

## MORAL CAPITAL

SOME fifty years ago, the United States probably had more moral capital than any other nation in the world. Then, at just about that time—the turn of the century—America set out upon a course leading directly into the web of imperialism: annexation of Hawaii, the Spanish-American war, ending in the conquest of the Philippines, and the renewal of the spirit of "Manifest Destiny" among American statesmen. Samuel Bemis, the historian of American diplomacy, called the war with Spain the "Great Aberration," and if its consequences in American history be traced from that day to this, it is difficult to disagree with Mr. Bemis.

Willingly or unwillingly, eagerly or with chagrin, the United States has behaved in Asia as though it were just another of the great imperialist nations of the West. And Asia, with its 1,163,000,000 souls, has become deeply suspicious of the United States. As a young Indo-chinese patriot, Thau-Oun, now exiled in Bangkok, explained to the authors of a *United Nations World* article on the attitudes of Asians toward America, the soldiers of the United States either watched the Western imperialists recover the territories lost in the war with Japan, or actually assisted in this restoration of colonialism. Thau-Oun, a member of the Free Government of Laos (province of Indochina), told of fighting against the Japanese in the underground:

"During those days in the underground," he said, "we thought that the Americans came as liberators. They had the reputation of sponsoring the cause of subject people. They had freed the Philippines. They were against colonialism. But after the defeat of Japan, the US showed its true intent."

According to this melancholy Laotian, this is what happened. After the Japanese were eliminated, the underground fighters were ready to form the first free government of Laos. At that moment, however, the US and the other allies permitted the French troops to return and reconquer Laos and the rest of Indochina by force of arms.

"We had daily risked our lives for our freedom," Thau-Oun said. "But now the colonial regime was re-imposed on us with American aid. Do you wonder that we can no longer accept the word of Americans without reservations?"

It was the same story in Cambodia and in Indonesia. And a brilliant Chinese playwright said:

We genuine liberals would have cooperated gladly with any group working for democracy in China . . . But America continued to back the Nationalists who threw liberals into prison as a matter of routine. So the liberals either escaped to Communist North China or took refuge in Hong Kong, meaning bitter exile. I chose the latter. But many chose the other way out. Thus liberalism was extinguished in China. Tell me, why is it that America always seems to back the wrong horse in Asia?

Thus the United States, after having been the inspiration of countless Asian revolutionaries, has practically lost the respect of Asia. And when an American visits the Orient and speaks of helping the East to learn to practice democracy, he is invariably asked about the sort of "democracy" enjoyed by Negro Americans. The fact that communist propaganda has planted this question everywhere in the world does not do away with the necessity of making a reasonable answer. And Americans have no reasonable answer to this question—none, that is, which can satisfy the thousand million people of Asia, *who are all colored people*.

It is possible, of course, for Americans to be contemptuous of such searching inquiries. We can call the Koreans "gooks," as though they belonged to a not-quite-human breed, and we can—for a while longer—pretend to ourselves that the industrial genius and military power of the West will always be able to drive back the tide of resurgent nationalism in the Orient. But meanwhile, another great country of the world, a country of Asia, is rapidly acquiring the moral capital which the United States has lost. Last summer, Jawaharlal Nehru, Prime Minister of India, said:

The fate of Asia is still being determined by statesmen of the Western world. I wish to point out that any attempt to solve the problems of Asia without taking Asia into consideration cannot succeed.

India is as yet a country without military power. India has only moral power, and even this is focussed largely in the hands of Mr. Nehru, who is, from all accounts, a very lonely man in his idealistic statesmanship. Yet the world will have its hope for peace and justice, and it seems likely that the little people of the world, the small nations which do not "count" in the deliberations of the great Powers, and the subject and colonial peoples who still long for their freedom, have found a spokesman in Mr. Nehru.

Countless Europeans dreamed for centuries of a new and free life in a new and free land—America. But this particular dream, for Europeans as for nearly everyone else, has become tarnished and unattractive. Our doors are closed, our generosity withered by fear, and our invitation to the "tired and huddled masses" of the Old World has been withdrawn. Perhaps the deepest affront to the Europeans is that we have become too like them, subject to the same mutual distrusts and continuing antipathies. We have destroyed their dream of a New World to which their children, if not themselves, might some day go, leaving behind their weight of poverty and despair.

