

## THE NEW FREEDOM

NO man is really a slave, someone has said, until he loves his chains, and calls them his "freedom." With all the talk, today, of the importance of freedom, it seems a good idea to examine into our own, to see to what extent we are really "free."

Freedom, however, is about the most difficult thing in the world to define. The freedom you really have is different from the freedom you think you have and if you have some kind of freedom without knowing it, can it be called "freedom" at all? But there is one freedom with which we are thoroughly familiar. Our social and economic system, for example, is said to allow, encourage, and to be based upon individual "initiative." Under this system, a man can strike out for himself. He is entitled to work for himself, to think for himself, to choose his own religion, his own politics, and to pursue whatever brand of learning or culture he wants. All regulation by law is supposed to maintain equal and optimum conditions for individual initiative. The law is impersonal, and indifferent to status or any private interest. "The law," as Anatole France has said, "in its majestic equality, forbids the rich as well as the poor to sleep under bridges, to beg in the streets, and to steal bread."

But this "system" which we prize as the means to our "freedom"—is it exactly what we say it is or think it is? Will anyone deny that, in terms of the claims made for the system, and the popular arguments about it, the private initiative it is supposed to give scope to is mostly initiative in acquisitiveness? Actually, a number of things have happened to the system in recent years which have made it extremely inefficient, from an individual point of view, even in the processes of private acquisition. The combined effects of technology and labor legislation and high taxes have made private enterprise over into a project involving enormous outlays of capital, if a businessman is to

be in a position to compete with existing producers of manufactured articles. There are exceptions, of course. The man who combines inventiveness with business ability may be able to become a successful manufacturer on a small scale, but the chances of his being able to *maintain* a business which is both small and successful have become increasingly slight. It is often observed that the small businesses which survive are usually "service" businesses, in which personal skill and responsibility are important factors, or "family" businesses, where it is possible to cut corners and avoid the problems raised by high union wage scales.

The extraordinary cost of distribution is something which impressed Ralph Borsodi, years ago, causing him to make it a subject of basic analysis in his *Flight from the City*, and elsewhere.

The necessity of a volume market for almost any type of product except luxuries and works of art imposes the further necessity upon the manufacturer of making only those articles which will *sell* in a volume market. Here, doubtless, is the explanation of why the market is glutted with the commonplace, the mediocre, and the "cheap" in countless lines of manufacture. The exceptions lie in the direction where American taste and judgment reach notably high standards—in the automotive field, and the area of household appliances, in which engineering capacities are especially required. But this, obviously, is the region of big business—*very* big business.

The fact is that initiative—initiative in private enterprise is now under the necessity of conforming to rigid limitations which have been created by the way in which our free enterprise system has evolved. Fewer and fewer individuals can employ their "initiative" in business, as the years go by. They may of course exercise endless

initiative and ingenuity *within* those limitations, as administrators of large organizations, as public relations experts, and in scores of other ways, but for their initiative to have any scope at all, they must accept all the implications and commitments of the system as it presently exists and operates. This is conceding a lot more than the idea of the importance of personal initiative. It means adopting the entire set of stereotyped values which the system has established in our society.

The methods of mass manufacture have made those values penetrate into almost every department of living. Years ago, the technocrats conducted a dramatic exposé of the system by showing that better quality goods could be made by many manufacturers, except for the reason that they would soon saturate their markets and have no more customers. The nutrition experts, likewise, have shown that the system—and here, "system" means the entire scheme of food supply, from farm to packaged bread or cereal or whatnot—has made adulteration almost a principle of production. And our vast system of communications, including the newspaper and periodical press, the radio, and now, television, engaged in marketing these food products, is virtually silent on the verdict of the students of soil, nutrition, and health. In a really "free" community, the pioneers of basic reform in the field of food production would be hailed like conquering heroes by the community press. As it is, they find nearly every aspect of the machinery of the system geared against them. Ideas cannot "sell," if they are free, with the result that the communication of free ideas must pay also for the goods that *might* have been sold if the channels of communication had been used instead for merchandising. More than a century ago, before the system assumed its present character, a man could use his initiative to speak to his countrymen freely, and if he had something of importance to say, he could expect them to listen. Take William Lloyd Garrison, who for thirty-five years—from 1831 until the abolition of human slavery in the United States—campaigns almost single-handed

in the pages of his *Liberator* for the freedom of the Negroes. As his eminent and late descendant, Oswald Garrison Villard has put it:

Garrison was to be dreaded because the press was free to all men. It was not the enormous costly, commercialized undertaking of today, and it took no large circulation for a newspaper to make itself felt. . . . Whereas it takes hundreds of thousands of dollars to carry on a little political weekly today, he produced his with a few hundred.

