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HAVE WE TRIED EVERYTHING?

WITH a title like this one, it is justifiable to expect a discussion of getting together with the Russians, or the Chinese. That is the problem which concerns most people, these days; that, or how to lick the Russians, or the Chinese, or anybody else we have trouble with. But when the trouble is as well developed as the present "cold war," there is not much real use in academic analysis. We take our place with Tolstoy's old general in *War and Peace*, who implied that war is something that happens over everybody's head, and all you can do is make the best of it, day by day, without trying to evolve a metaphysic about it.

We ask, "Have we tried everything?" for the reason that, to read the papers and the magazines and the books of the day, we are the people who have everything figured out, and still we have this kind of trouble. We know all the answers, but we don't seem to be able to put our answers to work. There is no real push behind our answers, right as they seem, and right as they may be. The Nazis were beasts, and we beat them in war. We sent Max Lerner and some other qualified lecturers to Europe to explain to the Germans how bad they had been, and we sent them teachers to tell them how to do better. The teachers were probably good teachers and they probably tried very hard. And then we sent good journalists over there who came back and explained why the re-education program wasn't working, and why the Nazis—a lot of them—weren't really denazified. After we understood that pretty well, we stopped caring much about it because pretty soon, it seems, we are going to have to build the German army back up again, and a good efficient Nazi may come in handy.

We knew the answers about Japan, too. We knew that the Issei and Nisei in America might turn into saboteurs over night, so we put them all in internment camps. Then we knew it was contrary to the Constitution to do what we did, so we wrote books about our Great Mistake after the war. We knew that the Japanese generals and political rulers had been plotting a conspiracy to wage aggressive war ever since 1928 and so, after we defeated them, we tried twenty-seven of them, found them all guilty and hung or imprisoned them. We figured that Japan ought to learn to be a peaceful nation, so we helped the Japanese to make themselves a new Constitution renouncing war forever, but now we know that we may need their help in a war with the Chinese or Russian Communists, so we don't talk about the Japanese Constitution any more, but what good soldiers the Japanese are. And General Telford Taylor, who was the chief US prosecutor of the German war criminals at Nuremberg, now says that if, after the Korean war is over, there is to be another "war criminal" trial, "we must try both sides or admit there are mitigating circumstances on both sides and let them all go."

It does seem as though we've tried pretty nearly everything. And with our wonderful background, it seems foolish to write about what we ought to do to stop or win the war. Such omniscience and omnicompetence can hardly be augmented.

Mark Antony, in his famous oration over Caesar's bier, said with rolling irony, "These are *honorable* men." We have to say this, too, about our experts, our liberals, our moralists, and our leaders. But we have to say it without irony, for the reason that it is really true. They are as honorable, at any rate, as their critics, as ourselves, and our friends and relations. There is no use in trying to find men who are more honorable to put our theories into practice, if our theories are no good. And either our theories are no good, or the rest of the people in the world, or most of them, are no good. That is the kind of a dilemma we are in, whether we like it or not. When it begins to look as though half the world is going to have to fight the other half, the half you belong to has to say to itself that the other half is no good. If you don't say this, how can you drop bombs on them? And if you don't say this, you have to be willing to take another look at your theories. But to take another look at *our* theories, these days, is to get into an argument with a lot of infallible experts and caretakers of our honor, our prosperity, and our security. Pretty soon, they will want to put you in jail for taking too close a look at our, that is *their*, theories. It is all right to go to jail, if it does any good, and maybe the time will come when a lot of people won't be

able to live with themselves and their consciences anywhere else but in jail, but in our opinion, that time is not yet.

So we come back to the question, "Have we tried everything?"

Well, we have gnashed our teeth at Materialism. We have called attention to Mammon in the market place; we have also called attention to it in the Churches. We have deplored and exposed Supernaturalism. We know that sin and guilt are bad things to have around. We know that a hostile environment—one without interest or sympathy—creates hostile children who grow into anti-social adults. We know that the worship of Success is a corrupter of our lives and our natural fortunes. We know about the hungers of the lonely and the tragedy of the displaced and dispossessed. We know that the undernourished need vitamins and the tired need a rest. We try to supply recreation for the bored and idle and teach handicrafts and self-expression to the maladjusted and handicapped. When whole populations are threatened by famine, we evolve Marshall plans and send ships with food and tools.

