history—will profit by the statisticians we are lending and the trainees we are receiving. On the other hand, the medical program of the Rockefeller Foundation, so long a godsend to public health in Latin America, at last is closing its great southern base in Argentina following six years of opposition from the Perón regime.

A result of another use of Rockefeller funds is that alumni of the Institute of International Education, along with former Guggenheim Fellows and research grantees of our universities, are among the staunchest friends we have in Latin America. They possess keen minds, prestige, and a sense of civic responsibility; no investment in good will pays better returns. Our whole cultural program, whether private or federal, finds indeed its best contacts at the university

level. Here the Esperanto of common interests makes communication freest, and in this quarter much public influence resides—the Latin republics having long been accustomed to recruit political leaders from the ranks of professors, physicians, even poets. Furthermore, this program is most effective when working through long-established native institutions: schools, universities, professional societies, and English-language institutes, maintained because they fill a pragmatic need. To cite personal experience, I found unfailingly good audiences—ever willing to excuse my bad Spanish—among normal schools, academies, universities, and medical societies (the last appreciating a layman's attempt to address them on matters of overlapping interest).

The visiting lecturer in each country, however, finds his main base at those remarkable cultural centers that are a combination of school, library, club, and auditorium. Oldest but now one of the least satisfactory is Buenos Aires' Instituto Argentino-Norteamericano, founded in 1927, currently run by a board whose chairman cannot speak a word of English. Seven other Latin-American centers were likewise started before our government assumed any responsibility for aid. Today there are twenty-eight such centers. Washington ships books to their *bibliotecas* and recordings to their *discotecas* (a new word to me), gives modest help in meeting the teachers' payroll, and sends down an occasional visiting lecturer. Nevertheless, to a large and ever-growing extent these centers are self-supporting, as they should be. They make a small tuition charge for English-language classes, and since many thousands in each city want to learn American English, the income from this source is considerable. Lessons in English can be had elsewhere—public schools, private teachers, and centers maintained by Britain—but the centers staffed by Americans have the reputation of teaching most quickly and effectively; indeed they serve as pilots in language instruction methods.

Every one of the nine institutes I visited is bursting its seams, physically speaking. Classrooms are jammed morning, noon, and night. Early in 1947, when the English Language Institute in Mexico City, with 2,000 students, announced it had 300 vacancies to fill,

nearly 2,500 applicants presented themselves in a queue that formed at 4:00 A.M.—a few gate-crashers climbing over roofs to drop through a skylight, while the police, summoned to keep order, made the most of their chances and got themselves enrolled.

Although teaching English is their most utilitarian task and reaches the broadest base, these centers by their cultural activities draw in a very important minority. Under the pandemic dollar shortage it is hard to buy American books in quantity, and to many readers the shelves of these libraries are the only places where they can find recent American fiction, poetry, drama, history, education, chemistry, engineering, and the like. The turnover is amazing. The Benjamin Franklin Library in Mexico City, for example, with only 25,000 volumes, provides service more than half a million times a year. Readers haunt these tables from opening to closing hour. I saw the same thing at OWI Libraries during the war in Australia and New Zealand. The former head of Sydney University once told me the closing of these libraries would be “a major tragedy in the cultural life of the country.” Many of our English-reading neighbors to the south feel likewise. Also these libraries, usually in charge of an American library school graduate, have measurably raised local standards of librarianship. And besides the stimulus to reading, the centers offer free concerts, exhibitions of painting and sculpture whether by native sons or North Americans, and of course public lectures.

Where does the historian come into this picture? In the first place, Latin Americans have a lively curiosity about our history, mainly biographical. Washington, Franklin, Jefferson, Lincoln, Theodore Roosevelt, Wilson, and Franklin D. Roosevelt—for whom, incidentally, many streets were christened—are far more familiar to Latin ears than Bolívar, San Martín, Sucre, and O’Higgins to us. One guesses that Franklin, Jefferson, and F.D.R. are top favorites. Their place in the tradition of world liberalism and stable democratic government commends them to our southern neighbors, who have been victimized so often by the Man on Horseback. Names from our cultural history—notably Edgar Allan Poe, Walt Whitman, and Mark Twain—are also known everywhere. The two latter

belong of course squarely in the democratic tradition just mentioned; as for Poe, I suspect that his apotheosis in France, a nation whose culture has been no less potent than Spain's upon Latin intelligentsia, has played its part. Costa Rica's President, José Figueres, assured me he was a passionate *aficionado*, and quoted "The Raven" almost entire to prove it. In Buenos Aires I was astonished to learn that Perón's new foreign minister, Dr. Hipólito Paz, recently prepared a lecture not yet delivered called "Edgar Allan Poe y los principios de Peronismo." I am still trying to figure that one out. Respecting current American literature—Hemingway, Lewis, Faulkner, Steinbeck, and others—interest is keen, as it is about our near-contemporary history—social, economic, educational, and technological.

Here is the historian's opportunity. The Latin mind, with its nostalgia for cultural traditions of the Mediterranean peoples and its penchant for Catholic authority, tends to regard North Americans as Protestant parvenus, aggressive individualists lacking the arts of leisure, a sense of the past, and that spiritual finesse which they associate with *Hispanidad* and the Old World in general. Because of temperament the typical Latin American will never be a hustler; the widespread interest among highbrows today in Existentialism is one small token. On the other hand, his economic life is molded increasingly by certain entrepreneurs—biological sports, perhaps—who imitate Yankee systems of business organization, production methods, and advertising. Their activities range across the continent from Brazil's industrial capital of São Paulo to Chile's great steel mills now building at Huachipato.

It does no harm, therefore, and probably much good to inform the intellectuals about segments of American civilization other than the factories of Pittsburgh, Detroit, and Hollywood. Let us tell the Latin Americans about our New England tradition of plain living and high thinking that stretches from Jonathan Edwards to Emerson and thence to James and Dewey; about the spacious Virginia milieu that sired Washington, Jefferson, and Lee; the story of a westering frontier such as South America has never known, and the lasting marks it left upon the Northern mind and character; and the basic

difference between a Spanish colonial empire founded upon conformity, where emigrants were screened by the Church and State before they embarked, and an English-speaking civilization grounded historically on nonconformity. Knowing these roots, they can better understand us. And, coming to modern times, we may tell them too of the folk art and folk music of our highlands, no less than the achievement of the TVA; the chain of great universities stretching from Massachusetts to California; the notable record of private philanthropy in the United States, unmatched by any other land; and above all, the strong American tincture of idealism, the desire to improve not only oneself but one's fellow man, that values labor-saving and material gains as means toward the end of democratic education and fuller personal realization.

These aspects of life in the United States are still unfamiliar to masses of our Latin neighbors. They are still prone to recall the days of "dollar diplomacy," when certain Yankee captains of industry forgot their international good manners under the spur of exploitation. That day is largely gone. No better refutation of our alleged dollar-worship can be found than the billions of those same dollars we have poured out since the war for rebuilding other nations and strengthening the fabric of world democracy—while our four-year monopoly of atomic energy, though now ended, at least has shown how utterly we reject the totalitarian notion that he who possesses the power has a mandate to conquer the world.

In setting right some of the hoary old legends about the predatory Yankee barbarian—myths that Franco's Spain no less than Stalin's Russia would like to foster in Latin America—the historian can do yeoman service. He knows our national record. He can meet with friendly candor any query about the Mexican War, Theodore Roosevelt and the Panama Canal, Wilson and Vera Cruz, or the Marines in Nicaragua—placing incidents in their perspective, not denying the rash of imperialism which certain American leaders caught from the Old World, but against which we have long since built immunity, in these the days of our vastly greater power. With the Spanish-American War, for instance, the historian knows how to equate two generations of typhus and yellow-fever control, abrogation of the

Platt Amendment, and liberation of the Philippines after we had first expelled the Japanese.

This visiting historian is not a “propagandist” in the pejorative sense, not a propagandist at all, save as knowledge of the facts and their judicious appraisal may help the understanding abroad of his country and justify the communicable pride he takes in her best traditions. As for the other side of the coin, the American historian in other lands will feel his own curiosity stirred to learn more about their past, to show an interest that always pleases his foreign colleagues, and to draw parallels both useful and flattering to local pride.

In our cultural program—whether in this hemisphere or regions still more distant—as I see it, the American scholar has an important responsibility. Speaking to thoughtful men and women, not as an official from Washington but as a citizen of the catholic republic of learning, he epitomizes that most precious American ideal, freedom of the mind and tongue. He has nothing to sell, but a great deal to share. He knows that international culture must be a two-way road, and shows it both by his own receptiveness to learn and by doing what he can to promote the international exchange of students and teachers. A fair hearing for the American story, a clear observation of the American scene—these are his honest concerns as an agent of good will.

In Europe and Asia today still more than in Latin America the urgency of such missions is clear. Let us put it simply. Our tangible resources—commodities, machines, and money—we send abroad to bolster the physical survival of other peoples. But unless we lend them the skills necessary for mastery of their material and social environment, and still more, give them a measure of our faith in responsible self-government, their lasting stability and the peace of the world are far from guaranteed. China is a tragic instance. Transfusions of economic lifeblood and the artificial respiration of provisional governments must lead to life-giving processes within the body politic itself, if in the long run these measures do not end in total waste. Ill will among nations and the ignorance on which it feeds—whether passive or deliberately tended by democracy’s ene-

mies—are dangerous. They are the cancers of future wars. The last words penned by President Roosevelt a few hours before his death, intended for broadcast the next day, say it all: “Today we are faced with the pre-eminent fact that, if civilization is to survive, we must cultivate the science of human relationships—the ability of all peoples, of all kinds, to live together and work together in the same world—at peace” Under this charter all cultural programs must proceed.

. . . . that which slumbered in the plant and fitfully stirred in the beast, awakes in man. The eyes of the mind are opened, and he longs to know. He braves the scorching heat of the desert and the blasts of the polar sea, but not for food; he watches all night, but it is to trace the circling of the eternal stars. He adds toil to toil, to gratify a hunger no animal has felt; to assuage a thirst no beast can know.

—HENRY GEORGE, *Progress and Poverty*

A FOREIGN POLICY FOR FREE MEN

by Harold H. Fisher

WHEN the people of Melos objected to paying tribute to Athens on the ground that such a payment violated their rights, the Athenians made this reply: "You know as well as we do that right, as the world goes, is only a question between equals in power, while the strong do what they can, and the weak suffer what they must." The Melians were appealing to principle, that is, to moral rule or to a concept according to which the weak have rights that the strong are bound to recognize. In denying this obligation, the Athenian envoys gave a classical example of what may happen to principle when there is no equilibrium of power.

Many other instances could be cited in support of the notion that the accumulation of power must be the supreme goal of foreign policy. It has been said that "foreign politics are the struggle for power by states competing among themselves in the area of anarchy where domestic writs do not run." Once we recognize this law of power accumulation, we are told, we can understand the behavior of governments in their foreign policies. Conversely, we are told, too, that these same policies cannot be understood in relationship to principles, in the sense of moral rules, or in terms of ideologies or economic interests.

This explanation sounds like down-to-earth realism undiluted by legalistic or moralistic nonsense. Realism of this kind always gives satisfaction to those whose main interest is the accumulation of wealth or power because it implies that they are merely doing what every one else is doing, only doing it better. Certainly, the accumulation and preservation of power is an important aim of foreign policy, but because the nature of power is monopolistic, those who possess it are tempted to make it the exclusive aim. And so it

comes about that the nations possessing the most power tend to look for security not in conciliation and agreement—this would be appeasement—but in the accumulation of more power.

As a nation we have had some experience in the use of power in our relations with our neighbors in the Western Hemisphere. But we now face the heavier responsibility of the possession of much greater power and of its use on a global scale. "If policy without power is lame," says R. H. Tawney, "power without policy is blind." We face a double challenge. The possession of great power, if we are to avoid using it blindly and to the destruction of our principles, forces us to develop a foreign policy. Beyond this, however, we are faced by Soviet antagonists who have great power together with a world policy based on the doctrine that anything is right and just that in the opinion of the Politburo benefits the Soviet Union.