The *Liberator* gained 500 subscribers the first year, and reached a thousand in the third year. It never had more than 3,000 subscribers, at \$2 a year. Its deficit, on the other hand, was as little as from \$700 to \$1,700. "It was a day of low costs and self-denying." And if the circulation was small, the three thousand copies, as Villard says, "counted as if they were a full 300,000." But this sort of publishing freedom no longer exists.

What about the freedom to be a good citizen? Suppose you want to make up your mind about two small items among the thousands which are proper matters for public concern—Point Four, of Mr. Truman's program, and the Indian Policy of the United States. To be well informed on these subjects will require two or three weeks, at least, of full-time research. And then, after you know, or think you know, what ought to be done, you must reconcile yourself to the massive realities of the "system"—and the difficulty with which *anything* gets done, except in response to some widespread public hysteria, like the fear of war.

But the worst effects of the system have been psychological. The awe inspired by the system's tremendous size and power exerts a weakening influence upon individual judgment and independent imagination. And because students and advocates of the system are all specialists—frequently men with pretensions to great learning—there is strong psychological pressure on everyone to conform. Even when experts disagree, there is a tendency to choose one side of the controversy, and defend it like a faith, instead of endeavoring to arrive at an independent conclusion. The disaster, here, is in the failure to

recognize that *no* conclusion which must be taken on faith is a really important conclusion for a human being. This is really the point of our entire discussion, for when the paramount decisions of our lives seem to rest with the experts, instead of with ourselves, then we are no longer free. This remains the fact, regardless of the political system we boast, regardless of the social philosophy we expound, and the wealth and comfort which embellish our physical existence.

When we begin to *feel* incompetent to make our own decisions, the time has come to start building a new system of our own. This we are always free to do, because we are human beings. A man can always re-scale his values to make his personal decisions and his private initiative the most important things in life. He will meet obstacles, but they will not be obstacles that generate impotence and submission. By setting his problems differently, according to his new values, he can develop the means to overcome them. This, really, is what is involved in the restoration of the dignity of man. The man who takes this position is attacking what we call "totalitarianism" at its source in human nature. He is rediscovering the principles of human freedom all over again. He may even be contributing to the foundation of a new order of human life—for freedom, once it is understood and practiced, brings an infectious happiness and enthusiasm. It has been the inspiring force at every great beginning in human affairs.

## *Letter from* **ENGLAND**

LONDON.—It has been said that the secret of the Labour Party's success in this country lies in the ethical fervour of its rank and file. This may have been true of its early beginnings, resulting in the formation of the Labour Representation Committee of 1900, which grew into a political party with the adoption of a constitution in February, 1918. But its growth since the days of pioneering for social justice has seen an increasing "realism" in the drafting of programs, thanks chiefly to the efforts of a group of younger intellectuals. It is doubtful if the idealism of its original promoters still survives, except in isolated groups and individuals without power to influence the main stream of the party's work.

How far the scientific methods of the advanced economists are responsible for this corruption of what was originally a genuine idealism is matter for debate. It is certainly the case, however, that the formulation of political policies has been and is largely in the hands of "experts" who are as subject as anyone else to the frustrations of the twentieth century, and, if the truth be known, are more prone than most to take advantage of the principle of self-interest in order to "put over" their own pet judgments. For the social scientist, man is merely the material on which he works. Fortunately, in the case of the general membership of the Labour party, a suspicion of merely "clever" men still persists, though it is not quite sufficient to emerge as a deterrent idealism. For one thing, the English working man or woman steadfastly refuses to read Karl Marx!

The fact is that we are witnessing in the political field, no less than in industry, the activities of a professional and technical class that threatens to become the dominant power and influence in the "democracies." In England, we are spending more and more money on improving the status and rewarding the abilities of one professional group after another. More than one observer has pointed out the real dangers of this epidemic of diploma worship and professional syndicalism. "The special skills and techniques needed," writes one commentator, "and to some extent called into being by the social service state, are tending to obscure the purposes for which these services were created."