We know all these things, and we do all these things—we do them, as well as we can—and if we can't do them well enough, then our hearts are not in it, and that is the sort of problem we really face. We try to do for these other people the same things that we try to do for ourselves. But our hearts are not even in what we try to do for ourselves. Why else should the United States be the richest market in the world for self-help books? This land of ours is a land of endless efficiency and formulas—that is what sells in America, efficiency and formulas. This is not to suggest that you will find anything better anywhere else. The whole world envies our efficiency and our formulas. How could our efficiency and our formulas have such a devastating effect in other lands and cultures if they are not envied? The barrenness of efficiency and formulas is most evident in America for the reason that we are better than anyone else in putting them to work. So we have the dubious distinction of being able to demonstrate more clearly than anyone else that efficiency and formulas are not enough.

We are envied, but we are also feared. And fear, too, is a form of flattery. A man fears only what he thinks he lacks. The Russians fear us, along with other nations, because of our power. The Russians think our power is something worth envying and fearing. And we, judging from the excitement in Washington and in New York and Illinois and California, and nearly everywhere else, fear the Russians, too, and for much the same reasons. We fear their manpower and their fanatical zeal. We cannot defeat the Russians, the liberal Jeremiahs tell us, whether with guns or with a triumphant ideological conversion, unless we can develop the same zeal for our Way of Life as they seem to have for theirs. So the liberal prophets and sociological doctors are all writing new prescriptions and formulas to stimulate our flagging zeal, and the political altruists are telling us what we must do to make the rest of the world believe us when we say we believe in freedom.

But there is nothing new in these formulas. They are the same as the old ones, with perhaps an international twist. We are still telling some people what they ought to do for other people, and what the other people are expected to do in return. Our formulas always involve "selling" some kind of a program to others, or to some of ourselves. Even if we had the wisest man in the world to write out for us the best formula in the world, we would still need the most powerful man in the world to make everybody do what the formula says. That, we suppose, is the reason why wise men are never caught bothering with formulas.

It is just possible that although hungry men need to be fed, they need something else even more, and that while tired men need a rest, they also need something better to work for—which may make them even tireder. And if the warring nations need peace, they may need something more important than just "peace," if they are to stay peaceful.

Perhaps there is something in human beings which makes it impossible for them to settle for what they need to stay alive, and healthy and prosperous. This, of course, sounds like a guarded request for religion, and maybe it is, but it is not a request for any of the formula religions. The difficulty, quite likely, is in our longing for some kind of certainty, whether about life on earth, or life in heaven, when the fact is that every certainty we get rapidly becomes either a physical or a political or a psychological system of oppression.

Perhaps the demand for security is itself what we must learn to forego. That would be something we

haven't really tried—it would be faith in ourselves. Not faith in ourselves to lick the Russians, to live in the best part of town, to win out in the competitive struggle and get to the top of the particular ladder we have singled out as the most important one to climb. The faith in ourselves that we are talking about is a faith which has a meaning not dependent on any kind of a system. It is a faith which comprehends and does away with the gnawing dissatisfactions that attack both the successes and the failures of the modern world.

Surely, if we knew how to inspire one another with faith in ourselves, it would be an easy matter to develop faith in one another, what would happen to our envies, our fears and suspicions? By abandoning our quest for security, we could make security come to us. This, we should like to think, is one of the great laws of nature. It is certainly the law relied upon by the great and good men of the world—the men who will offer no formulas to their fellows because they know that no formula exists for developing faith in oneself. And this is the law which none of the current formulas offered to us by others says anything about.

Yet the men who are any kind of men at all live more or less by this principle. It is almost as though the faith a man has in himself were a kind of a meta-physical organism of the mind and the spirit—the psychologically tangible structure of our personal dignity, our morality, and the light of our hearts. Every great religion says something about this "body" of the inner man, yet it is more a nucleus of intelligent energy than a "body" or a form. It is what we are—what we have become—as human beings. No dogma, doctrine or even metaphysical tenet will suffice to describe this principle of our real life and security, for the reason that it is a living, dynamic principle which is eternally creating new definitions for itself. But it seems likely that we can never live consciously as human beings ought to live without some attempt at self-recognition in these terms.

Letter from INDIA

BOMBAY.—Important developments have taken place in the sphere of international politics, which have brought the "cold war" closer to India. It is common knowledge that the world is today swayed by two entirely opposite ideologies, one represented by America and her allied democratic countries and the other by Russia and her satellite communist countries. All the upheavals or conflicts that occur in any part of the world today are either caused or influenced by the clash of these two ideologies. The three major crises precipitating in North and Northeast of India are cases in point.