Soviet foreign policy and the ideas of Soviet national interest were, like our own, formed in an epoch of revolution. This twentieth-century revolution has deepened the interdependence of peoples by technological developments in production, communication, and warfare, and has aroused in the minds of millions of persons in Asia, Africa, and Latin America the belief that emancipation from foreign political and economic control will give them a greater measure of respect and a greater share in the well-being which science and invention have made possible. But Soviet foreign policy traditions and methods have been derived from the precapitalist, predemocratic days of czarist absolutism. To these traditions and practices the Communists have added the strategy and tactics of an international class struggle in which other methods besides organized violence are essential for the pursuit of the national interest and are a prerequisite to the use of force.

The national interest of the Soviets is embedded in a global revolutionary mission. Their grim pursuit of this mission overshadows all other problems of American foreign policy because it challenges the capacity of our form of government to deal effectively with new international issues and because it challenges also the capacity of the citizens of our country to perform the functions they must perform, individually or in voluntary association, if democ-

racy, as we know it, is to survive. The new international issues which our government must meet and which we as citizens should try to understand are the result partly of the technological revolution, especially in warfare and in communications, and partly of the Communists' idea of their mission and the way to accomplish it.

The Communist mission is to replace the great variety of existing political, social, and economic systems by a world system of communism. One of the Communist leaders of the World Federation of Trade Unions told a group of Asians that the Communists were forming "a grand new coalition of peoples fighting for a new world, living in peace, making socialism a living reality and laying the foundations of a new civilization on a world-wide scale." The Communists do not expect to do this all at once or by some tremendous military victory. They have no timetable. They expect to win local victories and suffer defeats; but they claim that ultimate victory is sure, and they say they will keep up the struggle until it is won.

These aims appeal to a great many people, especially to those who feel that under present systems they are denied a fair chance to win the good things of life or are discriminated against because of race or color or class. These aims appeal to many who reason that because the existing systems have failed to prevent two world wars, only some new system such as the Communists offer can prevent a third and still more terrible world war.

II

To speak of Communist principles is perhaps misleading, for their precepts are really not principles built up from below but dogmas laid down from above. The first of these is the dogma of the inevitable triumph of communism and the corollary that so noble an end justifies any means that appear to be effective. As Molotov put it, "This is an age in which all roads lead to communism." Both the certainty of victory and the inspiration of a world mission to win peace and social justice are tremendous incentives to the Communists and a challenge for the rest of us. "We aren't rich or prosperous," said a Communist workingman, "but we know where we are going."

A second dogma is that of the two camps. The Communists say that, as a result of the victory of their revolution in Russia, the nations of the world have been divided into two camps. They call the camp headed by Soviet Russia the camp of peace and real democracy, of socialism and communism. The nations within this camp, so they claim, enjoy a mutual confidence, national equality, and the fraternal collaboration of peoples. They claim that within this camp, headed by Russia, a new system of international law and relations is being developed. They also claim that the present relations between the various republics that make up the Soviet Union are based on equality and fraternity, and this is the ideal of international relations toward which Russia is leading the way.

The other camp, according to Communist dogma, is the camp of capitalism. We should prefer to call it the camp of freedom, but according to Moscow, it is the camp of imperialism, war, national hatreds, oppression, colonial slavery, and supernationalism. This camp was at one time headed by Britain and France; since World War II, it has been headed by the United States.

This dogma of the two camps has consequences of great significance to nations outside and inside the Soviet camp. By denying the possibility of a third camp, such as Nehru has aspired to lead, or the possibility of neutrality, such as European neutralists and the Left Wing of the British Labour party have advocated, the Communists have applied to international affairs a principle that they apply frequently in domestic politics, namely, that "those who are not for us are against us." In practical politics this concept caused Russia to support the Zionists and the Indians against Britain to gain full independence. But once independence was gained, the Soviet Communists turned against these new governments because they had not accepted Communist leadership and become members of good standing in the Soviet camp.

As the Soviet Communists deny the possibility of a third camp, so also they deny that unity and common purpose are possible in the capitalist camp. Capitalism itself, they say, makes it inevitable that the strong capitalist states should quarrel with each other over which should dominate and exploit the weaker countries. Thus, the Rus-

sians interpret troubles in Iran as an imperialist struggle between the British and American governments to control and exploit the weak Persian state. Russian diplomacy seeks to increase and take advantage of these conflicts and to encourage British and American suspicions of each other. Since the United States is the strongest member of the capitalist camp, Soviet diplomacy uses all its weapons to isolate America by persuading other members of the camp that we pursue only our own selfish interest, which is to exploit them economically and to use them for cannon fodder in the next war.

The dogma of the two camps is significant to the members of the Soviet camp because of the ideological pre-eminence of the Russian Communists as leaders in the Communist movement and the position of Russia as the first land of socialism and the motherland of the workers of the world. It is the sacred duty of every Communist to support every policy of the Soviet government and to defend the Soviet Union by every means on every issue. The Soviet Communists claim that there can be no real conflict of interest between Soviet Russia and other Communist-ruled countries or between Soviet Russia and the workers and peasants of non-Communist countries because Soviet policies are decided in accordance with the so-called science of Marxism-Leninism, and policies so decided cannot possibly be contrary to the real interests of workers and peasants, wherever they are. Foreign Communists use the science of Marxism-Leninism, too, and they must therefore have the same answers to foreign problems as the Russians.

The history of the last thirty years has shown over and over again that Communists from the non-Russian republics of the Soviet Union as well as those from foreign countries have not found the same answers in Marxism-Leninism as the Soviet Politburo. These Communists have occasionally intimated that Politburo policies were not taking into account the interests of other non-Russian peoples. Since the Soviet camp has been expanded, there have been power conflicts and conflicts of interest expressed by Communists in Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Rumania, Czechoslovakia, Poland, and Russia. The Soviet Politburo has explained these conflicts by saying that the Communists who disagreed with Politburo policy were bad Communists

or traitors and spies in the pay of the Anglo-American imperialists. The bad little Communists have been removed to obscurity; the bad big Communists have been publicly disgraced and hanged. Tito, because of the geographical position of his country and for other reasons, has been able to defy the Soviet Politburo, but Titoism is not a disease confined to Yugoslavia. It is endemic in every country under Communist rule and it would seem to prove that up to now the Communists have not been able so to transform the behavior of individuals and groups that conflicts of interest have disappeared.

In the realm of foreign affairs members of the Soviet camp, in theory, are sovereign and equal and have the right to withdraw, but any Communist who publicly advocated withdrawal or insisted on equality with the Soviet Union—"the first land of socialism"—or obstinately opposed political, economic, or cultural policies of the Politburo would be denounced, disgraced, or destroyed as a traitor.

During the last thirty years we have had enough opportunity to observe Soviet Communist policy to justify the conclusion that a totalitarian dictatorship based on a self-perpetuating, infallible political machine is driven by its very essence to extend its power further and further over national, occupational, and other groups within the Soviet camp. We know that conflicts within the Soviet camp exist and that they are settled not by the principles of Marxism-Leninism but by the superiority of Soviet Russian power.

We do not know whether, or for how long, a Communist-ruled state the size of China will accept a subordinate position in the Soviet camp, nor do we know whether, or for how long, the Soviet Politburo can resist the totalitarian urge to subordinate the political, economic, and cultural interest of China to those of the "first land of socialism." We do not know whether, or for how long, the infallible Chinese Politburo will accept the superinfallibility of the Soviet Politburo in decisions regarding North Korea or Indochina or other Asian areas that may fall into Communist hands.

I believe that American public opinion and American policy makers pay too little attention to these Communist contradictions. We are too ready to accept the Communists' boasts about themselves and their superhuman ability to transform the behavior of

individuals and groups. When we give them more credit than they deserve, we give them unintentional but substantial aid by acting as if we thought that anyone who ever entered the Soviet camp would never want to leave it.

Another Communist dogma is the theory of imperialism. This is related to the dogmas I have already mentioned, but applies especially to Asia, the Middle East, and Africa—areas in which the American government faces difficult policy decisions. The gist of this theory is that the capitalist nations have been able to survive beyond their time only because they have been able to exploit the people and the natural resources of the colonial areas of the world. The imperialists, in order to make larger profits, have not allowed the colonial countries to develop industries and hence the proletarians in the colonies are too few to lead a revolution. But there are millions of peasants kept in ignorance and poverty by the native feudal landowners, who themselves are the agents and junior partners of the European and American capitalists. According to the Communists, the workers, peasants, small businessmen, and intellectuals—all colonial classes, in fact, except the feudal junior partners of the imperialists—have been aroused to struggle for national independence and social justice.

The victory of the Communists in Russia and their alleged struggle to liberate the workers and peasants from the exploitation of their European and American imperialist masters make the Soviet Communists the natural allies of the Asians, Middle Easterners, Africans, and all other colonial peoples in their struggles for independence. On the basis of this theory, the Soviet Communists support two movements that are most popular in Asia: the movement for national liberation and the movement for agrarian reform. In this the Communists join hands with intellectuals who want political liberties, small businessmen who want to enlarge their private businesses, and peasants who want to own the land they cultivate. The Soviet Communists do not believe in political liberties, private business, or private ownership of land. They justify their support of these measures on the grounds that colonial peoples are not yet ready for socialism, much less for communism, but that liberation

with Communist help is a first and necessary step that will accomplish three desirable ends: it will stimulate a revolutionary spirit among the colonial peoples; it will strengthen the Communist movement; and it will hasten the fall of capitalism.

The best way to describe Soviet tactics in foreign relations is, I think, to say that they are the tactics of the class struggle adapted to a struggle between nations. The method of the class struggle is to support good causes by legal means; to organize, publicize, and spread discontent by legal or illegal means; and to use organized violence whenever and wherever the opposition is not in a position to retaliate effectively or to maintain order. Organized violence is not the primary weapon in the international class struggle; it is the final weapon to deliver the knockout blow once the enemy's will and capacity to resist have been broken by other means.

The Communists take the line that peaceful coexistence and the international class struggle are not contradictory. Russia and India, for example, can peacefully coexist at the same time that Indian Communists, whose subservience in the Soviet Communist leadership is acknowledged by both Indians and Russians, carry on legal and illegal actions, including guerrilla warfare, against the government of India. Peaceful coexistence between Russia and the United States would end only if the armed forces of the two countries were in actual combat.

The record shows that the Communists have sought to avoid a general war but have used military power indirectly. They have accomplished Communist objectives through intimidation made possible by the presence or the proximity of Russian troops. The Soviet Union has annexed territory in East Prussia, Poland, Rumania, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary as a result of the presence of Russian military power. Russian troops made it possible for the Communist regimes to take power in the captive satellite states without a civil war, and Communist theorists accept this as another legitimate method of achieving control. Finally the Soviet Communists have used and are using military force indirectly through aid and encouragement of guerrilla warfare, as in Greece, Korea, Malaya, India, Burma, and the Philippines.

The Soviet historian Eugene Tarlé tells us in the third volume of the *History of Diplomacy* that Lenin and Stalin have created an entirely new kind of diplomacy which is capable of achieving peace, liberation, and progress. What this new diplomacy boils down to is the use of diplomatic negotiations, conferences, and so forth, not to compromise differences or to relieve tensions or to reach lasting agreements, but to promote the security of the Soviet Union and to advance the interests of the Soviet camp by cultivating rivalries and frictions within the capitalist camp.

The chief objective of Soviet diplomacy since World War II has been to arouse fear and suspicion of the United States, thus to isolate the strongest member and leader of what the Communists call the capitalist camp and we call the free world. There is nothing new about this kind of diplomacy except the verbiage in which it is dressed. The grand dukes of Muscovy would feel at home in it, and the Byzantine emperors would be flattered by these imitators of their system.

III

In the face of this Soviet world policy of total struggle and under the pressure inherent in the possession of great national power, many of us have become confused, a few are dangerously frightened. We now try to escape from our confusion and fear by turning toward a "realism" which we further rationalize into bold hyperboles, such as "power accumulation," "get-tough policy," "no appeasement," "national security," "unconditional surrender." The repetition of these phrases does not make policy.