What protection has the individual against the "authority" of paid professional skill? None, except an education which will produce the right kind of character and the right attitude of mind. In Book VII of his *Republic*, Plato looks upon education as consisting not in putting knowledge into the soul, "as if one were to put sight into blind eyes," but in turning the soul, which has already the capacity for knowledge, in the right direction. In this sense, the true education, like the true brahmin of the *Upanishads*, will be concerned equally with ends as with means.

Here we touch the roots of the ills besetting so many progressive movements, including those associated with the Labour movement in England. We may glimpse one section of the problem by looking at the present position of what is known here as adult education. Adult education and democracy have grown from the same soil in this country. The working classes themselves created the adult education movement. They and their well-wishers founded libraries, built their own institutes and colleges, and paid their own tutors, without recognition or help from State or Universities. Arising out of army education during World War II, the 1944 Education Act compelled local authorities to consider the needs of adults. But despite the numerical increase of students and classes since the war, there has been observed an uncertainty of aim in all this work. "Education for responsibility" has not the same popular appeal as "education for emancipation." One educator has already noted "a disturbing scepticism on the part of students and teachers alike which destroys conviction, and, therefore, purpose; a scepticism as to whether any of our deeper problems can be solved by means of existing disciplines of study." This reflects also the climate of opinion in purely academic circles. In short, our whole society is faced with the question of what is the *summum bonum*, and how it is to be achieved.

—ENGLISH CORRESPONDENT

## REVIEW

### THE NOVELS OF UNDERSTANDING

HARSH and hard, Promethean without glory in the suffering, the travels of Ulysses without a conscious pilgrimage, the stories of heroism that is not heroism because heroism must be purposeful--yet so many modern novels, having given up "story-telling," remain novels of Understanding. It is not this novel or that novel which is to be singled out, but a current which runs through the best and the second-best as well, a current carrying a feeling of poignant humanitarianism, for all the brashness of tone, and which gives us something the Romantic tradition did not supply in mass-appeal books. The Romantic tradition told us stories-with-points in plenty, and let us view the successful pilgrimages of mediocre moment in well constructed plot, yet often we felt the story instead of the men who wrote them and lived them.

An almost random selection from stories presently before the reading public will illustrate this deeper current. Take, for instance, Budd Schulberg's *Disenchanted*, a plot presumably based on the folding life of F. Scott Fitzgerald. Or take another novel, recently reprinted, about the Navajo Indians, by Edwin Corle, called *People on the Earth* (Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1950). There is nothing to truly inspire us in the plot of either, the first a Book-of-the-Month selection and the second a little known novel for lovers of the Southwest. But many who read either book will feel themselves *in* the characters—characters so different—and by that identification through feeling will come closer to a sense of general kinship not necessarily limited to Navajos or meteoric novelists of the mad twenties.

We have discovered, we think, a particular reason for linking the two books mentioned in our discussion. For while Corle's Navajo story is brutally realistic in telling the story of a modern Indian caught in the alternating toils of American paternalism, exploitation and Jim' Crowism, and

thus matches the grimness of the Schulberg story at the other end of the social ladder, there is a way out for the Navajo—even after murder, even after near-insanity and despair. But Schulberg's Manley Halliday had no way out. The once famous author found himself, a decade later, to be an older-than-his-years irrelevance in an age where debauchery was planned and calculated rather than executed with spontaneity. Halliday (or Fitzgerald, if we choose Schulberg's portrayal as authentic) was a creative genius while he linked his destiny with an age of enthusiasm. Without this enthusiasm no creativity could survive. Halliday later became an alien to enthusiasm, because he was rooted in a temporary culture which could not transfer or regenerate the enthusiasm, having no roots. The Indian found his way back to a hogan, and to the primitive simplicity of a life close to the earth. He finally came home, and he knew he was home when he arrived.

Halliday had no home. In the twenties his home was everywhere, but when the twenties rolled by into the past he was adrift. His later, cynical, half-hearted efforts to re-establish a place for himself were doomed to despair because he had gained too much wisdom to be taken in by the psychology of the thirties, to believe that *this* world, at least and at last, was real. Had either the twenties or the thirties been ages of sufficient constructive purpose, he might have benefited literary art much more permanently. But Halliday, despite the efforts of his logical mind to call his retrospection absurd and infantile, lived in the past, hanging on to memories.