We still speak of peace and justice as we used to speak when what we said was still believable, but we are not trusted any more. How can a nation which is stock-piling atom bombs be trusted by anyone?

How easy it is, these days, for the hope and confidence of the world to be gained, becomes evident from the attention that is paid to Prime Minister Nehru. He speaks with his back to the wall, and he stands, as it were, upon the lid of a boiling kettle of almost insoluble domestic problems. More than half the Indian people are hungry all the time. There is corruption in Nehru's own Congress Party—admitted and condemned in the Indian press—and the country is obviously adopting many of the less desirable Western ways. A writer in

*Swatantra* (a South Indian monthly) tells of his experience in newly industrialized Bombay:

During all their waking hours, the bosses and the intermediaries of industry have never been able to switch off their minds from money and the problems of making it even for a few minutes. Some of them appear to possess charming manners and they display in their houses articles and books which we normally associate with men of culture and taste. But they are there, merely as decorative features. Inherently they are crude and vulgar. They have no interest in the abiding things of life, and their sole preoccupation is to make money regardless of ethical codes.

But in the foreign liberal periodical press, India remains the land of spirituality, of cultural renaissance and devotion to social and moral ideals. Nehru is everywhere quoted as the man of the hour—the world's man of the hour—who sees without partisanship and speaks without national self-interest; as indeed he is, and does. The peoples of the world want terribly to *believe* in India—they want to be able to think that *ex oriente lux* may still become more than a metaphor and a memory. Even if Nehru should turn out to be a man without a country—a patriot of the world whose birthland belies his noblest utterances—the world will long continue to cherish its faith that where good men with courage can arise, there is still a soil where may blossom the tree of peace and justice.

The world, in truth, asks for very little to support its faith in the goodness of mankind. We all know how difficult goodness and justice are to fulfill. High motives and honest effort are enough to satisfy us. No one asks success all at once. Even America could regain much of the world-faith it has lost by practicing only a little trust in the good will and integrity of the struggling peoples of the East. The world does not want to have its dreams betrayed.

## *Letter from* **ENGLAND**

LONDON.—"About the last of August," a Virginian wrote in his diary for the year 1619, "came a Dutch man-of-war." Not a noteworthy incident in itself. But the commander of the vessel sold the Virginians 20 Negroes, the first to be imported into English America. This is but one link in the chain of events that has gone to make up the history of western civilization in its relation to racial theory and practice. The fact has had present significance, however, because of the shock lately felt by readers of an English edition of *Scottsboro Boy*, by Haywood Patterson and Earl Conrad. The violence and racial discrimination described in this book, and the heroism of Judge James E. Horton of the Alabama Circuit Court—arising out of an incident that occurred twenty years ago—have made an intense impression on thoughtful minds. Obviously, it is easy for Europeans, and especially so for Russian Communists, to make capital arguments out of the story. But in this matter of callous treatment, no country's hands are clean. As one reviewer has put it:

Compared with Auschwitz, Katyn, Buchenwald, and the "corrective" camps of Russia and her satellites, what are the sufferings of nine Negro boys in the prisons of Alabama? Yet a million suffering men can feel no more than one man. Human experience, in spite of the excesses of collectivism, remains measurable only in terms of the individual. Our dulled sensitivities, sympathies and imagination today are towards suffering, cruelty and inhumanity in general: the things in themselves.

Another book dealing with another aspect of the racial problem has recently received attention, especially because of events in Korea and elsewhere. This is *Agrarian Unrest in Southeastern Asia*, by Erich H. Jacoby. It is a striking criticism of the economic policies of Western nations in the Philippines, Java, Burma, Malaya, Indo-China, and Siam. Although these communities differ a good deal, Mr. Jacoby discovers common features—all the economies have become dependent, "with unhappy results for the native; and almost all have undergone the change to the benefit either of foreign states or of foreign financiers and entrepreneurs." Subsistence farming has been replaced by farming for export markets. The farm unit has become larger, and the little cultivator is now a serf. If this process goes on, without regard to the need of a mixed economy, a fair system of land tenure, and the use of

finance in favour of the small cultivator, the entire area will turn from unrest to revolution.