Our power, our fears, and our confusion tempt us to rely on a capacity for creating the most destructive implements of war and to overlook the fact that the Communists are depending less on Soviet military power for their victories than on the skillful use of economic, political, and ideological weapons. In the face of this challenge some of us swing away from the formula of more and more force and toward a desperate determination "to fight fire with fire." We find it easy to denounce Communist tactics as wicked and unworthy of decent human beings, and at the same time we adopt them either in retaliation or as countermeasures.

By word and deed the Communists express their contempt for the United Nations as a means of preserving peace, whereupon some of our most articulate anti-Communists take the same view and denounce this alien body and its "mongrel flag." Russia has a government monopoly of foreign trade, which it uses more for political purposes than for the welfare of the people. Observing this, many citizens urge us to increase our controls of foreign trade in the sincere belief that in this way we can injure our enemies and persuade our friends. This, I submit, is extending to the Soviets a tribute they do not deserve. The Russian government does its best to keep the citizens of Russia from contact with foreigners and from having access to foreign books, periodicals, and newspapers. This is clearly a confession of weakness, an acknowledgment that the Communists dare not let their subjects learn freely what other people are thinking, saying, and doing, lest they lose faith in communism and the Communist dictatorship. Yet patriotic Americans, in an emulation they do not intend, urge us to exclude Communists, their books, their periodicals, and their ideas, from this country and to deny our people access to them—all on the apparent assumption that we dare place no more faith in the judgment of our free citizens than the Communists place in the victims of their despotism. Shall we, as we are increasingly urged to do, set up official, or tolerate unofficial, censorship of books, newspapers, radio, television, and movies in order to prevent the expression of subversive ideas—all on the theory that only a few of us can recognize and resist them and that the allegiance of the rest of us to American ideals is so weak that we cannot be trusted to prefer democracy to totalitarianism?

The Communists have a counterespionage system. So have we, and obviously we must maintain it as protection against spies and traitors. But the Communists have also a vast and growing system of espionage, control, and intimidation for another purpose: to enforce conformity and subservience and to exclude the infiltration of foreign ideas. In the past we have rightly regarded the apparatus of a police state not only as an evil in itself, but also as evidence that a system is being preserved against the will of the people. Yet many would-be patriots now urge us to increase the size and scope

of our security and loyalty machinery, to make absolutely certain, through inspectors and informers, that no club, union, business enterprise, or religious group is infiltrated by subversive elements. How much further can we press this self-preservation process without turning ourselves into the very police state that we abhor?

Communist demagogues have made political profit by the unscrupulous exploitation of the fear of war. Must we encourage those in our country who spread suspicion and confusion by the unscrupulous or irresponsible exploitation of the fear of communism? Must we, in these times of trouble, look for leadership to those political ragpickers who offer nothing for our guidance but an assortment of gossip, rumor, half-truths, and slander which will dishearten and divide our people and so serve the cause of our enemies?

Most of us know that in times of national emergency some of our rights must, in the public interest, be curtailed. But in the past we have insisted that no curtailment be made without full debate and presentation of the facts to the people. Yet some badly frightened people now consider the situation so dangerous that we must not only curtail our rights, but must inhibit full debate and deny the people access to facts and opinions bearing on the issue. Thus, we allow their fears and confusions to drive us into a moral defeatism. We appear to be on the verge of conceding that the weapons of freedom will fail against the weapons of oppression. If fear makes the Communists treat our representatives as spies, let us treat their representatives as spies. If Russia has an iron curtain to keep out what they call American lies, let us have at least a closely woven, McCarran-type screen to protect our people from what we call Communist propaganda.

Such measures are a surrender, not an answer, to the Soviet challenge. Such measures represent the degeneration of national purpose. Tawney believes that a nation can secure itself from this danger by periodically redefining its objective: "Like believers in a world of scoffers," he says, we ought to rehearse the articles of our faith. But if we are to restore our faith in ourselves and reassure others who look to us for leadership, we must rehearse the articles of our faith in terms of the times and the issues.

These are revolutionary times. The Communists did not make the revolution, but they have tried with some success to identify themselves with the achievement of its objectives. In truth, the creators of the revolution of our time are science and invention and the practice of freedom, and they have inspired great hopes. One hope is that the wise use of science and technology has made it possible to improve the welfare of all mankind. Another hope is for the development of a world culture and a world community whose conflicts of interest can be settled without war. Finally, this revolution has aroused the hope of those who have been excluded from any part in decisions regarding political, economic, and cultural affairs that they shall henceforth share in these decisions.

These hopes are the goals we have sought and in some measure achieved on this continent. Millions of peoples have come from the other continents, drawn by the promise of American life, and they have shared in such fulfillment of that promise as we have attained. So now we are challenged to rehearse the articles of our faith in the promise of American life in terms that apply not merely to this continent but to the world of today, in terms that will lift our hearts and the hearts of our allies and make allies in the hearts of our enemies.

IV

We stand for the prevention of war and for the gradual conquest of ignorance, disease, and poverty. We have a stake in the wider distribution of the benefits that science and invention have made possible. We believe that a world encouraging the liberation of creative powers in the individual is better than a world regimented by censorship, corrupted by spies and informers, harassed by fear, and ruled by political police. We believe that it would be in the national interest to have this kind of world and that the way to achieve such a world, an earth-encompassing free man's commonwealth, is to use our national power for encouraging the growth of international institutions in which inevitable conflicts of interest can be discussed and compromised without bloodshed.

We do not believe that the way to a better world is through a sys-

tem based on fear and organized to force upon all people a particular form of government, or social and economic system, or religious, philosophical, or political idea, or literary and artistic style. The conditions under which our nation was conceived, the circumstances of our birth, and the aims we have pursued demand that we use our national power to defend and to extend liberty, not to destroy it. We ought not, of course, to expect that a free man's commonwealth can be attained overnight, that it can be realized by the act of ratification of a document such as the Charter of the United Nations or by the codification of international law and the world court. It must grow, and, to the United States, history has given the opportunity and the privilege of leading and encouraging and nurturing this growth.

Is it contrary to our principles and traditional policies to take this opportunity and to direct our foreign policy toward the achievement of a free man's commonwealth? Let us recall for a moment what our traditional policies have been and then consider the principles on which they were based. Most authorities agree that our basic foreign policies have been the avoidance of permanent entangling alliances, the Monroe Doctrine, freedom of the seas, the open door, and the peaceful settlement of international disputes. No one of these traditional policies is a separate improvisation unrelated to others, but all are related to two basic American principles. The first is our adherence to democratic ideas, our faith in such rights as religious and political liberty and equality of opportunity, which Allan Nevins says is "the bedrock foundation of American action in foreign affairs." The second basic principle is closely related to this. It is the sense of a world mission to be realized through the fulfillment of the promise of American life. The American people have come from the four corners of the earth; they belong to many races; they have many religions; and they were nurtured under differing cultures. A German visitor who knew America well pointed out forty years ago that "neither race nor tradition nor the actual past binds the American to his countrymen, but rather the future which together they are building."

When George Washington warned us against entangling alli-

ances, he also warned us against permanent hatred of other nations. He said: "The nation which indulges toward another an habitual hatred or an habitual fondness is in some degree a slave." The policies of nonintervention and nonentanglement in Europe—the Monroe Doctrine—were not based on fear of all contact with monarchical or radical governments or on the belief that we could realize the promise of American life by having nothing to do with other nations. These policies were designed to protect our experiment in democracy in the Western Hemisphere from becoming involved in the incalculable complications of European power politics. We adopted the Monroe Doctrine to prevent the extension of European power politics to the Western Hemisphere, and we stood for freedom of the seas and the open door in China in order to uphold the principle of equality on the high seas and in the Far East.

Throughout our history we have upheld democratic principles in international affairs. We have supported the right of self-determination, and we have opposed imperialism. We have favored the peaceful settlement of disputes by arbitration or compromise. We have upheld the principle of the legal equality of sovereign nations, regardless of size. We have occasionally violated our own principles, but never without strong and effective protest from our own citizens. Those leaders whose statements of basic American principles we most revere—Washington, Franklin, Jefferson, Lincoln, and Wilson—have all emphasized the American mission and the world significance of the American experiment in sowing the seeds of Liberty and Union, as Washington put it, and through commerce in goods and ideas connecting all mankind, like one great family, in fraternal ties.

The Truman Doctrine, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, the Organization of American States, the proposed Near East and Pacific defense arrangements are recognition of a new security problem, recognition of the fact that for most of the nations military preparedness is no security unless done in arrangement with a great power. I believe that the word "containment" was an unfortunate way to describe a policy which, like the Monroe Doctrine, contributed to the security of the United States but also upheld the

right of peoples of different states to work out their own political and social order free from foreign rule.

Our leadership in the formation and activities of the United Nations is a case not of permanent entanglement but of participation in co-operative measures to deal with multinational problems, to ameliorate power conflicts, and to keep the peace.

The most original, and perhaps in the long run the most effective, of our extended foreign policies are the programs of economic and technical aid—both those carried on unilaterally, as in the Marshall Plan and Point IV, and those carried on through agencies of the United Nations. By these programs we have recognized that in the world at large, as in our own country, the issues of freedom and general welfare are inseparable. We are learning that these measures are most effective when they are carried out in the interests and with the maximum participation of the people concerned.

We have adopted these measures after considerable argument and for two reasons: fear and principle. It is much easier to spread fear than to uphold principle, and it is politically more profitable. We are now in some danger of allowing fear to direct our policies to the neglect of principle. We are in danger of giving the free world that looks to us for leadership the impression that the only principle we really believe in is the principle of self-preservation—the doctrine of every man for himself.

V

I believe we are committed too deeply to be frightened into trying to wash our hands of the United Nations and all its works, to repudiate the responsibilities we have taken in respect to NATO and other regional arrangements, to abandon economic, technical, and cultural exchange operations that we first undertook as emergency measures. We shall abandon these activities only if the Communists succeed in isolating us in such a smoke screen of fear and suspicion that other nations withdraw from us.

If we cannot escape from the world by our own will and if we do not intend to be forced out of it by the Communists, how do we gain

security in a free man's commonwealth embracing the earth? Two ways have been suggested. One is by a crusade against communism wherever it exists, a crusade in which no nation besides the United States may be willing to take part, a crusade certain to develop into a third world conflict in which new weapons would give "total war" a new meaning. Even those who denounce what they call appeasement in Asia do not advocate a preventive war. They realize, so far as anyone can, how much such a war would cost. They realize, dimly perhaps, that such a war would not produce the changes we want to see in Russia or China. A better-behaved regime cannot be imposed on Russia or China from the outside. A more tolerant, more humane system must be worked out by the Russians and the Chinese in conformance with their traditions and their needs.

As an alternative to a world crusade against communism, we have the containment policy. Containment aims at keeping Russia from further expansion by stopping holes. It is argued that it is too late to stop holes and, moreover, that containment tends to stabilize things as they are. "It betrays," says Wilhelm Roepke, "the political and moral principles of the West by acquiescing in the enslavement of half the world and thus emasculating our propaganda."

There is a third course. The Soviet theory of coexistence and competition of two systems is a challenge. The Communists say in effect that total war is too costly and too hazardous a means of winning the world for communism. Besides, it is not necessary. The Communists claim that, with their objectives, with the aid of the dogmas of Marxism-Leninism, with their monolithic party and their totalitarian system, they can beat the divided, contentious elements of the camp of freedom in spite of the greater wealth, experience, and technological competence of the free nations.

Whether we want to or not, we have to meet this challenge of coexistence. Let us meet it head on. Let us stop dreaming about dropping on Moscow a magic bomb that will cause the monolithic system to disintegrate and then magically reintegrate into something that looks like the United States of America. Let us stop thinking wishfully that within the next few months the Russian army or the Russian people will rise up and overthrow the Politburo and set up

a republic like the United States, of which they know so little and about which they have been told the most monstrous lies.

We need not act as if the Communists had driven us into a corner from which we cannot escape. We can prove that we believe in freedom by accepting the challenge with confidence in the creative power of free men exercising their rights to surpass the achievements of men regimented in thought and ruled in their acts by a self-appointed clique claiming omniscience. There is more history on our side, if we get the fear out of our eyes to read it, than on the Communist side. But accepting this challenge will force us to face difficult questions:

Do we realize that we are in an endurance contest from which there is little chance of respite for a long, long time? This race is not a hundred-yard dash but a marathon run which we cannot win by sudden spurts and dashes. We shall get no rest until we finish the course, and when we finish the course, we shall be a long way from where we started.