One of Schulberg's accomplishments in *The Disenchanted*, though, is that he shows why the twenties were not quite as psychologically ridiculous as they sound: the twenties had adventure, buoyancy. Social conditions were not so much "studied" by university students, the old social myths had not yet been replaced with others of more sober and doubtless more truthful mien, but works of merit rolled off the presses.

Freedom in literary opportunity? Yes, even if only a freedom turned to license in personal lives. Why was it, asked Shep, the young studio writer attempting the impossible task of collaborating with a temporarily resurrected Halliday, that the twenties into which his co-worker's dreams always lapsed *did* seem somehow better, more "fun"? *So much was new*, then. We can, apparently, learn from the excesses of youth, find their memories something better than sordid, while their repetition in an enforced maturity simply dulls and dissatisfies our sensibilities.

It is said of Edwin Corle that he often acts as if he wishes he were himself an Indian. The power of his writing, and he does have some power, apparently derives from the fact that he feels most keenly a lack of real satisfaction in the cultural or monetary accomplishments of a more civilized race. Corle, like Halliday, runs off into the past from time to time, similarly because he thinks he finds something better there. And what he finds allows him, even though a "realist" as to style and treatment, to come forth with a happy ending. But it was the Indian way of life which made the happy ending possible—there was a core of living to which someone might actually return. Corle is saying that primitivism is not an absolute answer, but it may be a relative one, since the primitives have not altogether lost their simple bearings, and we have.

Corle's white characters are full of hypocrisy, even when they live as well as they know how. The Indians are not hypocrites. They try to deal with their environment in direct terms, becoming completely drunk and completely raving in despair, and completely strong and dignified when they see a way or an idea clearly.

There are some passages in *People on the Earth* which let us feel, in moments unprotected by our own carefully prepared veneers, the tragedy of not knowing one's place. The following one is symbolic of the tragedy of the American Indian, half white, half primitive. It is also symbolic of "Halliday," and perhaps many of

us more average folks. The Navajo boy has tried to fit into American society and failed, yet with his schooling at the Sherman Institute feels a stranger, also, to his own people. Rejecting his missionary sponsor for his chauvinism, he is then rejected by the family of the tradition-bound Indian girl he hopes to marry:

Suddenly he was running across the mesa. It was dark now and before him, coming down from the stars, he thought he saw a huge shovel blocking his path. A giant called Mr. Stratton had driven it into the earth and blocked him. He wheeled about and raced furiously in another direction and there was Crooked Arm, many times his own size, blocking his way. He turned from Crooked Arm and he ran in another direction. He fell and scratched himself and he scrambled up in a hurry and raced on. He must make it; he mustn't be blocked on all sides; he must be free.

In the darkness he fell headlong over some bushes and sprawled in some cactus and the spines cut his face and his arms and he lay there panting and gasping and not minding the pain. He dug his fingers into the rough earth and with every move the spines bit him more deeply. He defied the agony and he beat his fists on the earth and tried to crawl on in spite of everything, asking himself over and over again, "What am I? What am I? *What am I?*"

It might be worth it for many of us to wander just as much amok as this for a time, if we could find peace, and some kind of belonging, in a hogan at the end of the story. One thing is sure, though, if we are to believe Corle—Christianity will not show anyone the way. The Indian boy escapes from the kindness of one of its stalwarts (the Mr. Stratton of the quoted passage) before he finds himself. The white man, he saw, lived in two worlds, the world of words and the world of actions, and the resulting confusion was too much to bear. More to bear than the tribal rigidity represented by his leader-brother, Crooked Arm, with which he could at least come to direct terms.

## *COMMENTARY*

### **LEFT, RIGHT, AND CENTER**

LAST August, the *Monthly Review*, a journal of left-wing political commentary, published an unusually lucid analysis of the issues of the Korean war. One of the points of this article was that an American victory in Korea will settle nothing, so far as contributing to the ultimate peace of the world is concerned: "About the most that American arms can hope to achieve is a precarious military occupation of Korea which could be maintained only by continuous and endless campaigns along the lines that the French have been fighting in Indo-China and the British in Malaya for the last several years." Then there is this summation:

At the root of the whole Korean conflict and of other and more terrible conflicts which will surely come if the US does not change its course, lies the refusal of this country to negotiate issues which divide the world today—the foolish and fantastic notion that somehow the US can restore the international balance of forces which prevailed before World War II. . . .