Take the crisis in Tibet. Last October, Tibet had just hit the headlines with the report of the unprovoked invasion of that most peaceful country by "Red" China. Today, the Chinese hold on Tibet is *fait accompli;* the "land of mysticism" has gone over to Communist China. India's endeavour to settle this question through negotiation has failed; might has asserted its power over right. Defence, Foreign Affairs and Communications of Tibet are now in the hands of China, although "complete autonomy" for the Tibetan Government in internal affairs is still promised. Despite the unfriendly attitude of China towards India in respect of the latter's effort to effect a peaceful settlement, India's faith and conviction that "the path to peace does not lie through war" remain unshaken.

Following the crisis in Tibet came the upheaval in Nepal. Though Nepal is a much smaller country than Tibet and though the recent revolt there is an internal one, it cannot be gainsaid that Nepal today is "a fertile soil for communism." The cause of the revolt in that country was twofold. On the one hand, the King was striving for his own freedom from the domination of the Prime Minister, and on the other, the people were striving for their freedom from the autocratic rule of the Prime Minister. Simply put, this is the immediate explanation of the King's flight to New Delhi for shelter, but the deeper causes which precipitated the crisis are to be found in the mediaeval type of feudalism that has prevailed in Nepal for centuries. The King is the nominal head of the State, and is even worshipped by the people as a God, an *avatar* of Vishnu, but the real power is in the hands of the Prime Minister. The King is a virtual prisoner in his palace. The present Prime Minister also happens to control the Army, besides holding the highest authority, both legislative and judicial, in the land. He is the mouthpiece of the Ranas, the feudal chiefs who, for centuries, have been sucking the people, mainly agriculturists, of their produce. The land, in theory, belongs to the State, but virtually it is the family property of the Ranas, who are the hereditary owners. The cultivator has no right in the land. Such an autocracy on the part of the Ranas is doubtless an anachronism. Political freedom and civil liberty are things unknown in this feudal country, which is isolated from all foreign influence. Small wonder, then, that these discontented people should rise in revolt against the Ranas, and that the King himself, who is believed to have secret sympathy with the popular movement and had serious differences with the Prime Minister on that ground, had to seek refuge in New Delhi.

The people's revolt, however, not being well organised, has been put down by the powerful Ranas. The end of the civil war is almost in sight; and autocracy will once again hold its sway over the country. In such an atmosphere it should be very easy for Communist fifth columnists to infiltrate into the land either from Tibet or China. India's attitude has been to respect the sovereignty of Nepal and to exert her influence very cautiously to achieve the political and material progress of the country. The Ranas, it was hoped, would see the writing on the wall and move with the time.

By far the greatest crisis is in Korea. What was once a question of localised conflict between North Koreans and the UN Forces threatens to develop into a global war by the intervention of China. President Truman's impetuous talk of the possible use of the atomic bomb has outraged public opinion in India as well as in all other Asian countries. Pandit Nehru's fateful warning against crossing the 38th parallel not only went unheeded, but all sorts of adverse criticisms were levelled against him. Perhaps, if the 38th parallel had not been crossed, developments in Korea would not have taken such a serious turn. The immediate task ahead is to persuade the Chinese Communists to agree to cease fire, and after that to open fresh negotiations. In this task, India's role as a peacemaker, by virtue o£ her unique position among Asiatic nations, cannot be minimised or belittled. May wiser counsels yet prevail, and the world be spared another international war!

INDIAN CORRESPONDENT

REVIEW
NIHILIST MOTIVES

IT is depressing to discover that something maintained for the wrong reasons by the wrong people, in ignorance, contains an important truth. There is much evidence, however, that this is the case in respect to some analyses of the causal factors in modern wars. Allied propagandists (unlike General Fuller, whose war-is-inevitable-for-economic-reasons thesis was discussed last week) attempted to rouse the old college cry in the democracies by telling us that the totalitarians really, and deliberately, wanted to change Our Way of Life. Many of our liberals, including perhaps a MANAS writer or two, found themselves saying "Nonsense!" and trying to balance the scale by pointing to the understandable causes of neurotic nationalism in Germany, birthed from a population in travail since Versailles. And then perhaps we, along with a few other "liberals," insisted that the bad dictatorship countries mostly just wanted enough to eat.