Do we believe in those freedoms which men came to America from the four corners of the world to enjoy—freedom of conscience, political freedom, freedom of occupation—do we believe in them as fervently and shall we use them as confidently as the Communists believe in and use what they call the dictatorship of the proletariat?

Do we believe sufficiently in the democratic principle of assent to work out solutions of international problems within the camp of freedom by discussion, compromise, and agreement? Are we willing to recognize the right of other nations to opinions which do not coincide with ours? Do we recognize that in a struggle against totalitarianism our principle must be that those who are not against us are for us?

Are we ready to accept Tawney's belief that every nation whose cause is not wholly selfish "has an ally in the heart of its enemy, whom it may alienate by menaces, or strengthen by the recognition of the common interests of common humanity"? This belief means that we must regard Communists as ordinary human beings made somewhat more formidable by training, organization, and dedication to a cause that promises utopia sugared with power. There is nothing special about a Communist that enables him to subvert any

non-Communist with whom he comes in contact at the same time that he resists indefinitely the evidence that freedom is better than slavery. We accept the fact that Communists desert their party, inform against it, and denounce and oppose it as Tito has done. But to date we have hesitated to draw policy conclusions from this fact.

Are we willing to make a distinction between the peoples of Russia, China, and other Communist-governed countries and their rulers? Are we prepared to consider them, not as Communist collaborators whom we are willing to destroy in order to defeat the Communists, but as the victims of communism, whom we want and need, in George Kennan's phrase, as "our willing allies"? If so, we still shall not win them as allies by telling them how much better off we are than they are. We must convince them not only that we have come a long way but that we have not stopped moving toward freedom and peace and social justice and well-being, all of which have been for millions of people the promise of American life.

Are we willing to recognize that problems arising from the transition of colonial and underdeveloped areas (with all their complications of poverty, ignorance, and inexperience) to the status of equality before the law of nations are problems that we must deal with, not in the spirit of saving them and ourselves from communism, but in one of preserving their freedom to make their contribution to a richer and better world?

Finally, are we willing to accept the idea that the same Americans whose unity has been cemented by the belief in a common future are now dedicated to the building of a better world in union with other peoples—including the prisoners in the camp of communism?

We who are the heirs of those who had faith in the promise of a free man's commonwealth in North America need courage to reject the counsel of fear that accepts the accumulation of power as the sum and substance of our foreign policy. We need vision to discover the wider application of the great principles from which the founders of our nation drew their inspiration and on which those who came after them based their hopes. We need faith in freedom to have a foreign policy for free men. With courage and faith we can, perhaps, rise above the mean and hateful problems of the present.

ARGENTINA AND URUGUAY: A TALE OF TWO ATTITUDES

by Russell A. Fitzgibbon

A FOREIGN correspondent in Buenos Aires was discussing not long ago the problem of sending out news stories from the Argentine capital. He explained, appropriately accompanied by sighs as sound effects, how the cable companies had primary responsibility for rejecting anything that might conceivably be objectionable to the government. How the government could intervene, quite capriciously, with its own censorship. How the fantastic law of *desacato* (disrespect) could be and arbitrarily was applied to penalize a writer, legislator, or anyone else whom the government chose to persecute.

His visitor had just come from Uruguay. "It certainly isn't like that in Montevideo," he exclaimed. "Correspondents can send out any sort of story they darned please."

"You're telling me!" the B.A. man answered. "On the map Montevideo and Buenos Aires are 125 miles from each other. Actually, they are as far apart as the North and South poles."

In reality, too, he could have added, Argentina and Uruguay, the countries that provide the hinterlands for those two great cities, might almost as well be on opposite sides of the earth.

It is two rivers, the Rio de la Plata and the Rio Uruguay, that separate the two countries. The Plata, a great bay, inlet, or estuary (geographers can't agree on their terminology), is from eight to 150 or more miles wide. The Uruguay River, where it is a national boundary, varies from a maximum of about eight miles to a minimum width of less than a mile. Yet either river might be as wide as the Atlantic Ocean which receives their waters. They are in combination a gulf, a wide gulf that separates the two countries.

To a degree, the attitudes of the two nations are reflected, typified, pointed up in those of their respective capital cities. In some

measure Argentina and Uruguay are just two cities: Buenos Aires and Montevideo. Hence, the title of this article might well have borrowed flatly that of Dickens' novel of revolutionary France.

If you transplant a *norteamericano* to the region of the Plata for a few months, or perhaps just a few weeks, and give him a little experience on each side of the river one of the first questions he starts asking is, "How do they get that way?"

By which he means, when he amplifies his question, how do two adjoining nations which have so much in common—ethnically, economically, and culturally—vary as much as these two do? How do two near-by cities, one the parent of the other, and only 125 miles apart if you are naïve enough to believe the map, become poles apart in attitude? Why do a common use of the Spanish language, a common adherence to the Catholic religion, and a common concern with stock raising mean so little in welding a common denominator for the two countries?

On the answer to such questions hangs a real comprehension of one of the most important political and social situations in all Latin America. It is probably not too much to conclude that a proper assessment and interpretation of this picture will definitely affect the course of inter-American relations, which will become of vast and insistent importance if, as some people think may be, a new Pearl Harbor finds its locale in Latin America.

What makes them tick? Why is Argentina, in that figure, a strident and somewhat tinny alarm clock and Uruguay a sturdy, honestly built Swiss watch?

I

First of all, what is the picture? What are Exhibits A and B and C and so on?

In a word, Uruguay presents a reasonable facsimile of being the most democratic state in the hemisphere. (And the hemisphere, be it noted, includes both the United States and Canada.) Just short months ago the Uruguayans amended their constitution to substitute a nine-man executive council for the president, the theory being that the multipersonal executive was a surer guaranty against

dictatorship or even presidential dominance. It was the incumbent president, incidentally, who took the lead in trying to abolish his own job.

Argentina? At the same time these extraordinary things were going on across the river, Argentina was consolidating what is perhaps the harshest, certainly the most grandiose, dictatorship the hemisphere has ever known.

Montevideans make a play on words. "Argentina has the good airs (Buenos Aires)," they will tell you, "but here we have the free airs."

That free air—and how the Uruguayans prize it!—is one of the great, solid assets, impalpable though it literally is, of this little country.

Item: The Argentines, qua Argentines, often generate the reaction among other Latin Americans, including the Uruguayans, of a knowing smile, a shrug of the shoulders, or open resentment. They are frequently referred to—and it is *not* meant as a compliment—as the Yankees of Latin America. Many of them used to go to Montevideo for the summer season to enjoy Uruguay's incomparable beaches. Uruguayans welcomed their pesos but not the Argentines themselves: too many of them were regarded simply as the *nouveaux riches* throwing their financial weight around—and Uruguayans don't like parvenus. The Uruguayans, on the other hand, have friends all over Latin America. They almost invariably have an open and democratic demeanor, a lively but not a prying interest in their neighbors' concerns, and a genuine simplicity and modesty. All this has won friends and influenced people from one end of the continent to the other.

Item: Uruguayans like the United States. Collectively and individually they react in a friendly and sympathetic way to what most *latinos* regard simply as the Colossus of the North—and who wants a colossus in the family? many of the other Latins seem to ask. A North American family rented an apartment in Pocitos, a Montevideo suburb, for several months' stay and one day their next-door neighbor, a retired police officer, volunteered to do anything possible for them—allow the use of his telephone (a much-

in-demand device in Montevideo), guide them over the city, ward off vendors when they had to be away. The reason, he explained a little shyly, was that years before, when he was an active police officer, the American embassy had done him a favor. He had always felt the obligation to repay it in some way and the chance acquaintance with a temporary, even though strictly nongovernmental, next-door neighbor offered the opportunity.

Across the river? The average Argentine does not like the United States—period and exclamation point. Ask any of the various North American businessmen who have moved from Buenos Aires to Montevideo to find a more congenial if less convenient location from which to carry on operations in the Plata region. Ask the newspaper correspondent quoted at the beginning of this discussion. Ask a lot of tourists who have seen both sides of the river.

A young Buenos Aires professional man, who had degrees both from his own University of Buenos Aires and also an Eastern university in the United States, was talking about this point. "Most Argentines think pretty logically about most matters," he said, "but once the conversation gets around to the United States they begin to see red. We can't seem to take an objective view of that country."

Many more exhibits and items could be brought into court to make a case. The evidence is there aplenty for him who runs to read, or to be bowled over by.

Now, let a necessary and very important qualification be entered on the record. When one is discussing almost twenty million people—the combined population of Argentina and Uruguay—and a highly complex social and governmental situation, the broadest sorts of generalizations have to be employed, with the consequent likelihood of oversimplification and the omission of exceptions which would somewhat tip the scales the other way. There are two young lawyers employed by a shipping firm in Buenos Aires, for example, than whom the United States has no better friends the world over. The young professional man who says his compatriots see red is a profound admirer of the northern republic. There are many individual others. But they are scores or a few hundreds or even thousands, and the population of Argentina is 17,000,000.

II

How do they get that way? The first answer is historical. Buenos Aires was neither the earliest nor the most important center of Spanish authority in South America. Lima, "the City of Kings," held that distinction. But Buenos Aires became the most important business and commercial center for southern South America. Culture, progress, and the creature comforts were late in coming to Buenos Aires but the foundations of fortunes were being built by the *estancieros* in the hinterland. The businessmen of the metropolis were sufficiently aggressive and ambitious that by a subtle alchemy such attitudes became those of the colony itself, especially after Buenos Aires became the capital of a new viceroyalty in 1776. When the Old Families were established (and to a certain extent self-designated), the attitude of being born to the purple in successive generations began. It was a social purple that was of far greater meaning than the floral color which gave a name to the Purple Land of Uruguay across the river.

What happened across that river? Uruguay was for long generations simply the Banda Oriental, the East Bank, the range of wild cattle and equally wild gauchos or cowboys. The gauchos had as little interest in social pretensions as they did in quantum mechanics. One Montevidean claims that Uruguay during those early generations got "the garbage" as settlers. That is stating it unnecessarily harshly (and probably facetiously), but those who settled the Banda were certainly not the ones out of whom an aristocratic and class-conscious society is made.

Montevideo was founded only in 1726—it is hence one of the youngest capitals in the hemisphere—and was designed primarily as a defense post against Portuguese encroachments from Brazil. The Banda was for many generations a pawn in the game of high politics between Spain and Portugal. Hence, where the gaucho did not leave his stamp on colonial Uruguay the soldier often did. "Society" was equally disadvantaged by both.

Colonial authority and prestige in all their many forms—civil, military, ecclesiastical, social, cultural—radiated from Buenos Aires. Montevideo was a "poor relation," a frontier settlement.

Then came the wars for independence. Once the Spanish were ousted the *porteños*—the people of the port (of Buenos Aires)—tried to assert their leadership over the whole area and centralize it all under the control of Buenos Aires. Uruguay finally became independent but only after a last chapter involving three years of warfare between Argentina and Brazil for the prize of the Banda; it was a revival of the colonial Spanish-Portuguese tug of war. The wild gaucho spirit of freedom, almost of anarchy, pervaded all of Uruguay even though the gaucho was on his way out as a type. In Buenos Aires the settled and aristocratic society, although based on a cattle economy in the hinterland, was strong enough to resist a gaucho coloring and democratizing influence.

Thus, the two states were born with important, even if subtle, distinctions. In the one case a frontier or individualistic, almost an anarchic, psychology prevailed. To the extent that the Uruguayans reasoned about such matters an egalitarian philosophy dominated their thinking. In the older, larger, and richer country the domestic and external imperialism of the capital city was already manifesting itself.

III

Economic and social explanations reinforce the purely historical. A feudal economic and social organization has been characteristic, of course, of many countries of Latin America and especially in their rural areas. Its features included the enormous landholding units, an effective vassal-lord relationship, a large degree of private usurpation of normally governmental processes and functions. A feudal economy is almost necessarily parallel to a static and a colonial economy, i.e., to one which shows little or no change for long periods and one in which the *raison d'être* is to provide large surpluses of raw materials, usually agricultural, for the foreign or metropolitan market. A feudal society involves a large degree of patriarchal relationship, benevolent or not, between the *patrón* and the *peón*, embellished with the proper sort of humility or subservience on the part of the latter, and an effective attachment of the man to the master's land. With open serfdom legally abolished

in Latin America practical substitutes were often found in the form of debt servitude and social pressures.