Turning from left to right, there is the following passage which appeared recently in the Hearst press (Los Angeles *Examiner*, Dec. 5):

Continuing the war means only the slaughter of millions in a quixotic American attempt to conquer a vast and distant population.

First and foremost, therefore, this country should withdraw its armed forces from the invasion areas.

We should get our troops out of Korea as quickly as possible. . . .

For once, the right is in entire agreement with the left, even if for quite different reasons, and under somewhat different circumstances, in point of time and military fortunes.

What about the "center"? *US News and World Report* (for Dec. 15) provides the results of a public opinion survey taken in a typical American community. The "people," it seems, would like it fine if the Korean war could,

somehow, be called off. So the "people," at least the people of this middle western city, see no particular sense to any further attempts at victory in Korea, and probably the great majority of the people throughout the United States feel the same way.

Some months ago, an article in MANAS suggested the idea of a popular plebiscite or referendum, to find out the judgment of the people, before the country gets into any kind of a war. Looking at the issue from either left, right, or center, it still seems a good idea.

## CHILDREN ... and Ourselves

AN educational anecdote from *Western Family* serves as an appropriate introduction for some material by Herbert Read, taken from *Education Through Art*. The anecdote tells the story of a parent who tried to overcome his child's aversion to piano practice by taking the same lessons himself. The point of the story was that the parent developed a genuine interest of his own, thus kindling the fire of purposive discipline in his child. The work became play, and mutual play—mutually understood and enjoyed across the gap of a generation. Because the work became play, play led to more effective work. This is a many-times-told sort of success story, but the repetitions are beneficial.

Herbert Read sums up the philosophy of this approach to learning:

True discipline is a spontaneously evolved pattern of behavior. Any other form of behavior that goes by this name is merely arbitrary constraint, imposed by fear of punishment, unstable in its equilibrium, and productive of individual and social tensions. The way to rational harmony, to physical poise, to social integration, is the same way—the way of aesthetic education. This was the teaching of Plato—clear and unequivocal in spite of the smoke-screens and sophistries of his latter-day commentators. Plato meant exactly what he said: that an aesthetic education is the only education that brings grace to the body and nobility to the mind, and that we must make art the basis of education because it can operate in childhood, during the sleep of reason; and when reason does come, art will have prepared a path for her, and she will be greeted as a friend whose essential lineaments have for long been familiar. Moreover, Plato did not see or offer any alternative to art as an instrument of early education—it is the only instrument that can penetrate into the recesses of the soul. Plato's teaching on this matter was taken up in the modern world by Schiller, and in all his philosophical works, but above all in his *Letters upon the Aesthetical Education of Man*, we have again a clear and explicit statement of this doctrine of education: that until man, in his physical and sensuous modes of being, has been accustomed to

the laws of beauty, he is not capable of perceiving what is good and true—he is not capable of spiritual liberty. Many other witnesses to this truth might be called but none so unequivocal as these two, whom I value more than any others; and I am very content to rest in their company.

While we feel that Mr. Read stretches Plato's intent a trifle, we shall find the basis for his statements in *The Republic*, *The Laws*, and *Protagoras*. In any case, he gives a stimulating point of departure for appreciating the rationale of many of the innovations of progressive education. What the progressives started out to do, and what some progressives are continually doing, is to establish a guarantee that the child himself—his spontaneous desires and interests—will not be left out of pedagogy. There is, of course, another side to the matter, for play in and of itself does not necessarily deepen or discipline the nature of a child. "Play" has to be converted into the Art of Living, to become an introduction to proportion, harmony, and integration of emotional and mental qualities. Mr. Read speaks of these delicate balances:

"The play way" is a recognized method of education especially in infant schools. But as I have already indicated, the conception of play on which these discussions and experiments are based is inadequate and sometimes superficial. At the lowest it becomes a presence of "not taking things seriously," and every subject is debased to an hilarious game in which the teacher becomes an histrionic buffoon. At its best the method tends to develop a form of sophistication which is only too evident to the child. The play method, if properly pursued, should not imply a lack of coherence and direction in teaching—that is playing at teaching, not teaching by play—but *to give coherence and direction to play is to convert it into art*. . . . Play is rather an informal activity capable of becoming an artistic activity, and of thus acquiring significance for the organic development of the child.