Partisan Review for November-December contains a section of Hannah Arendt's new book, *The Origins of Totalitarianism,* under the title, "The Mob and the Elite." There we find a discussion which is quite a challenge to the "economic need and bad leaders" sentiments with which so many of us have previously allowed ourselves to-be associated. *Both* the mob and the totalitarian elite, according to Miss Arendt, actually *do* want to change that middle-class, respectable Way of Living characteristic of the democracies. The *avant garde* of totalitarian intellectuals, "the elite," saw that war "promised changes so far-reaching that they might never again have to fit into the 'normal' pattern they despised." The "mob" longed to "transcend narrow and meaningless class lines. What the mob wanted, and what Goebbels expressed with great precision, was access to history even at the price of destruction." The temporary totalitarian alliance between the elite and the mob "rested largely on this genuine delight with which the former watched the latter destroy respectability." Further—

> Since the bourgeoisie claimed to be the guardian of Western traditions and confounded all moral issues by parading publicly virtues which it not only did not possess in private and business life, but actually held in contempt, it seemed revolutionary to admit cruelty, disregard of human values, and general amorality, because this at least destroyed the duplicity upon which the existing society seemed to rest. What a temptation to flaunt extreme attitudes in the hypocritical twilight of double moral standards, to wear publicly the mask of cruelty if everybody was patently inconsiderate and pretended to be gentle, to parade wickedness in a world, not of wickedness, but of meanness. The intellectual elite of the twenties who knew little of the earlier connections between mob and bourgeoisie was certain that the old game of *èpater le bourgeois* could be played to perfection if one started to shock society with an ironically exaggerated picture of its own behavior.

In other words, Miss Arendt is telling us, and telling us rather convincingly, that the most potent forces in modern history are psychological rather than economic; also, that we may expect a world-wide psychological revolution, a real rebellion, to be much more explosive than a world-wide economic change. Great Britain has passed from traditional capitalism to the State ownership of Socialist Government with scarcely a tremor; likewise has the United States Government moved towards centralized control of economy, even though "ownership" has not formally changed hands. But the psychological forces unleashed by the opportunity for introduction of totalitarian regimes are never so mild. The fascination of war, as Miss Arendt shows, often lies precisely in the fact that it is a symbol of destruction, a destruction which may be invoked to remove the objectionable features of our present "way of life." The intellectual *"avant garde"* of totalitarianism has very simply and literally hated average, humdrum, middle-class society. Sometimes we think we can understand this—nothing degrades man as much, perhaps, as lack of anything to be heroic about. On this view, by the way, the

disgust and "hatred" which may be felt in a vague sort of way by many citizens of our democracy, whether "elite" or "mob," have just not had sufficient time to mature. But though "totalitarianism *in power* invariably replaces all first-rate talents, regardless of their sympathies, with those crackpots and fools whose lack of intelligence and creativity is still the best guarantee of their loyalty," assuring, in time, the reaction of natural repugnance against any totalitarian regime, we have still to face in the present the blank negativism of a social life without ideals, heroism or sacrifice.

In the following passage from "The Mob and the Elite," we can perhaps see why it is that a country such as the United States might, after achieving its greatest economic and political control, later become gradually subject to the forces which will precipitate even less "necessary" wars than the ones we are having these days. For men will wish to destroy any form of a society which cannot inspire them. The same, it goes without saying, must be true about Russia. But wherever the "way of life" becomes too rigidly patterned—which can come about by the subtle, creeping domination of conventional values as well as by dictatorial commands—we smother the fires of human inspiration, or, rather, force them underground. There they smoulder, feeding on strange fuel, until ready to break out in ways that warm no one's hearth. Then comes the destructive activism, which, in Hitler's movement, terrified us so thoroughly:

> The postwar elite was only slightly younger than the generation which had let itself be used and abused by imperialism for the sake of glorious careers outside of respectability, as gamblers and spies and adventurers, as knights in shining armor and dragon-killers. They shared with Lawrence of Arabia the yearning for "losing their selves" and the violent disgust with all existing standards, with every power that be. If they still remembered the "golden age of security" (Stefan Zweig), they also remembered how they had hated it and how real their enthusiasm had been at the outbreak of the first World War. Not only Hitler and not only the human failures thanked God on their knees when mobilization swept Europe in 1914. They did not even have to reproach themselves with having been an easy prey for chauvinist propaganda or Iying explanations about the purely defensive character of the war. The elite went to war with an exultant hope that everything they knew, the whole culture and texture of life might go down in its "storms of steel" (Ernst Juenger). In the carefully chosen words of Thomas Mann war was "chastisement" and "purification"; "war in itself rather than victories, inspired the poet." Or in the words of a student of the time, "what counts is always the readiness to make a sacrifice, not the object for which the sacrifice is made"; or in the words of a younger worker, "it doesn't matter whether one lives a few years longer or not. One would like to have something to show for one's life." And long before one of Nazism's intellectual sympathizers announced, "When I hear the word culture, I draw my revolver," poets had proclaimed their disgust with "rubbish culture" and called poetically on "ye Barbarians, Scythians, Negroes, Indians, to trample it down."
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> Simply to brand as outbursts of nihilism this violent dissatisfaction with the pre-war age and subsequent attempts at restoring it (from Nietzsche and Sorel to Pareto, from Rimbaud and T. E. Lawrence to Juenger, Brecht, and Malraux, from Bakunin and Nechayev to Alexander Blok) is to overlook how justified disgust can be in a society wholly permeated with the ideological outlook and moral standards of the bourgeoisie.
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> The genuineness of these feelings can be seen in the fact that very few of this generation were cured of their war enthusiasm by actual experience of its horrors. The survivors of the trenches did not become pacifists. They cherished an experience which, they thought, might serve to separate them from the hated surroundings of respectability.

The concluding sentence serves as excellent introduction to the search for psychological orientation in respect to war that is found in many modern novels. In any case, Miss Arendt makes totalitarianism about as understandable a social phenomenon as it can be. However warped its representatives, we must, she says, grant them a "greater authenticity and passion" than the nineteenth-century ideologists. Much of the following applies only to Germany between War I and War II, but some of it applies to the Russia, and the America, of today and tomorrow:

They had been more deeply touched by misery, they were more concerned with the perplexities and more deadly hurt by hypocrisy than all the apostles of good will and brotherhood had been. And they could no longer escape into exotic lands, could no longer afford to be dragon-slayers among strange and exciting people. There was no escape from the daily routine of misery, meekness, frustration, and resentment embellished by a fake culture of educated talk; no conformity to the customs of fairy-tale lands could possibly save them from the rising nausea that this combination continuously inspired.

This inability to escape into the wide world, this feeling of being caught again and again in the trappings of society—so different from the conditions which had formed the imperialist character—added a constant strain and yearning for violence to the older passion for anonymity and losing oneself. Without the possibility of a radical change of role and character, such as the identification with the Arab national movement or the rites of an Indian village, the self-willed immersion in the suprahuman forces of destruction seemed to be a salvation from the automatic identification with pre-established functions in society and their utter banality, and at the same time to help destroy the functioning itself. These people felt attracted to the pronounced activism of totalitarian movements, to their curious and only seemingly contradictory insistence on both the primacy of sheer action and the overwhelming force of sheer necessity. This mixture corresponded precisely to the war experience of the "front" generation, to the experience of constant activity within the framework of events which were completely determined from outside.

COMMENTARY
THE DISENCHANTED

TRUE or false, the charge by Mr. Alan Pryce-Jones that modern literature has not only come of age, but has attained the tired and disappointed tone of middle age is something to wonder about. More than likely, it is true, for Mr. Pryce-Jones is literary editor of the London *Times* and writes out of a wide experience. He further remarks:

> Fear of the future, fatigue, the habit of introspection, loss of faith: all these have worked against the ardor of youth and the serenity of age in favor of a slightly soured middle state. Yet what seems to have affected writers most of all is the disappearance of subjects to write about.
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> This looks like a paradox. How can it be possible for a world in flux to lack a subject? All the same, the subjects that spring from so violent an assault upon the human condition—whether moral, political or scientific—turn out to be mirages. They cannot be seized or worked upon; they can only be watched in silence' or exclaimed at. (New York *Times Book Review,* Dec. 10, 1950.)

No doubt that whirl is king, these days. No doubt that youth can find no great causes to champion. But why, we should like to ask, is "middle age" the symbol, paradigm and archetype of the inconsequential and uninspired in human life? What is the matter with our "life," that it should typically sour in its middle—a time which ought normally to mark the beginning of fulfillment? And if we are spent at forty, how shall we be serene at sixty? Perhaps we enter the wrong race at twenty, and do not realize for half a generation that we have only kept a treadmill spinning under our feet.