Uruguay has been no stranger to some of these manifestations of feudalism. But the country where they have been exhibited perhaps more extensively and clearly than in any other in all Latin America is Argentina. This seems anomalous in view of the general reputation Argentina enjoys for progress and modernity. That reputation is largely built, however, upon the sophistication of Buenos Aires, the swank shops on its Avenida Florida, the billiard-table smoothness of much of its street paving, the loveliness of its parks. The contrasts between urban Buenos Aires and rural Argentina are almost incredibly great.

One hears the allegation from reliable persons in Argentina that within the lifetime of people now living the practice still prevailed on some Argentine *estancias* of allowing the owner to deflower the bride of the *peón* on her wedding night. Whether the rack, the chastity belt, and other relics of a thousand years ago still prevail is to be doubted; but, at any rate, the general atmosphere in many parts of Argentina has been, even until recently, unbelievably medieval.

That medievalism has even been carried over into Buenos Aires. The *oligarquía*—that tightly knit, class-conscious group of great *estanciero* families with a social consciousness and prestige based on landowning fully as much as was true in nineteenth-century England—found its counterpart and its representatives in Buenos Aires. For one thing, the *estancieros*, even with their great manor houses, the hosts of retainers, and their blooded horses, often found life in the country rather dull. They themselves, then, moved to Buenos Aires, if not to Paris or the French Riviera, for at least a part of the year. (The absentee landlordism that resulted simply intensified, of course, the social and economic problems of the country.) In Buenos Aires the *estancieros* found natural social allies: they made common cause with those whom Hamilton called the rich and the well-born.

Until the advent of the revolutionary Perón—and “revolutionary” in a far profounder and subtler sense than we usually assume—

these transplanted members of the oligarchy wielded a remarkable social and cultural influence in Buenos Aires.

A Latin-American artist from another country tells how, as a young man, he went to Buenos Aires to exhibit his work and become professionally established. He was advised that he would get nowhere unless he could obtain the patronage of a certain great lady from one of the Old Families. He called on the dowager in her many-roomed mansion facing the Plaza San Martín. Since he lacked an appointment, the white-silk-stockinged butler very doubtfully accepted his letter of introduction as a credential. He was ushered into the Presence. The *grande dame* was almost literally holding court: a servile and sycophantic adulation was expected and usually received. No, the *dama* would not sit for her portrait but she would have the young artist as a guest of honor at a luncheon. She did. He was then "made." Invitations—to teas, receptions, cocktail parties, dances—from Those Who Counted became so numerous that the artist had very little time left for art.

Much of the domestic bitterness in recent Argentina comes simply from the challenge that Perón has given the established social order, a tight and tenacious social structure that neither the decade and a half of Radical-party control nor the increasing industrialization had broken down. To counteract that internal schism Perón has recurrently sounded a trumpet blast against "foreign aggression." Tweaking Uncle Sam's beard has been the favorite specific expression of it. It is an old, old technique. Gain internal unity (if possible) by being externally chauvinistic.

What is the corresponding picture in Uruguay and in Montevideo? Uruguay, too, has had its sheep barons and its cattle kings. Uruguay has estates—a few—of more than a hundred thousand acres. Do these elements produce a similar situation? They do not.

The chief difference lies in the absence of social tradition in Uruguay. The big *estancias* were neither as numerous, as physically large, nor as socially or economically weighty as their counterparts in Argentina. (A legal prohibition on entailed estates and primogeniture makes for smaller average landholdings in Uruguay.) The sheep barons were less baronial, the cattle kings less regal.

Estancieros were as likely to be former gauchos who, by dint of shrewdness, perseverance, and individual ruthlessness, had lifted themselves by their bootstraps to positions of stockowning affluence as to be the scions and heirs of an old feudal lineage. The latter did not really exist in Uruguay. Montevideo—a small town, really, until the twentieth century—had not the glamour of Buenos Aires to attract those *estancieros* who felt an urbanward urge. There was very little city-bred aristocracy with which they might affiliate if they did move to Montevideo.

Hence, the picture in Uruguay was largely negative. Cattle and sheep were as important to the economy of Uruguay as to that of Argentina, perhaps more so, but the resultant social products of that environment differed greatly. An aristocratic tradition was enthroned in the one country, a democratic and equalitarian spirit in the other.

IV

The ecclesiastical situation also offers a clue to national differences. The Church was early and firmly established in Buenos Aires. The organization in the Banda Oriental was but an appendage, an offshoot, a poor country cousin of that in the metropolis across the river. The hierarchy in Buenos Aires quickly gained a prestige that the religious in Montevideo never enjoyed. The early constitutions of both independent countries established the Catholic Church as official, but there the legal similarity ended. The Church in Argentina occupied, until the conservative-military revolution of 1930, an unspectacular position but one of security and prestige. After 1930, with new forces calling the political turns, the Argentine Church gained greatly in influence.

When Perón came to power in the middle 1940's he found it expedient to cultivate the Church assiduously and almost blatantly. Despite the skepticism of some of its members the general reaction of the hierarchy was favorable and positive. Perón's cultivation was erratic: he, and particularly Evita, at times did things seemingly deliberately calculated to antagonize the Catholic Church. It still remains, however, a powerful social force in Argentina.

In Uruguay? The advent on the political stage of José Batlle y Ordóñez, than whom probably no single individual in modern times has ever left a greater relative impress on his own country, greatly changed the ecclesiastical pattern of the country. The Church there had never been really powerful. The drive and magnetism of Batlle, twice president of his country, succeeded in getting incorporated in a new constitution in 1917 a formal disestablishment of the Church. More than that, the anticlericalism of the times, while it never even began to approach the persecution carried out in Mexico, succeeded over a period of years in weaning away large numbers of Uruguayans from the Catholic Church, not to Protestantism but rather to a religious indifference or absence of church affiliation.

Hence, in contrast to the general and relatively high degree of Catholic loyalty in Argentina, Uruguay presents the picture of a country in which even devout Catholics estimate that less than 50 percent of the people are adherents of that Church.

V

The catalogue of differences also has a military entry. Uruguay has had its military dictators—the late nineteenth century had a dreary succession of several of them. During the twentieth century, however, the coloration of the government has been almost belligerently civilian (if the figure does not sound paradoxical). It is true that a dictator was in power from 1933 to 1938 and that his regime was harsh, though moderate compared to many other Latin-American dictatorships. It is true that he was followed in the presidency by a general—the only one in more than half a century—but it was that general who returned the country to a democratic government. Uruguay is fiercely and tenaciously democratic and that almost automatically presupposes devotion to civilian rule. Its military establishment is so small as to be almost negligible.

Argentina? That country had a long and impressive record of democratic civilian government. But in 1930 the combination of forces that overthrew the government in power was spearheaded by the military, and two generals followed in the presidency, the first as provisional and the second as elected president. A civilian (but

an archconservative) was in the presidency from 1940 to 1943 and in the latter year the military again took over. This time it was an imperialistic and roughshod military clique of which the then Colonel Perón was the spark plug.

This neonationalistic army group had circulated a secret manifesto among army officers three months before the coup in which it said, in part: "The first step to be taken . . . is to get the reins of government into our hands. A civilian will never understand the greatness of our ideal; we shall therefore have to eliminate them from the Government, and give them the only mission which belongs to them: Work and Obedience. . . . We shall have to arm, and continue to arm, fighting and overcoming difficulties, both internal and external. . . . Our guardianship will be . . . realized by the political genius and the heroism of the ARGENTINE ARMY."

There was more, much more, to this appallingly frank document but the quoted parts indicate the tone. It became the Argentine governmental road map for the next several years. In later years Perón felt it politically expedient to place a large reliance on labor groups, but the tank, the military plane, and the machine gun became in large measure the symbols of the new Argentina. Large numbers of Argentines did not like this—but, significantly, they did not effectively oppose it. The military of Argentina has thrived and fattened in the years of Perón.

VI

A further key to the picture is found in the diplomatic and international aspects. Economic growth late in the nineteenth century, thanks chiefly to that wonderful beef, made Argentina relatively a powerful state in the continent. In terms of both area and population it is the largest Spanish-speaking country in South America. Argentina's intellectual and cultural progress, its economic growth, its political achievements all persuaded it, quite understandably, that it was intended as a natural leader of the continent.

Then, in the 1930's, the energetic, even if perhaps partially misguided, efforts of Vargas in Brazil began lifting that country by its bootstraps, as it were, to a position of greater continental promi-

nence and prestige. Argentines were vaguely disturbed. Then the disturbance became less vague: it crystallized in the form of a gnawing fear that Argentine leadership was seriously threatened. And so the colonels wrote in their manifesto of March 1943: ". . . in the south there is no nation sufficiently strong to accept this guardianship [of the continent] without discussion. There are only two nations that could do so: Argentina and Brazil. OUR AIM IS TO MAKE POSSIBLE AND UNQUESTIONABLE OUR POSITION AS GUARDIANS."

During World War II many millions of dollars in United States lend-lease aid poured into Brazil. Not one cent or centavo went to Argentina. The leaders in the Casa Rosada smarted under such discrimination. Diplomatic relations between Argentina and the United States, often reflecting a considerable rivalry, became strained to an abnormal extent during the war. The Argentine government nominally maintained a pro-Allied nonbelligerency but actually leaned Naziward so largely that the United States government in its "Blue Book" of February 1946 engaged in calling spades by just that name to a greater degree than ever before toward sister states in the hemisphere. Argentina's diplomatic relations with most of the other states of the New World had been on a distorted basis from 1944 to 1945 and the country (both government and people) did not relish being what was referred to as "the Argentine problem."

Montevideo during those same years was a secondary unofficial capital of the hemisphere. The Uruguayan vice-president served as chairman of a hemispheric Advisory Committee on Political Defense and did yeoman work in combating wartime subversive activities.

VII

Intellectual differences also characterize the two countries. The academic and, in general, the intellectual atmosphere of Montevideo is friendly and democratic. With regard to that in Buenos Aires one could not do better than quote briefly from an unpublished report made two or three years ago by a highly reputable United States professor to a national professional organization of country-

wide acceptance and prestige. The report was based on an extensive field survey of almost all countries of South America. Regarding Argentine intellectual attitudes the author said in part:

"The atmosphere tended to be uncooperative and gave an impression of considerable jealousy and even fear. . . . [A] great obstacle to a frank appraisal of the Argentine situation lies in the general distrust of the United States on the part of many Argentinians, both in and out of the Universities, and in the view of many Argentinians that the United States and particularly its intellectual and university life is very inferior to their own. To a great many Argentinians North Americans are proud, arrogant, self-confident, [and] bad-mannered. . . . (It is perhaps of interest here to note that in virtually every country of South America, but particularly in those with most contacts with Argentina, university people describe the Argentinians in identical terms). . . . Not uncommon is indifference to outside ideas and a conviction that anything Argentinian is the best. . . ."

In terms of literary eminence José Enrique Rodó, the Uruguayan essayist, is perhaps as distinguished as anyone the larger population of Argentina has produced. In the matter of social and economic reform and influence José Batlle y Ordóñez is probably more outstanding than any single Argentine.

VIII

Here, then, are several elements which help to explain national differences that, superficially in terms of ethnic and economic likenesses, appear inexplicable. The net result of this complex of factors has been to foster a high degree of nationalism in Argentina. Even the language responds and yields up the word *argentinidad*—"argentinity" or "argentineness," if you will. A few other countries offer corresponding coinages: Franco has talked much about *hispanidad* and Batista about *cubanidad*. There seems to be no disposition to manufacture an analogous term for Uruguay. Not only would the word be a barbarism, even the thought of it would be an incongruity.