Many English people who may be inclined to self-righteousness over other countries' villainies will be sharply reminded of their own iniquities by a perusal of the recently re-issued *White Settlers and Native Peoples*, by Dr. Grenfell Price, covering the history of the relations of the white settlers and their Governments with the native inhabitants in the United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, from the earliest contacts to the present day. The story is depressingly similar in all four countries. In each case, white settlement meant the destruction of whole tribes through disease (smallpox being the most deadly), alcohol, eviction, and massacre. In Australia, for instance, the Tasmanian people were exterminated by 1870. In New Zealand, the Maori wars were caused largely by robbery of Maori land. Missionary teachings only had the effect of undermining traditional cultures, the growth of non-Christian "cults of despair" amongst both the Maoris and American Indians being evidence of their failure.

Turning to Africa, we have the Rev. Michael Scott pointing out in the *London Observer* (August 20, 1950) that "the conservation and balanced use of African soil and-natural resources can never be achieved by machines alone, nor by a total disregard of the principles of social organisation and elementary human rights." In Africa, as in Asia, there are raw materials upon which powerful nations, in command of enormous industrial resources, depend for the supply of vital necessities in peace and war. The danger is that the "democracies" (akin in this to the "totalitarians") will pronounce in favour of the exploitation of populations "without the law," if they should be persuaded that such political and economic use of others for their own profit is necessary for survival and the retention of desirable standards of living.

What is the answer to this problem, which has all the makings of racial war in the future? Social panaceas abound; but no quick or easy solution is possible. Dr. Albert Schweitzer has suggested that "our present entire lack of any theory of the universe (Weltanschauung) is the ultimate source of all the catastrophes and misery of our times." This is probably true. Above all, it is necessary to remember, in these days of moral confusion, that any such valid theory, and the convictions built upon it, must have as its basis the inalienable self-redemption and self-enlightenment of the individual.

ENGLISH CORRESPONDENT

## *REVIEW*

### WARS WITHIN WARS

A CONSCIENTIOUS attempt to reduce modern warfare to a series of psychological equations finds expression in David Davidson's, *The Steeper Cliff*. Perhaps the intensity of deliberate message-carrying has prevented the book from being either great or compelling literature, but the ideas embodied are important, and, if one is inclined to give them due reflection, compellingly suggestive.

A desk soldier, Andrew Cooper, becomes an investigator in Germany's American army of occupation, with the task of selecting the Germans best ideologically fitted for staffing revived German newspapers and magazines. Cooper discovers that the job has difficulties. He is looking for men of courage, who refused to prostitute their talents in service to the Nazi regime. But most of these died in concentration camps or were broken physically or psychologically, whereas his office is receiving numerous applicants anxious to do profitable business as usual with the Americans, as they once had managed with the Party.

This story is one of initiation into the mysteries of human integrity, and Cooper, metaphorically peeling the skin from the onion, is profoundly disturbed by recognizing his own traits reflected again and again in Germans who once took the easy way out. He discovers that his own position, years after the termination of hostilities, is very close to being identical with that of the men who knew better than they did—who did not *like* the injustices of the regime but who took a prudent or expedient course. Cooper's military superior is an ambitious incompetent whose one thought is of promotion, and who is perfectly willing to approve publishing certificates for applicants on the basis of their present affluence rather than their war-years record. The drama of the tale comes through Cooper's search for a missing German who seems to be his own counterpart—a "man of ideals" who was nonetheless somewhat weakened by his fear of torture and imprisonment. Encountering official opposition in his attempts to find and install this German, Lorenz, as editor of a paper, in preference to someone his

superiors favor, Cooper knows that he must risk court martial in order to complete his investigation. He, like Lorenz, his "German image," at first retreats from the field under fire. Finally, however, he brings himself to a psychological maturity which demands action on principle, a position into which he is more or less "shamed"—after all, any punishment for opposition to his own superiors will amount to less than nothing in comparison with what Lorenz had to face if caught writing or distributing anti-Nazi tracts during the war.