This is certainly true of our more than slightly soured twentieth century, which is also middle-aged. Mr. Pryce-Jones observes that there are no longer "a number of basic assumptions about human nature and society" which are "generally accepted." The writer of today does not know where he stands. He has no Archimedean stability. And that, it seems, is precisely the problem of our time. What shall we stand upon, in order to say we are going somewhere from here? Middle age, from this point of view, is any time when we no longer see anywhere to go, and the sourness comes from realizing it. Perhaps, in ages to come, psychologists will say that in the middle age of the twentieth century, the frustrations of middle-aged human beings caught up with them in history, and they had to learn to be born again.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves

[Some readers have told us that they liked, and why they liked, the sensitive, imaginative dialogue between Socrates and a child, as reprinted from *Gorgo,* by Charles Kelsey Gaines, in MANAS, Dec. 6. We needed only the slightest excuse to reprint another condensation from the same source—and one more is to follow. Our reason is the same for all three—the teaching of true philosophy is beautiful, for it brings to the surface the potentialities of harmony and proportion in human thoughts and lives.]

"TELL me who you are?" I said.

"You heard them speak my name," he answered. "And it may be that you have heard before of a certain Socrates, about whom some say foolish things. But what they say is not true,—neither that I am very wise nor that I am more foolish than others."

"No," I answered, "I did not mean what is your name, but what is it that you do."

"I try to find out about the truth," he said.

"And is that all you do?"

"I try always to do what I think is right. Nothing else—unless it be something else to go about asking questions. I know that many dislike me, because I show them that they are believing lies and telling lies to others; but I know also that the gods have commanded me to live just as I do."

"The gods—those gods—they speak to you, Socrates?" I asked, with a greater awe than I had ever known.

"They speak to me," he repeated, bowing his head, "and I have never willingly disobeyed that voice, nor ever shall. It would come to others if they would listen."

"It is so strange," I said, presently, "that you are not beautiful, like Alcibiades. Perhaps it is only your clothes. My father is rich, and he shall give you clothes and money."

"I have no use for thy father's money, son of Hagnon," he answered, sharply. And then he spoke softly, as if he were sorry for that one little harshness. "I take money from no one; yet the thought in your heart was kind, and for that I thank you. But perhaps I am richer than you suppose—richer even than your father. For he, I think, wants many things, and I want nothing."

"Do you mean," I asked, "that those are the richest who do not need anything?"

"Yes, that is exactly what I mean," he answered. "And as to my not taking money—not to speak of any other reasons now, though there *are* other reasons—it does not seem to me to be right for one who is richer to take from those who are poorer."

I pondered over this; for to me these were new ideas, and I had never seen anybody, unless it were my mother, who did not seem to care for money. Even those who gave it away in great purses, like my father, and those who flung it about and pretended not to care, like Alcibiades, did care and set great store by it; that I saw clearly enough. But this man did not care for it at all. Then my thought went back to those still stranger things that he had said about the soul. That was the reason of his not caring,—he cared only for the soul, because that was the only thing that lasted. All the rest was to him like the things that one leaves for the slaves to use.

"Tell me," I broke out, suddenly, "what is it that really happens when one dies?"

"I do not know," he said. And this shocked me, for I had thought that of course he would know all about it. "But I do know this," he went on, "that no harm can ever come to any soul that always does what is right."

But I was sceptical now. "How can you know that," I demanded, "when you do not know what happens?"

"Have you ever thought why it is," he asked, "that some things are right and other things wrong?"

I had not, but I thought hard now. "It is right," I said, "when we do what the gods want us to."

"And if the gods should want us to do anything that is wrong, or if they should do anything wrong themselves—I do not say that they could—but would that make it right?"

"No!" I cried; for I thought bitterly of my mother, and how we had prayed for her in vain.

"Then right and wrong are something mightier than Jove himself."

"Yes," I answered. Again my spirit was humble, and now I knew why Alcibiades had spoken as he did. "Tell me about it, Socrates."

"I will tell you, then, how it seems to me. To do right is to do what is truly wise. To do wrong is to make a mistake,—wilfully, perhaps, but that is because we think that we are truly wise when we are not. The gods alone are truly wise in everything, and that is why only the gods make no mistakes and never do wrong. If I say anything that you do not think is so, you must stop me."

"Don't stop," I said.

"Well, then, could any real harm come to a soul that is truly wise, and always does what is for the best and never makes mistakes—if that were possible? And it is possible, if we do not forget." He paused, but I did not speak. "And is not this the same as saying that nothing can ever harm the soul of one who does right and never does wrong, whatever may happen, now or hereafter? I do not think that we need to know just what it is that happens, little son of Hagnon."