One of the reflections of Argentine nationalism which seems

almost pathological is the megalomania which is so characteristic of reactions in Buenos Aires. The cult of bigness has many devotees in Argentina's capital. (Even Californians and Texans would be somewhat overwhelmed by it.) This street is "the widest in the world." That building is "the tallest in South America." The Buenos Aires airport is "the world's largest." The Jockey Club race-track grounds are "the biggest in the hemisphere." That some of these claims are no longer literally true is beside the point. The significant thing is that an almost desperate sense of inferiority finds a typically compensative expression in boasting.

Uruguayans are much more content to let the foreigner tell them of the good points of their country. They beam when complimented on their beaches, their recreation facilities, their world's championship soccer teams, and also on their social consciousness, their working democracy, and their national and individual friendliness. It works out much more pleasantly for the compliments to pass in that direction rather than in the reverse.

If a man or a nation feels inferior it must, of course, be on a relative basis. He or it must be inferior to some other person or nation. In Argentina's case it is largely a matter of longing to play in the Big Leagues but not making the grade. Uruguay is content with a role in the minors—and the national blood pressure is correspondingly lower. In terms of a sense of mission, or lack of it, and an ability or inability to live the good life easily Uruguay is to Argentina much as the Austria of many years ago was to Prussia.

Nor is this distinction one of just the last few years. J. A. Hamerton in his book *The Real Argentine*, published in 1915, wrote that "The whole atmosphere of the town [Montevideo] in its social life was to me infinitely more pleasing than that of Buenos Ayres" (p. 392). And more than forty years ago the Englishman W. H. Koebel wrote that "Life in Uruguay is perhaps best described by the German word *gemütlich*, an untranslatable adjective that savours in its birthplace just a little of light beer, easy-chairs, cigar smoke, steaming coffee, and an atmosphere of camaraderie," and that "The absence of sycophancy . . . is especially marked in Uruguay" (W. H. Koebel, *Uruguay*, 1911, pp. 128, 130).

IX

Are these pervasive differences more significant than simply as interesting social and psychological phenomena? It seems reasonable to conclude that they are and that we would do well in the United States to try to read between the lines. Juan Domingo Perón made much political capital a few years ago out of a synthesized feud between himself and the former United States ambassador, Spruille Braden. The differences are more profound than mere personality conflicts, however. They approach the proportions of a deep-seated rivalry, at least on Argentina's part, between the two countries; Perón and Braden were but the personification of it.

In the event of World War III the strongly organized Communist movements in many Latin-American countries will immediately step up their anti-United States activity, attempt to influence the attitudes of the several governments, and try to stop or retard the flow of strategic materials to the United States.

It will, in that case, more than ever behoove the United States to look to its Latin-American fences. The time to repair them is not after they have been blown down when the storm is upon us but rather when they show signs of sagging even before the storm arrives. Argentina will almost inevitably be a center of still greater doubts, apathy, and even hostility than it has ever been before. Whether or not the Perón regime survives, and it seems increasingly doubtful that it will, the skillfully led Argentine Communists will take full and quick advantage of that country's long-standing rivalry with the United States.

And so, if the United States realizes that in the Latin-American family it already has a friend in court in the form of one of the most highly respected countries of the whole score of them, if it realizes that Uruguay is not simply a minor part of a uniformly reacting Platine region, that it is not at all a satellite of Argentina, this country will—or should—do more than ever to see that it keeps the good will of the sturdy little state on the east bank of the Uruguay River.

HISTORY REPEATS ITSELF IN KOREA

by Jack James

IT WAS drizzling that morning of June 25. Seoul looked dour and gray, and the streets were almost deserted as I drove toward my office about eight o'clock. On the way, I stopped at the pressroom of the U.S. Embassy to pick up a raincoat I had left there. I never got to the office. As I reached the door of the Embassy, I almost collided with an American officer who came running out as I ran in. His first remark was, "What do you hear from the border?"

I had heard nothing, but—you must be an actor sometimes as well as a reporter—I answered him, "Well, not much. What do you hear?"

"I hear it's started, everywhere but in the Eighth Division area."

And that is how, on an almost deserted street in Seoul, with the few passers-by still going about their peaceful pursuits, I got the early information which gave me a beat on the start of the Korean war. I hope I never have another like it.

Those of us who were on assignment in Seoul were more or less expecting it, though none of us expected it exactly when it came. The preceding five years had made eventual war almost inevitable. Some knowledge of those five years is necessary to show why. It is also necessary to explain how, in my opinion, history in Korea is now repeating itself.

Briefly, then, here is the history of Korea between the time, in the late summer of 1945, when Russian and American troops entered to take surrender of the Japanese garrison, and June 1950, when the northern Communists attacked the republic of the South.

At the time of entrance all that the troops went in for was, as said, to take surrender of the Japanese garrison. Once the Japanese were deposed, the Allied forces (Russians were Allies then) were

to turn the government over to the Koreans and leave. This had been agreed upon at Cairo in 1943 and again at Potsdam.

As a matter of convenience, Russia had been given responsibility for territory north of the thirty-eighth parallel, the United State for that to the south.

Theoretically, there should have been no difficulty in handing the government over to the Koreans once the Japanese were disposed of. Practically, the difficulties were immense. The Japanese had crushed all opposition and even all community leadership in Korea for forty years. There was a refugee government, which had been in China for years; Syngman Rhee was in the United States and was undoubtedly the best known of the refugee patriots. But when the refugees returned—and this is something that always happens—splinter parties formed from the old groups. They divided and redivided, somewhat after the manner of the amoeba, until there were nearly forty of them.

In the North the Russians found a similar situation—and exploited it. In Moscow discussions at about this time, the foreign ministers of the United States and Russia had agreed that the two countries would establish, temporarily, a joint trusteeship over Korea and would set up a provisional Korean government. Leaning on this agreement, the Russians established what they called the Provisional People's Committee in North Korea and then announced, "Here's your provisional government!" The United States, of course, disagreed. Discussions followed—three years of discussions. At the end of three years the United States and Russia were no nearer agreement than they had been at the beginning.

In the course of the third year the whole mess was turned over for settlement to the United Nations. The General Assembly appointed a UN Temporary Commission to arrange and carry out elections in Korea. The aim was to have chosen representatives, who would draft a constitution and establish a permanent government.

The elections were duly held—but only in South Korea. The Russians refused to let the Commission, or any subsequent UN commission, enter their occupation zone. In May 1948 the South

Koreans voted in the first free election they had ever had. In August the Korean Republic was established. In September the Russians established their puppet state in the North. With the establishment of the two separate governments, the schism was complete. The industrial North was cut off from the agricultural South. Farmers in the South were unable to take their produce to market towns north of the border which had served their communities for centuries; towns just to the north were similarly cut off from the trade areas that once gave them life. So it stood for two years while the rival governments made threatening noises at each other across their unnatural dividing line.

In those two years, what of the Republic of South Korea? Few governments have been established under more trying circumstances or with less hope of continuity. For forty years the Japanese had kept the Koreans down to a uniformly low level of occupation and experience. If you were a Korean under the Japanese, you could be a factory worker—almost never a foreman. You might by tremendous diligence become a fireman on the railroads; you could never be an engineer. Any native leadership which raised one Korean above his fellows was summarily suppressed. When the Japanese left, there was, therefore, no corps of native civil servants who knew their business, as, for example, there was in India when the British drew out. The lack showed up at all levels of government and outside of government.

To help the South Koreans get under way, the United States sent a Military Advisory Group to assist in training a Korean army, sent advisers to work with Korean railway administrators, with Korean bankers, with the Korean telegraph and telephone services; we even supplied a training organization to show the Koreans how to run their international airport at Kimpo. But let no reader get the idea that the United States was running the Korean government—it was not. Korean government servants were inexperienced; the people were still fumbling, unsure of themselves in the exercise of democracy—remember, they had never before had opportunity to determine their own course—but while there was no tradition of freedom in Korea, there was a tradition of resistance to oppression.

If there were tendencies toward autocracy in the newly formed government—and there were many who thought there were—there was still the freedom to get up in the legislature and say so with impunity, the freedom to publish editorials in the newspapers. There existed a legislative, an editorial, an electoral opposition, and it was a native opposition, not one manufactured by foreigners.

In their relationship with other countries too, the Koreans stood on their own feet. If they disagreed with bigger powers, they did so sturdily and vocally. The Communists might call Korea a “puppet” of the United States, but the ROK was not going to be a puppet.

And Koreans in general, whether in opposition to the government or in support of it, attacked their manifold problems with gusto if not always with enlightenment. There were false starts, there were embarrassing crises over trifles; but the Koreans made progress. The Republic worked.

In the North there was no such freedom either for the government or for the people. Perhaps the best commentary on the amount of popular support given to the Communist North Korean government is this: Between 1945 and 1950 more than two million people fled the country. They crossed the parallel at considerable personal risk, leaving all possessions behind them, to accept a refugee existence in the South.

Elections, to be sure, were held in North Korea. They were held in 1950 for a single slate of approved candidates. The North Koreans could—as a matter of fact, they had to—vote for or against these candidates; another freedom too was presented them—they could either mark their ballots in front of the poll watchers or they could go behind a screen which was provided. Those who went behind the screen had their names taken by the government poll watchers. I am told that few did.

With their only popular support derived through coercion, with a government set up in direct opposition to a United Nations directive, one whose policies were dictated by the Soviet, the North Koreans were unable to gain recognition from any group of nations except the Communist satellites. They had little stature even there.

But they did have a regular army, more than twice the size of the ROK's, an army equipped with planes, tanks, and artillery, which the South did not have, and strengthened by units released from duty with the Chinese Communist army. And in June of 1950 they decided to use it.

Not much need be said about the course of the Korean war; the newspapers and the returning soldiers have kept us fairly well informed. There is, though, one thing not always realized: We once had the Communists whipped. In late April and early May of 1951 the Communists launched two offensives about three weeks apart. They were probably the heaviest offensives of the war. Those offensives were stopped cold by the United Nations forces and at immense cost to the Communists. Then the Communists sued for peace. Mr. Malik, Russia's representative in the United Nations, broadcast this suggestion: "The Soviet peoples believe that . . . discussions should be started between the belligerents for a cease fire and an armistice providing for a mutual withdrawal of forces from the thirty-eighth parallel." We responded officially, suggesting meetings to arrange an armistice, and thus the Communists gained one point immensely important. They could announce that we—*we*—had asked for peace.

They have been making that point ever since. And they have convinced many people abroad and especially in Asia that what they say is true. And the talks still go on. And the country is still divided. There is still a vicious government by terror in the North. There is still a republic in the South. Its freedoms have been diminished somewhat—this war has been terribly hard on all of Korea—but there is still an opposition speaking with relative freedom. What we can look forward to is no more than a prospect of continued division. Of continued preparedness. Of a weak economy which might be a sound one. Of prolonged negotiations with an adversary as long-winded as insincere. We have returned to the hiatus of 1948.

By our inconclusive stand in Korea, the United States, as the principal power other than Korea involved, has lost friends. Many

sincere people in Asia and Europe believe us guilty of bacterial warfare, believe us guilty of starting the Korean war, are convinced that it is we who are insincere in our negotiations for peace. Many believe that we harbor imperialist designs on underdeveloped countries or, at the least, that we give aid and comfort to imperialist powers. Worse still, many who do not accept the Communist propaganda wonder now whether they can trust us to be their friends. When the POW agreement, the final article in the armistice agreement, was accepted at Panmunjom, even the non-Communist Chinese newspapers—of which there are sixteen published in Hong Kong—gave evidence of confusion and distress. “Our friends have let us down,” one of them said, one of the best. The others said much the same thing. By committing ourselves to the Korean war, and then by agreeing to talk peace without having won, by signing that armistice and letting the talks go on and on, we have lost the trust of people willing to be on the side of freedom but doubtful now of our intentions.

But thus far we are speaking of the past. What of the future? The honest answer there for any one of us is, “I don’t know.” What we do know is this: Whatever has happened in the past, we are faced today in Korea with a given situation; our decisions must be made to meet that situation. And by the decisions we make now—by the stand we take—the nations of the world will come to trust us—or to withdraw their trust.

In my years abroad, living on the edge of the democratic world in countries which were falling to communism or were under its threat, I formulated some ideas about what the United States might do. Such as they are, here are those ideas. Put into action, they would not be panaceas—they might be strong helps.