The final truth, for Cooper, lies in his realization that the world is made livable not just by the few who are *complete* heroes, but by those who somehow manage to be heroes part of the time. The last stages of his investigation are undertaken against explicit orders, finally involving escape from arrest and the stealing of a car. Cooper, in other words, finally stood up and fought the Nazism within his own regime. The reward for fighting this war within a war was strange, but real enough to Cooper, as indicated in the concluding paragraphs of the book:

Ahead of him, he reminded himself as he went down the dark stairs, were arrest, trial and imprisonment. Against all these he would offer no defense. It was coming to him. Not for the guilt as charged, but the greater indictment within: that he was half a coward.

And yet—he saw sudden satisfaction—by the course he had taken these past six months, by all those reckless acts of independence, he had proved also that he was half a hero. And by the penances he had so freely invoked from himself he had won half an absolution. Never again would he be haunted so sharply by the blood he had failed to spill at the side of Joey Hall; he had succeeded finally in spilling some drops of his own. And at the bottom of the cliff was peace.

I could be considered happy, he thought.

If every man who had direct experience with the workings of an occupation government were able to come forth with Davidson's conclusions—he based them on his own experience with SHAEF and the military government in Bavaria—our occupation authorities might conceivably have done some genuine good. The following illustrates the likeness of the moral problem for both Germans and

Americans—and we can of course add the Japanese and the Russians. The Time of Testing for one nation, or for one individual, is seldom the same moment for any other, but the implication here is that the tests *will* come for all, and that because of the fundamental interdependence of all humans in a sort of metaphysical brotherhood, the welfare of each is dependent upon the small decisions of every individual who is put to the test in his own time and place:

This, too, had to be granted, that we were the creatures of the history into which we were born. Had the seventy million Germans been born in America, they would have lived out their lives drinking soda pop. And had our nation of Americans been Germans, Andrew Cooper among them, we would have divided just as inevitably into Gestapomen and victims, a few of us heroes. It was history which exposed or concealed our capacities for brutality, heroism or cowardice, the history into which helplessly and accidentally we were born. History was the litmus paper. . . . Yet there were occasional variables. To some the litmus was never applied in any case: those Germans who had come through the Third Reich looking good, but by no deed of their own. They had managed to evade the litmus. Contrariwise, though I was born in the land of the breathing spell, the land blessedly free of litmus, I managed to find it, nevertheless. For reasons of my own, because of accidents which were not lucky, I have been living with litmus all my life. And here, before me, is the result of the test. . . .

There are, indeed, an infinite number of wars within every war. The record of national disaster grows from the soil of expedient compliance as much as from the warped consciences of power-mad rulers. The society of Nazi Germany punished men for failure to carry out the policies which the victorious Americans later indicted as crimes against society at large. In the war crimes trial, the issues seemed perfectly clear—as formulated by the prosecutors. Yet the individual on trial had perhaps been long standing on a sand of shifting values, his own innate reluctance to capitulate being opposed by the whole psychology of his immediate surroundings.

This, perhaps, is an appropriate place for quoting a passage from *Down in my Heart* by William E. Stafford. An American conscientious

objector to World War II, Stafford writes of an ironical situation which, however it may stretch the point we are trying to make, is nonetheless a reminder of the typical incapacity of our society to make its professed values serve clearly and unequivocally in all instances:

In those latter days we often fought fire in the company of state prisoners and servicemen either not yet sent overseas or back here pending discharge. One bleak and frosty night three of us sat hunched over a tiny campfire on a ridge above the fire line. I asked the wearer of the purple heart how he had received it; he said it was for the wounds he received while accounting for the lives of some vast number of Japanese—fifty-three, I think.

Our companion was a prisoner, a Filipino doing the fifteenth year of a life term. He scratched his head, kicked disconsolately at the fire, and said,

"I killed a Jap too, but I guess it was out of season."

The decorated one looked at him with a sad expression and said, "No fooling, is that what you're up for?"

"That's what I'm up for," said the little fellow. "But if you think that's funny—here's a guy," and he indicated me, "who's up because he refused to kill Japs."

This is not to argue that the Filipino was "right" in his slaying of the Japanese, nor that Stafford was right in refusing to have anything to do with fighting a war, nor that it was necessarily admirable for the wearer of the Purple Heart to have accounted for fifty-three lives during battle. It is rather to indicate that human laws, unless and until they are formulated around undeviating principles, will often present us with the Jekyll-Hyde face of moral confusion.