In other words, the school must be a microcosm of the world, and schooling an activity which grows insensibly into living. The process is one of *initiation*, and though it may be objected that the word *play* is not a good enough word for such a solemn rite (and therefore we substitute the word *art*) nevertheless Caldwell Cook's description of this



method is the best that could be quoted. "Play, as I mean it," he says—*art* as I mean it, "goes far deeper than study; it passes beyond reasoning, and lighting up the chambers of the imagination, quickens the body of thought, and proves all things in action. The study of books, however thorough, may yet remain but superficial, in the sense that there may be no feeling of reality behind it. 'No impression without expression' is a hoary maxim, but even to-day learning is often *knowing* without much care for *feeling*, and mostly none at all for *doing*. Learning may remain detached, as a garment, unidentified with self, but by Play (Art) I mean the *doing* anything one *knows* with one's heart in it. The final appreciation in life and in study is to put oneself into the thing studied and to live there active."

*Education Through Art* is a volume well worth perusing. Here, however, as in many other instances, we tend to welcome certain specific ideas of an author rather than give unqualified praise to all that particular author has produced. To some extent a brother in spirit of Homer Lane and A. S. Neil, Read is also at times given to generalities indicating excessive self-assurance, perhaps typical author's weaknesses. There is truth but also triteness, for instance, in a sentence from the *New Statesman and Nation* for Oct. 28, where he states: "It is not merely that faith without works is dead: words without concreteness are dangerous, and the hope of the world lies not in the expansion of the spirit without bounds, but in the erection of vessels of precision to contain our little share of that commodity." Education through art is, on Mr. Read's own terms, something more than a matter of erecting "vessels of precision." Plato certainly thought so. And it is precisely because Mr. Read, in *Education Through Art*, integrates so well the spontaneous and the planned that we recommend his book.

For those who feel themselves friendly to many of the craft-education pioneering attempts of Progressive educators, Mr. Read would seem to have furnished a very good formulation of basic doctrine. He places almost exclusive emphasis upon the *experience of consciousness* in the creation of objects of art, rather than upon the

technical "craftsmanship" which goes into the finished article.

## *FRONTIERS*

### Causes of War

IN *Ordnance* for September-October, 1950, Major General J. F. C. Fuller, writing on "Why World Wars?" develops the argument that "Food is the great fundamental—it takes precedence over all other wants; for to live man must eat, and if he cannot eat he will fight for food." The proposition, as he presents it, is that agricultural societies are usually peaceful because food is plentiful and can be stored, and because the death rate more or less balances the birth rate. But when a society becomes industrialized, the fields must feed the factory workers as well as the farmers, and this pressure of population on food supply leads to attempts at expansion of food-producing areas through war. Woodrow Wilson's September, 1919 speech is quoted as dramatic proof of this:

Why, my fellow-citizens, is there any man here, or any woman—let me say, is there any child here—who does not know that the seed of war in the modern world is industrial and commercial rivalry? . . . This war, in its inception, was a commercial and industrial war. It was not a political war.

General Fuller now propounds some like heresies on his own account, saying that it was Hitler's successful experiment in direct barter and subsidized foreign trading, enabling the Germans to undercut their competitors in the international market, which precipitated World War II, and not the Nazi political doctrines. Further, as the leader of an industrial nation which lacked a balancing source of food supply, General Fuller continues, Hitler hoped to make Germany a self-sufficient country by conquering the Ukraine, "the granary of Russia." Following is the military expert's broad generalization:

The second of the world conflicts was marked by a ferocity not witnessed for centuries, and its chief victims were the civil populations. It was as if Nature had whispered to men: "Destroy the cities you have built, massacre their inhabitants, and get back to the field land I have given you." Even when the war had ended, like cattle, millions of people were herded

from one land into another to make room for their conquerors.

Occultly, it was an antipopulation war in which the search after food, in all its many forms, was the driving force. Nevertheless it solved nothing because populations were not sufficiently reduced, and today we are told that every year 20,000,000 more children are born to swell the world's overcrowded peoples.

In support of his thesis that the great modern wars, up to the present, have been for biological survival, General Fuller cites Plato as having pointed out that so long as the Greek city states remained agricultural, wars between them were infrequent. Plato, he claims, showed that wars became endemic only when the city states became "industrial"—that is, developed a large artisan class, which made a larger food supply necessary.