First, the United States, through its government, should make a public restatement of principles, a restatement in simple language of those principles on which our country is founded. Let us say again to the people of the world—those who seek independence and those who, having it, do not know quite what to do with it—that we are on their side. Let us say that we believe every nation should be free to select the form of government of its choice,

should be provided with peaceful ways to change that government with changing times. Let us say that we shall encourage and, so far as we can find means, support the victims of imperialism or totalitarianism, anywhere in the world, in their struggles to gain independence; and that we, a favored nation, are ready to help those less favored in guarding their independence once it is achieved.

To those less favored nations let us give of our knowledge to improve agriculture, to improve industry, and, once the material needs are partly satisfied, to expand education, so that people may be more competent in the exercise of their freedoms.

And as we restate our principles and make our offers, let us say one other thing louder than all the rest. Let us say that we come in peace—let us recapture that word *peace* from the Communists—that we come as friends, not as intruders, and that no political strings are tied to the aid we offer.

After stating these unchanging principles, let us follow through with courage and conviction. Let us make it known that we will negotiate, but that we will not retreat from this position of justice; that we will listen to reason, but that we will not compromise our principles for momentary gain.

Let us avoid the mistakes of history.

Let us make our policies, our judgments, not with regard to past bitternesses, or old wrongs, or present advantage and convenience, but with regard to present and future justice.

But, it may be said, this is exactly what we have been doing. If so, the message has not been getting through, not far enough through. Too often, our deeds have been interpreted as anti-Communist only, not as constructive in the cause of freedom. Indochina is a case in point. We have given military aid to the French in order to help them repel the Communists. But in at least some of the countries which are neighbors to Indochina, our aid is looked upon as a prop to colonialism. An Asian editor, himself anti-Communist, writing in a south Asian newspaper, comments on the visit of Vice-President Nixon, “. . . the American Vice-President, Mr. Nixon, stated further that he did not like domination over one nation by another. Indo-China was a free nation before, but France rules this free

nation. So Mr. Nixon should help the nation fighting for independence. But he is sending arms and ammunition to France.

"Then his statement is at variance with his works."

Another Asian editor, also anti-Communist, said: "In the old days, the British were the worst for empire expansion. Now the Americans have taken their place."

We know, as probably these Asian editors do not, the difficult international situation we face, the perplexities that beset us; but the greater the perplexities, the more the need to keep our purposes spread clear before the eyes of the world and to implement those purposes in ways the world can clearly see.

But they cannot be implemented, they cannot be made clear to others unless first of all they are clear in our own hearts and minds. And when actually they are in our hearts and minds—in the hearts and minds of millions of us—then they will be touchstones by which we try our own actions and judge and at last influence the actions of our leaders.

Robert Carver North, a scholar on the staff of the Hoover Institute and now on leave in the Far East, expresses our necessity better than I can.*

". . . the moment has come for us all to reread the Declaration of Independence, nail the Bill of Rights over our doors, and demonstrate to the world that we are a bold, imaginative, and constructively revolutionary people. You do not believe it? Then consider a now-famous photograph of East German workers stoning a tank.

"During mid-1953 incipient revolt—a workingmen's revolt—electrified the air in East Berlin and several of the satellites. The Russians and their accomplices put down these riots, as they may well put down the next and the next. But the lines are drawn. Stones are no weapons against tanks, but courage and audacious love of freedom are—as we in the United States, with our revolutionary tradition, should never have allowed ourselves to forget.

"We can lend sympathy and aid and inspiration to the stone

* Robert Carver North, *Moscow and Chinese Communists* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1953), p. 285.

throwers of tomorrow (East or West, wherever they may rise up against the totalitarian master)—but only if we love freedom as deeply and courageously as they. We cannot help them if we deny our own freedoms in a frenzy of masochism and introspective fear.

“Under such circumstances as these the free peoples of East and West—and eventually even the lost ones behind totalitarian curtains—may learn to honor and live freely with one another. But for this purpose propaganda, whether subtle or bombastic, will not do. For this purpose men and women who are consciously and proudly free must reach deeper into the hearts of their fellows than do the Communists—and with truer, gentler touch. They must come to search out together and reverence the noblest and boldest of man’s instincts: his deep-buried pride and integrity and love of freedom and respect for truth—the very impulses which the Communists scorn and seek to stifle.”

*The spirit of liberty is the spirit which is not too sure
that it is right.*

—LEARNED HAND

THE NECESSITY OF LIBERALISM

by Joseph B. Harrison

THOUGH from time to time in the rough and tumble of usage certain old terms become so contaminated that they have to be thrown away, others are of such permanent worth that they need only be periodically scrubbed. One such word, surely, is "appeasement," which in its proper sense means to calm, soothe, or allay excitement, anger, or hatred, and connotes neither thirty dirty pieces of silver nor umbrellas. Another is "liberalism," which in essence is the spirit and theory of that which is appropriate and fitting for a broad and enlightened mind, or that which is free from narrowness and bigotry in ideas and doctrines, and which has only by much subversion come to mean that which is tired, or soft, or the product of minds incapable of thinking sharply about politics or poetry or original sin.

Until fairly recently few persons felt themselves seriously damaged by being called liberals; but nowadays many reject the label because they do not want to be suspected of being populist, or Marxian, or global-thinking, or New-Dealish, or furtively fonder of the poetry of Carl Sandburg than that of Ezra Pound.

I was not myself born a liberal. My father was a gold-standard Republican, and my own public passions were first stirred at an early age by a torchlight procession for William McKinley. I cannot trace step by step the stages of my corruption. Perhaps the first came in 1912 when, if I had been in the United States, I would have voted for Teddy Roosevelt on the Bull Moose ticket, an action which at that time and against my personal background would have been headstrong. I did vote for Woodrow Wilson in 1916. Thereafter I took to reading certain journals of opinion, and the jig was up. I still look into such journals, off and on. Now I find them sometimes dull, but I am still a liberal.

In fact, I am unable to understand how any man who wishes to be "free from narrowness and bigotry in ideas and doctrines" can escape the classification. The liberal is a person whose recognition of the facts of life includes a recognition of the fundamental fact that nothing is certain in this most mystifying of all possible worlds. Granted for the sake of argument that this be so, then the credence of any absolute is for the liberal the Unpardonable Sin. A liberal must, of course, like anyone else, grant the working validity of any number of relative-absolutes—such, for instance, as that the world is round or that atoms exist. But these can be working validities only. The sphere is something that could not exist for the dwellers in flatland, that presumably did not exist for those painters who called themselves cubists, that perhaps does not exist except for fun or as an acknowledged fiat in the mind of God.

I am of course prepared for the objection that what I am talking about is not liberalism at all—relativism being something quite different from liberalism, that depository of a thousand sentimental beliefs. The liberal, we hear, is an incorrigible believer. He believes in human nature, in progress, in the persuasiveness of reason, in the efficacy of good will, in general education, in the next general election. The liberal believes, if he is a cosmic optimist, that he is a vicar of the Almighty, of an Almighty who is waiting confidently for His agent to bring His laws at last into triumphant operation; the liberal believes, even if he is a cosmic pessimist, that (to adopt Mencken's phrase) "an act of parliament can cure the blundering and practical joking of God." And he is so bemused by all these beliefs that he sends five dollars a year to the American Civil Liberties Union, or joins the A.D.A., or refers to *Grapes of Wrath* as a significant book and thus betrays the fact that he is totally unable to appreciate art because he is looking for its social relevances rather than its significant form. He is eminently a person whom the hard-headed refrain from setting straight only because the hard-headed are, as one of them was recently overheard putting it, "too weary and too kind."

All this, however, is based upon the thesis that the liberal is by definition naïve, that he is in a continual state of hurt surprise over

the nonfulfillment of his quaint hopes and fond expectations. The thesis is gratuitous; for though the liberal, being human, is as capable as anyone of sentimentalizing his credo, he is in his uncorrupted state necessarily an ironist. He is an ironist because he believes that, since no adjustment in human affairs is good enough to last, such affairs must continually be readjusted; because he believes that truth, which always flits around a corner just as one reaches out to shake the proverbial salt on its tail, can never be caught up with and must therefore be eternally chased; because he believes that nothing is more precious than the freedom which he will never get except imperfectly and in the privacy of his spirit but which he will not attain even there if he submits to the encroachments upon the independence of his actions or his relationships or his expression that threaten him at every moment. He believes also that his own freedom diminishes where the other man's begins, that freedom can exist only within the law; but such belief sharpens his vigilance as to the law, which must always be modified or repealed when it becomes presumptuous. He believes, with Emerson, that "the law is only a memorandum."

All of these beliefs deprive him of any illusion that he can retreat, weary and kind, into any tower of form or dogma. His strategy calls for continual mobile action across the entire front. Totalitarianism of any sort—that the state is all, that America is all, that the church is all, that a philosophy is all, that art is all—is for him evil because of its false assumption that anything but all is all. A theory of art, for example, which seeks integrity for art by absolving it from "references" to other categories of action or being violates a fundamental principle of art, the principle of wholeness. Politics, economics, art, and philosophy are essential elements in culture, and each should be as self-coherent as possible; but none will be very good in its kind if it isolates itself from the others. It is the liberal's belief in all this that makes him a liberal.

The antiliberalism which has laterally infected both public affairs and cultural attitudes is the consequence of a misinterpretation of the current human predicament which has afflicted antiliberals and liberals alike. Antiliberals have capitalized on the frag-

mentations effected by two world wars, and liberals have capitulated by compromising alternately with the radical left and the radical right. But the spirit of radicalism, whether of the left or the right, is poisonous to the spirit of liberalism: radicalism always knows too much and too little, too much about its specific programs and too little about everything else. Because radicalism is dogmatic while liberalism is inquisitive and experimental, the former always has the advantage in moments of crisis that demand immediate action. During a great war radicalism is enough to build the armies and fleets, to organize the hates; while liberalism, necessarily enlisted in the common effort, seems otherwise superfluous. And when the war is over, the liberal emerges without fanfare: "What conquests brings he home? What tributaries follow him to Rome to grace in captive bonds his chariot wheels?" If, during the war, the liberal has presumed to raise his characteristic questions, his case is even the worse at the end of it. And should he then recall with Walt Whitman that "my enemy is dead, a man as divine as myself is dead," his murmur will be lost in what seems the adequate clamor for revenges and reparations.

Thereafter, the liberal enters the cold war with his banners trailing. The settlement of a world well conquered should surely follow the rules of its conquering. If an A-bomb turned the final trick, the threat of more A-bombs ought to be enough. If our friends turn into our enemies, our enemies into our friends, a discriminating distribution of dollars should handle that. When the liberal, who by now has sought refuge under the bed, is heard muttering who-knows-what, he is dragged out and easily identified as subversive.

Indeed, by such behavior he will almost have earned the epithet, for he will have surrendered his people's best weapon to the enemy, the weapon of liberal ideals. The enemy in this instance will be the fifth columnists, the enemies in the midst who have made themselves indistinguishable from the old hot-war enemies by adopting the latter's techniques and values. Whoever attacks intolerance with intolerance or defends liberty by destroying it is a fifth columnist in a free society. Perhaps hate, though dubious in any human situation, is the inescapable accompaniment of hot war; neither hate

nor intolerance is an effective weapon in a cold one. The liberal, who alone in a democracy is in possession of the effectives for a cold war, has a duty to bring them into action which is as great as that of any commander in a battle. Whenever he attacks exploitation, segregation, isolationism, cultural Brahminism—especially at home—he fires a shot heard round the world. Whenever he is silent or otherwise inactive he is more guilty than those whose noisiness betrays no faith.

I have a friend who describes himself, privately, as a liberal. But liberalism, he says, is an attitude, not a program. Liberals, he says, are always duffers in action. They can never get themselves together for united effort; they are never certain they have the answers; they are easy marks for any gangster looking for a target. Right now, anyone who makes a noise like a liberal is simply foolish. Martyrdom is stupid—and exhibitionistic. This is not the time. In due course the tide will turn—it always does. In the meantime *he* is going about his business. Wise men will keep their powder dry and await the moment.

No such parentless moment will ever be born.

But new moments are constantly being born, of the stoutest available parentage. And since reaction, always available, is at this moment virulent, liberals will have to be aggressive if they are to maintain their species.