"But there are such wicked men," I cried, "and if they catch you it isn't any use to be good."

"To be wicked," he said, "is the greatest of all mistakes. It is as if a general should think that all his friends were enemies, and all his enemies friends. A man who is wicked, like the Syrian, is sure to do terrible harm to himself; but he cannot harm any other, not even a child, like you, unless he is able to make him also wicked. And that he cannot do unless you help him; for it is not wrong to suffer what we cannot help, and no such thing ever really harms us. No, little one, the wicked cannot hurt the good."

"But they do hurt them," I insisted.

"Let us be sure that we understand each other," he said. "I do not speak altogether of what most people call harm and talk about as good and evil, not stopping to remember, but of what is really so. I know that the Syrian thought that he could harm us and meant to do it, and that you thought the same thing and feared him greatly; but you were both mistaken. In what way could he have hurt you?"

"He hurt my throat; and he might have killed me."

"If he had run a knife through your tunic, would that have hurt your body?"

"No, not if it was just the cloth that he cut."

"And even if he had cut the flesh and run a sharp knife right through the body, could he have hurt that part of you which is yourself, and does not die, and is only harmed by doing wrong? No, little one; it is very terrible to think about, but the worst that he could do, without your help, would be to tear or to pluck away its garment from the soul."

"And that is why you were not afraid when the black man lifted up his knife?"

"That is why," he answered.

FRONTIERS

What America Is Good At

THE heat of controversy over Mr. Truman's Point Four—which proposes financial aid to the backward countries of the world, to assist in their industrial development—usually arises from another chapter of argument in the old "Isolationist" controversy. Why, it is asked by those against Point Four, should we export our wealth and industrial abilities to help other nations when there is still so much we ought to do for the folks at home? So far as we can see, this is a stale and unprofitable argument. In the first place, money can't buy what the folks at home really need, and the question that ought to be asked of the Point Four enthusiasts is whether or not money can buy what the so-called backward nations really need, even if we have plenty to give them.

Willard Espy's new book, *Bold New Program*, devoted to exploring the possibilities and promise of Point Four, is a good one to read on almost every aspect of this controversy. It helps the reader to understand how money can be used to help other countries, and even if Mr. Espy gives far too little space to what not to do, when it comes to an industrialization program, his book is remarkably informing. *Bold New Program* is a candid and enthusiastic statement of the case for salvation through technology. It is a good book to read for those who habitually decry the ugly face of the modern industrial society and who are aware of industrialism's historic alliance with imperialism in politics and its enormous contribution to the techniques of annihilation in modern war. Their suspicions, we think, will be both qualified and confirmed, in various ways, by this book.

At the outset, Mr. Espy tells of the pioneering activities of several American firms in a Point-Four direction. In Bangalore, India, for example, William D. Pawley started an airplane plant. After three years, Mr. Espy practically exclaims, "the plant was producing planes at a man-hour rate 23 per cent faster than comparable plants in this country." (The Indians are not backward at all!) And wages and conditions are said to be comparable to the best in the United States. Further, the Indian Firestone plant pays its workers equal to American wages in rubber factories, and gets equal or better than American efficiency. But Mr. Espy says nothing about the effects on the Indian community of a factory which pays its workers fifteen or twenty times what the rest of the community people can earn. India may have a "long-term" need for airplanes—an arguable claim—but what about the elite caste of smart young men who get all the jobs in the factory? How does this fabulous wealth affect their lives and attitudes? If the extravagant spending of the American soldiers while in India was a disruptive-force which in two or three years created endless dissatisfactions with normal Indian life—introducing a factor of bitter competition which was far more destructive than even the extreme want of the Indian people—what will the perpetuation of this sort of disproportion in incomes do to the towns and cities which begin to be industrialized?

Mr. Espy finds what seems to him a dramatic illustration of the benefits of industrialization in South America. In Guayaquil, Ecuador, he relates, a little firm called Embotelladora Nacional was formed in 1946 to bottle Pepsi-Cola. Workers, engineers, mechanics and general manager are all Ecuadoreans. The conduct of this company is the very model of beneficent industrialization. When the employers found that only 40 per cent of the workers came each day, instead of "cursing the Ecuadoreans," they "added a physician to the staff." Serious diseases were cured, and to overcome malnutrition among the workers, a restaurant was opened in the plant. The average daily wage in that region was six sucres—about 45 cents. Embotelladora Nacional set its wage at 21 sucres, and paid for seven days, although the work-week was only five. The company also shares 7 per cent of the profits with the employees—a measure which cut losses from careless handling of bottles in half. Again, Mr. Espy exclaims: "Today Embotelladora is selling 3,000 cases of Pepsi-Cola a day at an agreeable profit—and workers and management alike are convinced that the saturation point is still a long way off."