One can, we suppose, draw this conclusion from Book II of the *Republic*, but what Plato really said had a considerably different intent. After describing the life of a simple agricultural community, Socrates is asked to add the "conveniences" and pleasures to which people who live "in the modern style" are accustomed. He replies:

. . . now I understand: the question which you would have me consider is, not- only how a State, but how a luxurious State is created. . . . In my opinion the true and healthy constitution of the State is the one which I have described. But if you wish also to see a State at fever-heat, I have no objection. For I suspect that many will not be satisfied with the simpler way of life. They will be for adding sofas, and tables, and other furniture; also dainties, and perfumes, and incense, and courtesans, and cakes, all these not of one sort only, but in every variety; we must go beyond the necessaries of which I was first speaking, such as houses, and clothes, and shoes: the arts of the painter and the embroiderer will have to be set in motion, and gold and ivory and all sorts of materials must be procured. . . .

Then a slice of our neighbor's land will be wanted by us for pasture and tillage, and they will want a slice of ours, if, like ourselves, they exceed the limit of necessity, and give themselves up to the unlimited accumulation of wealth? . . . And so we shall go to war, Glaucon. Shall we not?

Most certainly, he replied.

If we can bear with the puritanical tastes of Socrates, and accept, at least in theory, the austerities he admires, it becomes evident that, in his opinion, it is not simply the emergence of artisans, or "industrialization," which causes war, but too great a love of easy living, habits of self-indulgence, and the pursuit of "unlimited accumulation of wealth." General Fuller would have us believe that war is practically part of the Cosmic Process, in which nations, pressed on by their "natural" development, must choose between conquest and starvation. This was not Plato's meaning.

However, General Fuller suggests that the second World War was an ideological war as well as a war for survival. This struggle had the ferocity of a crusade. "The Western Allies set out to destroy Hitlerism, and Russia, their Eastern partner, to destroy Fascism which, according to the Russian definition, includes all political cults outside Communism, and, therefore, Western Democracy in its *several* forms." And in the present struggle between Democracy and Communism, he says, "we are returning to the wars of religion." Already there are precedents which, "in another world conflict will 'justify' the victor or victors 'legally' massacring entire populations." He continues:

Thus to the anti-population wars which the biological cause of war has released will be added antipopulation peaces, which are likely to be even more annihilating. We therefore see that ideological warfare and the biological cause of war walk hand in hand.

After presenting this horrifying prospect, General Fuller offers his solution, which is to popularize a Democratic Charter "as appealing to the masses as the Communist Manifesto," and "simultaneously to eliminate the diseases of industrial civilization" by living up to the Democratic Charter—"in order to prove that its adherents have as strong a faith in its creed as Communists have in theirs."

This is a tremendous task and demand. We agree that it must be undertaken, but where will the energy and moral determination it requires come from, unless we accept, with Socrates, the importance of the factor of moral causation? General Fuller remains an indifferent moralist until he reaches the last step of his analysis: *Now*, all at once, by an incalculable effort of the will, we must suddenly begin practicing "democracy." But if Socrates is right, the fault lies not in weakness at the moment of the last great emergency, but right at the beginning, when a society loses its simple ways and seeks unlimited riches. It is not our industrialism, but how we use our industrial capacities, which brings the war. It is not biological survival, but the competitive struggle after non-essentials, and the assumption that those non-essentials are of almost "spiritual" value—Our Way of Life—that make our wars seem "righteous" and "necessary." War, most certainly modern war, is caused by a number of powerful and deep-seated cultural delusions.

## *Has it Occurred to Us?*

WORDS are quiet things, or oddly mobile. They may slip by us with their cargo of ideas and hardly attract notice. Or they may tread water in front of us until we are forced to examine them, to measure their weight and power—and, perhaps, to invest them with a special cargo of our own. For example, we meet the word "reincarnation" quite frequently, nowadays, and its "freight" varies greatly in weight and value. Some notions of reincarnation would not be entertained for a moment by any self-respecting man, being only a cut above the hallucinations of the precariously-balanced, and seeming to borrow heavily from delusions of grandeur. Other notions effect an odd reconciliation with the Darwinian Theory, and would have human beings merge carelessly with what are called the "lower" animals.

Reincarnation might also properly be used to account for certain phases of human experience, which psychologists relegate to the realm of the unconscious or the subconscious mind. In this connection, reincarnation might be invoked, and occasionally is, to explain the matter of "recognition" of people or places we seem to know well at first sight. Eastern peoples, who apparently carry such ideas even further than Western speculators, have concepts of reincarnation still more elaborate, and also propose certain exercises of concentration by means of which the memory of past incarnations may be recovered by the individual. One tradition of Buddha, who was the "light of Asia," is that he could trace back completely the line of his former births, numbering, all told, enough millions upon millions of years to constitute a veritable eternity.