Because I am a faculty member, I find my instances chiefly on the campus, where if anywhere liberalism should survive, for an innate condition of the quest for knowledge is freedom of the mind. There is still hope for freedom of the mind on the campus, but the taxpayer who foots the bills should know that it is threatened. This taxpayer, who is regularly informed that he is paying for subversion, should tune his other ear from time to time. He is in the market for education, and though he properly does not wish to be paying for subversion neither does he wish to maintain educational institutions in which education is itself subverted. Just as he would not knowingly buy stock in a factory that was prohibited from turning out goods, he should not carelessly buy stock in a university that is prohibited from turning out ideas.

But it is difficult to persuade the taxpayer that the chief concern of a university is the turning out of ideas or that his institutions of higher learning are in danger of losing their primary function. Academic research goes on and continues to render important services. Chemists tailor the atom, and wool and metal move over to make room for synthetics; a bridge falls down, engineers experiment with models in a university laboratory, and a new bridge is built which does not fall; schools of medicine are closer on the heels of polio and cancer month by month. The suspicion thickens that cries for academic freedom are only the wailings of those who are being routed out of their coigns of subversion. "Academic freedom" is merely the Fifth Amendment on the campus. Let the teacher-scholar attend to his concrete and important business, of which there is plenty, and freedom will take care of itself or be amply protected by those who have been elected by society to make a professional job of it.

The joker is that synthetics and bridges and vaccines are not the primary business of education. They may well derive, and frequently have derived from the search for pure knowledge, which is one of education's major processes; and these derivations from pure knowledge are often best fostered in the academic atmosphere. But to reverse the emphasis from the source to the product is to slay the famous goose. That the great leaps in technology have been the by-products of discoveries in pure science is too well recognized to require argument; but it is evident on every hand that the necessity of extending this magic across the entire educational front is not so recognized.

It is somehow conceived, in certain quarters, that we can have general education by eschewing controversy, by begging rather than by asking questions. This conception is, of course, no modern error, as the histories of Socrates and Jesus and Galileo show. Its antiquity, however, does not make it the less destructive. In a democratic society, especially one engaged in a death struggle with totalitarianism, its avoidance is imperative; for in a democracy, which by definition determines its own directives, free questioning must be sacred. The teacher or scholar who is persuaded to dogmatize rather

than examine the validities of any proposition, or to be respectful to charlatans, or to be silent about well-considered judgments because they challenge popular prejudices ceases to be an instrument of democracy, and no democratic society in possession of its wits would continue to pay him his salary. The only education that a democratic society can afford to buy is one that can and will teach it what it does not already know. If it does not know what anthropology can tell about the equivalence of races, the educator must tell it that; if it does not know what history can tell it about the retributions of chauvinism, he must tell it that; if it does not know what law and logic can tell about the difference between accusation and guilt, then that too. These are sometimes bitter lessons, but no society can buy education on easier terms; and they are the very price of democratic survival.

America, born to this conviction, is loudly admonished to forget it today. Scores of organizations make it their chief business to scan for orthodoxy every public utterance; the techniques of accusation have never been more blatant; teachers of every sort, whether in classroom or pulpit or press, are continually reminded of the profits of conformity. "Welfare" becomes a plot; "freedom" becomes a cloak for disloyalty; even "democracy," lest it be taken to mean what it does mean, must be retouched into "representative government." And any educator caught looking into a dictionary for his definitions of these terms may find his indiscretion turning up as contributory evidence against him if he is later tried in a court which is not a court for a crime which is not a crime.

Ever since Socrates established the idea of a university by "following after false gods, misleading the youth, and making the worse appear the better cause," educators have been under the obligation to live dangerously. Too often, like other mortal men, they fail of their duty. The duty remains and is at this moment exigent.

It is not that educators are often deliberately coerced into saying what they do not believe, or into not saying what they do believe. They have the advantage over Galileo in that respect. It is rather that they work in an atmosphere in which whatever they say, if it have in it any element of adventure, is examined suspiciously, and

no less for content than for motivations presumed to be bad until they are proved to be good.

Furthermore, what happens on the campus happens also in the street. Though the man in the street is often told that education is like measles, a disease of the young that must be endured but will be outgrown when youth, maturing into manhood, is toughened by the impact of reality, the fact is that the educational symptom is a valid diagnostic of the state of a society's health. What a society wants from its education is what it wants from its future, and when it wants only what it already has it is on its way to lose precisely that.

At the present moment the Western world is passionately concerned with preserving its democracy. The most certain way of losing that democracy is to use it as a fixed form rather than a dynamic process. Democracy is less like something that can be measured out by the bushel than like something that must be transmitted over a wire. It is only as powerful as it is dangerous. At the other end of the line it may be transmuted into something quite unintended. "Equality of opportunity," for example, may at the other end of a local line blaze into "nonsegregation"; at the end of a transoceanic line into "Asia for the Asians." Democracy like electricity is useless until it is transmitted. It is dead at the point of origin unless it is alive at the point of reception. Democracy in the United States can remain a reality in the United States only by welcoming its own indefinite extension, not only by example but by the free play of dynamic forces. If we seek, by control of the transmission lines, to meter out democracy in prescribed quantities for prescribed uses, we shall find ourselves presently without takers, stewing in our own juice.

Without being an expert in Asian politics, one may adduce the current Asian situation as example. Ever since the West got off to a big start by its technological revolution Asians have been, by Western standards, a "backward people." While contributing enormously to the wealth of the Western world Asians have not on the whole shared it. Having in due time become aware of this fact they are now seeking restitution. The Western world, long complacent in the illusion that democracy can stay at home, is naturally

alarmed at the size of the bill. We would like to pay off in small installments—a little democracy, a little economic aid, but neither in sufficient quantity to upset the existing balance of power. The acceptance of this principle by the Asians would, we think, be more comfortable for us and beneficial to them. Rome was not built in a day, nor can democracy be built in a day in Asia's green and pleasant land. But in the meantime a rival emerges and proposes, however speciously, to correct the imbalance at a stroke. We warn our Asian friends but they do not listen too attentively. The West disregarded them for so long, and after that fed them promises for so long, that now our warnings seem to many Asians to have a hollow sound. While deprecating colonialism we advertise a bomb, though our bomb is no more suitable to the political situation than to the terrain. He whom Mark Twain called The Person Sitting in the Darkness wants none of it, and we too are dubious at heart. Alas, again, too little and too late.

The bomb that fell on Hiroshima was far too little and too late. But, worse than that, it was the wrong weapon. As Hermann Hagedorn wrote in 1946, in a neglected poem:

The bomb that fell on Hiroshima fell on America too.
It fell on people.
Not on five hundred thousand only, but one hundred
and thirty-five million.
It did not set them afloat over New York, Kansas City
or Los Angeles.
But it set them afloat on currents of chance which no man
may navigate or know the direction of.

Those currents of chance are perhaps less chancy than they seem. Tolstoy may have been right. The bomb that fell on Hiroshima, he would surely have said, fell of its own weight rather than because it was dropped. Just as it could not have avoided being made, it could not have avoided falling. And we should be in a serious situation indeed if this were the only dynamic we could offer to our time. But though the bomb is one of the concentrations of the forces of history, it is only one.

Let us look for a moment at an illustration of Tolstoy's argu-

ment. The Battle of Borodino, Tolstoy assures us, was not won because Napoleon made certain decisions and gave certain commands, nor was it lost—as some historians have asserted—because Napoleon had a cold in the head. It is impossible, it is meaningless to say that it was either won or lost, thus taking it as an isolated event. A battle is part of a campaign and a campaign is a part of history. Borodino was won by the French in that the Russians withdrew and the French marched into Moscow; it was won by the Russians in that the French went into Moscow a hungry and exhausted lot and immediately became a mob of pillagers rather than an army. The battle was won or lost not because Napoleon or Kutuzov made decisions or gave orders, but because the French were what they were and the Russians what they were, because the entire complex of antecedent events flowed into this event and a vast complex of subsequent events flowed out of it. The present does not exist except as an instant between the past and the future from both of which the so-called present must take its meaning.

Applying this Tolstoyan logic to an incident of the late world war, we could deduce that Singapore was not lost to the Japanese because the British commandant failed to give the right orders or was too busy at a party at the Raffles Hotel to be tending to business at the climactic moment. Singapore fell because the command and tradition of the British colonial armies were what they were, and they were what they were because of nineteenth-century British imperialism; and nineteenth-century British imperialism was in turn the product of modern international capitalism, which thrived on the exploitation of dark-skinned “backward” peoples; and that system was made possible by the developments of science in the seventeenth century with its industrial application in the eighteenth century. It would be a bit nonsensical to say that Singapore fell because Galileo discovered the law of falling bodies, but no more nonsensical than to say that it fell because Sir So-and-So failed to ingratiate the British with the Siamese or failed to get the big guns turned around in time.

And besides, it might well turn out—it may still turn out—in the sequel that the fall of Singapore among similar incidents will

finally lead to a readjustment of relationships between light- and dark-skinned peoples everywhere, to a recognition that the high standard of living of the West will go down unless the standard of living of the East comes up, or more importantly to a recognition that freedom and justice and civilization are indivisible. The good qualifies the bad, the bad the good, and a lynching in Georgia or an act of justice to a coolie are part of the moral fabric that will clothe or expose you and me.

Though the bomb that fell on Hiroshima fell of its own weight, it is fortunately not the only ponderable ammunition in our hands. The liberal tradition which is the nucleus of democracy is capable of giving off some of its energies as well. In the moment of atomic fission a tiny yield of mass, multiplied in terms of the Einstein formula, releases enormous energies. The nucleus of democracy has the advantage of not needing to be split in uninhabited islands of the Pacific. It is not poisonous to organic life.

Dr. Vannevar Bush is on record as having recently said with reference to the H-bomb test of November 1952 that it "marked our entry into a very disagreeable type of world." He was doubtless thinking not only of the bomb's physical potential but also of the dreadful attrition of the human spirit which its mere possession threatens. Yet the very fact that this is dreadful to us all may save us. No man on earth, not even any man in the Kremlin, can desire atomic warfare; yet this giant strides upon us, and the only David we have to pit against Goliath is the liberal imagination.

David did win. Liberalism can win too—but not with its tail between its legs. From all quarters liberalism is today under fire. Liberalism is a "creeping" something, and we have been well told what "creeping" leads to. Liberalism, questioning tradition, throws overboard the best that has been thought and said in the world; questioning untrammelled enterprise, it undermines enterprise itself; questioning nationalism, it scuttles the ship of state; questioning authority, it ends by rejecting God. But tradition and nationalism and enterprise and authority must always be questioned, as the cat must always be privileged to look at the king; nor is it the question but rather its absence that destroys.

The attack on liberalism, so characteristic of our moment, is of course no isolated phenomenon. It is but one expression of man's current uneasiness about the beneficence of his universe, the progressiveness of his society, the dignity of his self. Between split atoms on the one hand and split personalities on the other there is scant room for cheerfulness. Small wonder that many men come to question whether an act of parliament, or any other gesture of the human will, can "cure the blundering and practical joking of God." The Gadarene swine, in their mad rush down to the sea, did not stop anywhere to vote for freedom.

Well, as Thoreau once said, one is permitted to slander one's own generation. There have doubtless been other periods in which men have been discouraged about their prospects; every age must stir in a leaven of doubt to ferment its hopes. Just as possible personal death at the next moment is among the prospects of everyman, so is the possible demise of his culture or extermination of his race in the near future. Though he must permanently accept these hazards, he must temporarily forget them. Man has always done so in order to act. One of his best ways of doing so is to slander his own generation in the name of a better. His indictments may often be ignorant, his programs specious, his animosities frivolous, his enthusiasms momentary. But his spirit does not perish.

Man's struggle against "the Dark Powers, always on the verge of triumph," has been long and hazardous, but the odds against him, when the fight began, could scarcely have been smaller than they are today. They were not great enough to quell the first liberal who, instead of waiting on unaided nature, planted the first seed. Not until, blighted by sophistication, we plant no more seeds will liberalism be dead. I hope that the atomic bomb will come in the spring and find me on my knees sowing my radishes.