**COMMENTARY**  
**ON TEACHING DEMOCRACY**

IN Professor Bell's article in *Common Cause* for January (quoted under Frontiers), there is a passage dealing with the "occupation policy" of the United States:

When a country is conquered, we liberate it. That is what we call giving it democracy. It is as though we thought democracy a nominal thing, an abstract condition, when it is the organic life of a liberal and economically endowed people. Democracy is the rarest flower, for whose intricate suspension the whole plant of a culture and religion and Renaissance and idealistic burgeoning seems required. We cannot bestow it with constitutions and free elections.

Quite possibly, we cannot bestow it at all. At any rate, we certainly have little to offer, say, to the Koreans, in some departments of their culture. The Korean theater, for example, has traditions as old or older than American and European forms of the drama. Korean drama originated ages ago in Buddhist monasteries. When, in 1910 the Japanese suppressed all forms of typically Korean culture, the Korean theatre survived by presenting plays which hid their propaganda for freedom under the guise of symbolism. In 1945, after the "liberation" of Korea by American and Russian arms, some sixty acting groups sprang up, almost overnight, offering both traditional dramas and new ones that expressed gratitude for the newly-found freedom of Korea. The division of the country into northern and southern zones soon reduced by two thirds these companies of players, but the survivors kept going, even under tremendous difficulties. An article in *Eastern World* recently laid stress on the democratic character of the Korean theater:

Every job in the Korean theatre is important. No star system exists, and small-part players receive the same consideration as actors playing the leading roles. Back stage in Korean theaters, the leading lady and the girl who plays the walk-on role of the maid share the same dressing room and make-up table.

Korean actors also play Western dramas. Shakespeare, Ibsen, Shaw, and Galsworthy are popular with Korean audiences. These companies carry their own sets, lighting equipment, and costumes from town to town, over treacherous roads, to bring their art to the Korean people. That is, they used to do this, before Russia and the United States decided that Korea was more important as a preliminary battleground than as the seat of an ancient civilization with a history and "plant of culture" that date back in legend more than 4,000 years.

## CHILDREN ... and Ourselves

Editors: In a recent issue the point is made that children have a right to privacy in some of their thoughts and with some of their time. Not long ago my son brought home from school for my signature a paper which asked me, as a parent, to witness his signature on a statement declaring that he understands he is to be expelled if found joining any "fraternity, sorority, or secret club" during his high school career. Children from their earliest years find a world of fun and adventure in forming "clubs." It seems a fundamental urge of the human race to group together for various purposes. We question very much the psychology of eliminating undesirable organizations in this way. It seems that whatever evils there may be in secret organizations will not be destroyed, but only held in temporary suspension and perhaps intensified, by forbidding their existence. In Homer Lane's book, *Talks to Parents and Teachers* (quoted in MANAS Aug. 2, 1950), the author speaks of children refining their own motivations and actions, if they are left sufficiently free from interference to desire to do so.

THE first suggestion we should like to make in regard to the fraternity controversy is that all interested parents and teachers refrain from taking a completely negative stand. The form distributed to parents by the Los Angeles City High School Board of Education is obviously subject to severe criticism on psychological grounds. Being, by implication, an arbitrary rule, it may be expected to stir rebellious opposition. The greatest danger of those adolescent "concentrations of power" which high school fraternities represent has always been in the fact that youths in such association tend to "gang up" *against* another group—either another "fraternity," another social or racial group, or the entire faculty of a high school. Belligerent factionalism worries the Los Angeles City High School Board, but we can't attack the psychology of "being against" by adopting it. Absolute prohibition of any fraternity, on or off campus, will encourage and deepen any already existing sense of separation from parents and faculty.

This is not to imply that we are advocating high school fraternities and sororities; we are sympathetic with the dilemma of the Board, and, if anyone finds difficulty in feeling likewise, a reading of Irving Shulman's documentary-type novels of fraternal gang life should be quite an eye-opener (*The Amboy Dukes* and sequel, *Cry Tough*, now published in twenty-five cent editions). Psychologists who specialize in juvenile delinquency have also contributed much sociological research on the corroding influence of such organizations in large cities. But we need to begin, here, as in all other instances of destructive behavior, with a thoughtful consideration of environment. Our own series of articles a year or so ago on the "ideal school" devoted considerable space to discussion of the limitations of all educational environments which lack roots in a "natural" or "productive" life. The psychic energies of children need constructive outlets and without them adolescents will tend, especially in groups, toward destruction. Urban existence and a non-productive home life greatly intensify psychological conflicts within the family.