But Mr. Espy does not discuss what happens to such communities when other such plants, less fortunate, begin to show a loss, and the capital, with its desirable jobs, leaves town. Further, while more than half of humanity today lives in a chronic state of semi-starvation, Mr. Espy's choice illustration of the human benefits which grow out of exporting American capital and industrial techniques depends upon promoting a taste for Pepsi-Cola among the hungry and underpaid Ecuadoreans. The "idealist" who prefers water well

may ask how much Pepsi-Cola he is going to have to drink in order to reform the world. Maybe it won't be worth it.

An indiscriminate admiration for industrialism usually mistakes "standard of living" for "excellence of life." The industrialist is likely to boast that the chemical fertilizer plants he erects in backward agricultural regions will double food production, not knowing, or refusing to admit, that this sort of abnormal stimulation to crops very often reduces their actual food value. He may too easily assume that modern agricultural and assembly-line production will be an unmixed blessing for peasants who have been struggling along on methods of farming practiced for thousands of years, and without any but the simplest handmade tools. Modern agriculture too often becomes unmitigated cash crop agriculture—more "factories in the field"—and the assembly line becomes a place where a man stops thinking about making things and starts thinking about making money, and spending it. And yet—in a discussion of this sort, plenty of "and yets" are needed—it won't do to brush aside the constructive uses of industrialism. After World War II, Nelson Rockefeller established the Venezuelan Basic Economy Corporation in order to strengthen the Venezuelan economy. (A similar corporation was set up for Brazil.) The experts of this corporation study the economic problems of the country and offer what seems to be the right kind of assistance. For example:

> In Venezuela, a major problem is food, nearly half of which is imported. Though fish are abundant in Venezuelan coastal waters, formerly they could not become a food staple for lack of refrigeration. They spoiled before they could reach the market. Rockefeller made arrangements to furnish ice for the fishing boats, so that they could stay out days or weeks instead of hours. Then in refrigerated trucks and airplanes the catch was delivered to Venezuelans, for half the price they had previously paid for spoiling fish. Everyone, including Mr. Rockefeller, profited.

Nearly all the Latin American countries have their own government-sponsored development programs for industrialization. They are trying to do in a generation what occupied the United States for 150 years. Brazil, for one, in 1944 laid down the outlines of a program that was designed to increase the national income fivefold within fifteen years. Some measure of the enthusiasm of the Brazilians for modern "progress" is indicated by what happened at the opening of the first Sears, Roebuck department store in Rio de Janeiro in 1949:

> . . . it was visited the first day by 123,000 customers many of whom had been waiting at the doors since sunup. The day's receipts were $550,000. Said jubilant Sears chairman Robert Wood: "We are going to open a store in every key city in South America."
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> Eighty per cent of the items on Sear's Rio shelves are made by Brazilian, not American, manufacturers. Already the effects of this new enterprise are eddying outward in more goods for the average Brazilian—and more money with which the goods can be bought.

Mr. Espy goes on and on with his industrial and commercial drama. It is also a drama of lifesaving medical aid, of the wiping out of plagues, of elimination of pests, and the restoration of lands and peoples. A large part of these accomplishments is owing to the export of skill rather than dollars, of guidance rather than the old-time dollar diplomacy.

Of course, the "bold new program," or any part of it, requires the large-scale organization of either government or capital enterprise. It is not the sort of thing that a group of friendly individualists could undertake during the summer vacation. But it is something that Americans—North Americans, we probably should say—know how to do, and to do well. And it is certainly something that they will continue to do, in the future. Mastery of the physical means of the good life, we could call it. And yet, Mr. Espy's book gives little promise that we are moving toward mastery of the more important "ends." Here lies a basic problem for educators, for students and reformers. It is even more a problem for industrialists and their experts and technicians, for if anything is to be learned from the history of technology, it is that the ends have to be held in mind while the means are being devised. If not, salvation by Pepsi-Cola will doubtless remain the prevailing solution.