Yet how motionless all these concepts, compared to an *idea*! Possibly, we should never read nor listen to anyone else's notion about an idea. Why should we carry around a dead form of idea, when we could hold before the eye of mind a thing of life and movement? Why should it be the poets, only, who catch up an idea and see a wonder? Has it ever occurred to us that we, too, have a right—perhaps an obligation to ourselves—to keep watch of even a notion until it reveals its secret truth?

Since reincarnation as a concept appears not to be claimed as the private property of any religion or race or philosopher, why may not everyone who has heard

the word enter upon the free field of the idea itself, and build of his own choice with what he finds there? Ideas are designed to be lived with, not for collections or safety-deposit boxes. They are built for hard wear and for everyday use—especially the ideas that have made their way across centuries and around the globe. Doctrines, schemes, expositions, analyses, may be intellectually entertaining, but they, like books, are for the scholar's "idle times." The idea we open the heart to is one that can face us in the cold morning light as in the evening calm, in transports of joy and sorrow, in our bewilderments and in our certainties, in hope and despair, in childhood and manhood and straight up to the curious unknown we call Death. Such an idea is intimately ours, although we are never its exclusive possessor.

The simplest formulation of the concept of reincarnation is that man has been on earth before in other bodies, and can expect to return, after his present and, perhaps, his heavenly existence closes, to take up life again in a new form. The mechanics of the process are variously described, but since they all too often obscure the central point, we can navigate without them. What an idea means to this or that individual will be determined more by how he uses it than by how he heard of it, or by what he was told. Hence, we make bold to describe one correlative of reincarnation without reference to formal theories on the subject.

Suppose it should be true that we ourselves are coming not for the first time to the experiences of human life. Suppose, also, that something in us—an imperishable remnant, a continuing consciousness of a kind, a soul or a mind (need we seek out a term, when it is meaning we are after?)—will survive all the changes, including death itself, and return to animate other human forms in the future, which may, for all we know, be unlimited. We shall refrain from sidetracking on daydreams of what "we" have done or been, and if the idea of rebirth is not to immobilize us completely, we must similarly eschew vain dreams of what "we" would like to be in some other incarnation.

Has it occurred to us that the secret of an idea lies in the assumptions on which it is grounded, that the reality of an idea is the portion which, though not expressed, is "understood"? What is understood in this notion that "we" somehow have lived before and will live again? Have we noticed that it is an idea which has

an oddly unsettling effect on us? We may say instantly, without recognizing why, that we "don't like" the idea, or we may courteously but with firmness make it a formal adieu, or we may respond warmly and enthusiastically, as if to an old acquaintance. But whatever the response, we shall probably discover that we sensed quite accurately the underlying influence of the idea.

It is natural for some people to welcome a change in point of view. They are not disconcerted to find themselves temporarily separated from their social identity, from the psychological complex of "their" feelings and habits, their form and appearance. If asked, "Who are you? What are you?" they may forego the obvious answer, and set forth on a quest for identity which takes them far beyond the almost meaningless coordinates of name and worldly status. If we are aware that a silent spectator within perseveres throughout the many personality changes that obtain as the outer man contacts different friends and situations, we likewise may pause before returning too quick an answer to the question of our identity. Perhaps we never remember being Cleopatra or Napoleon, and it is not likely that we can say for certain what will be our lot in a future life, but we can scarcely have failed to notice that we live several "lives" almost simultaneously, even in the unexceptional here and now.

Has it occurred to us that a single perception of our power to masquerade in different characters or "personalities" from day to day and from year to year, is enough to constitute us "reincarnationists" in a general sense? We are theoretically familiar with suggestions by religious teachers, by psychologists, by educators, and of our own common sense, that the human being can change his habits of thought, his attitudes, and feelings, in order to bring himself into more intelligent adjustment with his associates, his problems, and the circumstances of his life. But what could more surely certify this power to proceed from one surface identity to another, than the imaginative leap our mind must take to reach the reality behind such an idea as rebirth? Perhaps we do not need the idea, but we need to be able to get our minds around it—if only to disentangle them from their present "incarnation."