The adolescent who becomes complicatedly involved with the doings of a factional group finds less and less opportunity to discover himself as an individual. The members usually dress alike, look alike, think alike, and, when they happen to be alone, immaturely speculate about their relationships with that particular group. And such clubs and fraternities have a divisive effect on the rest of the student body and the community at large. An unwelcome precociousness in respect to ways and means for exploiting sex is one of the first results, and even if the particular group be fairly well controlled by the self-interest which keeps well-to-do children from too open a break with their parents' views on such matters, the influence upon adolescent emotions is apparently always more confusing than inspiring.

The prohibition technique simply does not work, least of all when it is sponsored by an institutional body representing Responsibility to

Society. If this is so, what practical recommendation can be made? With the hope that it will not sound trite, we can only say that the essential problems represented by the present controversy will not have been resolved until the adults of a community, both parents and teachers, leave enough room for enthusiasm in their own lives to appreciate all opportunities for association with youth, on youth's own basis as well as their own. Adolescents are not "naturally" opposed to the comradeship of older persons. They are often conditioned to opposition by the rigidities of mind, the fright and worry and stiffness of adult natures. Yet in every community there are probably many adults who add enjoyment to their own lives by including younger people in their recreational activities.

In conclusion, it might be useful to call attention to evidence of something a bit neurotic in the approach of the Board of Education. Being empowered by California laws to prevent pupils from "belonging to any secret fraternity, sorority or club," the Board then asks both student and parent to sign a pledge that they recognize the right of the Board to expel the student for belonging "to any fraternity, sorority, or secret club." The Board has changed things considerably, has it not? The original stipulation is against "secret fraternities" of an oath-bound nature. This does not prevent the existence of fraternities or sororities, nor their right to conduct meetings and business in their own fashion, but only that the *existence* of these associations be declared.

The fact that fraternities and sororities are favored and admired groups in collegiate life makes it all the more inadvisable to inform adolescents that they are without any capacity to conduct such affairs at the high school level. The School Board will actually encourage extreme factionalism when it utilizes the prohibition method, and insures that college fraternal organizations will eventually become more rather than less fanatical as a result of attitude reactions developed in pre-college years. The latter

subject—College Fraternities—is, of course, a topic in itself, while "factionalism" is a discouraging common denominator for both high school and college problems.



## *FRONTIERS* Days of Wrath

IT has remained for a professor of the humanities, not a psychologist, nor a political scientist, nor even an authority on civil liberties, to suggest a key to the peculiar afflictions of democracy in this epoch—the loyalty oaths, the red-baiting, and the guilt-by-association persecution of independent thinkers. In *Common Cause* for January, Charles G. Bell, assistant professor of humanities at the University of Chicago, writes on the ultimate dilemmas before the people of the United States, and when he is done, the reader, while not encouraged, at least knows the sort of decision which lies ahead, and knows what he must do to gain still deeper understanding of his time and its multiplying confusions. It is a time when, in the words of Yeats,

The best lack all conviction, while the worst  
Are full of passionate intensity.

This key Mr. Bell finds in Thucydides' *History of the Peloponnesian Wars*, in the state of mind of the "liberal" society of the Hellenes after the Corcyran revolution:

Words had to change their ordinary meaning and to take that which was now given them. Reckless audacity came to be considered the courage of a loyal ally; prudent hesitation, specious cowardice; moderation was held a cloak for unmanliness; ability to see all sides of a question, inaptness to act on any. Frantic violence became the attribute of manliness; cautious plotting, a justifiable means of self-defense. The advocate of extreme measures was always trustworthy; his opponent a man to be suspected. . . . The ancient simplicity into which honor so largely entered was laughed down and disappeared; society became divided into camps in which no man trusted his fellow. . . . Meanwhile the moderate part of the citizens perished between extremes. . . . All parties dwelling rather in their calculation upon the hopelessness of a permanent state of things were more intent upon self-defense than capable of confidence.

With Thucydides as text, we may now turn to Owen Lattimore's *Ordeal by Slander*, to Carey McWilliams' *Witch Hunt*, to the weekly pages of the *Nation* and other journals of liberal and radical

protest to recognize the past in the present and the present in the past. You will not, perhaps, warm over-much to Mr. Lattimore's "personality," but he becomes the very type and symbol of the victim of people like ourselves—like the Greeks after Corcyra. The charges against Lattimore and his prosecution by public slander are so monstrously unjust as to illustrate and vindicate every overtone and implication of the Greek historian's analysis. One thing, and almost one thing only, becomes crystal clear from reading such books and articles as these—the real crime, nowadays, is to be the sort of person who can become suspected of *anything*.

The only way the fearful conformist can ever enter paradise is by dirtying all independence with suspicion and contempt. And that is what has happened, today. We now see the almost absolute triumph of narrow and jealous mediocrity. Mr. Lattimore may have been completely exonerated by the Senate investigating committee, but if you were running a small college dependent upon military subsidies for its support—and what small college is not?—would *you* hire him to teach a course in foreign affairs? He must have done *something* injudicious, people will say, to get into all that trouble.

What he really did do was to make himself, by hard work and study, into one of the leading authorities of the time on Chinese affairs. Then, when Chinese affairs became a matter of public concern in the United States, he spoke out with his opinions. These opinions were not even tinged with communism. "No one can read him intelligently," a *New York Times* reviewer has remarked, "and find evidence of personal sympathy with communism. His accusers had to distort his words in order to make even a superficial case against him on this score." Lattimore's injudiciousness consisted in knowing his subject and having convictions and in voicing them. There lay his danger, and there lies the danger of every one of us who has convictions and an inclination to expose them to view. As the *Times* writer says:

Most of us, to be sure, are protected by obscurity from the kind of attack made on Mr. Lattimore and a few others. Yet if any Senator thinks it worth while

to go after any citizen as Senator McCarthy went after Mr. Lattimore that citizen is in for trouble. Let us assume a wholly fictitious case. Senator A. says that Mr. B. is a Communist agent. Mr. B. must defend himself. To do this he rallies his friends, including Mr. C. Mr. C. says he is certain Mr. B. is not a Communist agent. By the curious psychology sometimes prevailing in some Congressional committees this makes Mr. C. himself suspect—and so on ad infinitum. The only safe course is to keep still or to join the hue and cry after an innocent victim.

When this situation can arise something is wrong with the machinery—perhaps even the spirit—of democratic America. . . .

What is worst about the "situation" is the complacency of those who go about saying to themselves, "Nothing like that could ever happen to *me*—I would never lay myself open to that kind of trouble." Copies of *Ordeal by Slander* and *Witch Hunt* could be placed in every library, barber shop and dentist's office in the country, and there would still be a sizeable number of people who look upon the accused ones with suspicious feelings akin to resentment—"What right have *they* to any sympathy or special consideration?—nobody *made* them stick their necks out that way!"

Right here, in this apotheosis of colorless conformity lies the terrible weakness of our society and our democracy. At root, it is a jealousy of any sort of distinction, of any kind of knowledge that may count for something.

It is the sort of worship of the commonplace and unimaginative which led the first generation of rulers of Soviet Russia to send the liberal intelligentsia of their country—the scholars and scientific specialists—to concentration camps. It is a fear of any sort of critical intellectuality and moral integrity which may refuse to bend with the storms of hysteria which sweep the country. And while this indifference, this jealousy or this fear is counting its virtues and congratulating itself upon its immunity to any kind of "trouble," some of the best men that we have, in the universities and in government, are being picked off like clay pigeons by the snipers who articulate the spurious self-esteem of those who can never be suspected of anything.

Mr. Bell's article in *Common Cause* is not so much devoted to the "home front" as to the foreign affairs of the country. We have used his quotation from Thucydides because it seemed so pat a summary of the psychological condition of the home front, and because this psychological condition comes closer than any analysis we know to making clear the origins of both our witch hunts and our muddled foreign policy. What, exactly, is the matter with us? In terms of national policy, Mr. Bell describes both the situation and the ensuing dilemmas with a clarity that leaves little more to add:

We allow the fact of cold war. Must we allow also the demonstrated flaws of our national character, flaws that are often the other face of freedom: the irresponsibility, as of a hurricane or a force of nature, of might without will; the reversal of policy and condemnation of statesmen; the entire dearth of leaders; the inertial lag of a propagandized people, slowly heated and slowly cooled, fluctuating and overshooting the mark of wisdom; the tug of capital seeking private profits in isolation until sucked into war, then clutching at whatever terror offers to save its skin; the self-serving intrigue of the military, talking of armament for peace, but leaping, as it arms, into the wars its arming stirs? Are we to admit all the woven threads of determined past that project like steel rails into the determined and appalling future? That is again to drown action in the contemplated dread.

Yet we cannot close our eyes to the facts of what we are. Policy must begin at least with the nature it intends to guide. Advising a pigmy to proceed like Hercules is throwing him into the Hydra's jaws. How can a Christian say we should disarm and stay out of war when he knows that our nature will draw us into war and that the enemy is strong? How, on the other hand, can an honest liberal tell us to arm to the teeth in the hope our strength will be wisely directed toward the larger good, when he knows it will be blindly abused in the kind of wasteful shifting of which our generation has given example to the world? It is like persuading a drunkard to start on another binge, with the assurance that one small drink will do him good. Unfounded hope, whether military or Christian, abandons the possible for the wished unreal. And yet, if the possible is inevitably grim enough, it is perhaps better for decent men to cling to the divine dream. If that has the weakness of impracticality, the other becomes collaboration with the beast. . . .

Mr. Bell has illustrations. In Korea, he points out, while we talked of establishing democracy there, we attempted no real reforms because we had no intention of staying to enforce them, yet we fear to risk giving the country to "indoctrinated peasants who promise to be our foes." So we side more and more with reaction—with Chiang Kai-shek. "We refuse to take a gamble on change anywhere, knowing it would alienate such decaying friends and leave us with uncertain rewards." Meanwhile, we long for a simple life within our own boundaries—let us be like the Swiss, we say, and set a larger example to the world. But this is a dream. We have "crucial" outposts everywhere. From Thucydides, again, comes the barbed and pointed truth:

It will be more honest to say with Pericles: "What you hold is, to speak bluntly, a tyranny; to take it was perhaps wrong, but to let it go is unsafe." Until our entire economy and way of life is changed we will be drawn into wars and responsible for peace. Our destiny is chosen. There is only the question whether we will succeed in it or fail. So far we have failed.

Try as he will, Mr. Bell cannot discourage us with his article. Perhaps this is because the insight of Thucydides is a greater thing than the fall of Athens and the whole Peloponnesian disaster. Perhaps it is because vision and understanding are greater things than any sort of victory, and will outlive every defeat. We are wondering what else Mr. Bell has written, and what it is like.

## *Has it Occurred to Us?*

AMERICANS are known to their more sophisticated cousins "on the Continent" as a people who, by and large, prefer happy endings. It is customary to apologize for this childlike taste, and to murmur something appropriate about the ardors of a "young country," such murmurings invariably carrying the overtones of an indulgent but much more experienced—indeed a *completely* experienced—guardian.

But has it occurred to us that the desire for a happy ending may indicate something more than wishful optimism? Is it only false hope which suggests that no matter how dark the clouds or how bitter the lot, there will be brightness at the end of the road? Is it really an axiom that suffering is merely interrupted, but never abolished?

The phrase, "happy ending," probably needs replacement, for the idea relates to the happiness, rather than the ending, and carries more the sense of the fairy tale formula, "and they lived happily ever after." A happy ending does not write *Finis* to the story. Instead, it is an open sesame, the password of one who knows where treasure is hid and who can command entrance to the secret stores. It is sometimes said that life begins where the fairy tale leaves off, and this is necessarily true. How else, when life consists in meeting situations that never appear in fairy tales, in trying formulas no genie has yet demonstrated? Every life-story has a period of *external* difficulties, when the obstructive elements seem to come down upon the hero from a lowering sky, or to rise up in his path from a nether world of mischievous and baleful forces. As long as this period lasts, the story can be told. Not until outside influences are spent, or somehow fail to motivate the action of the leading character, does the "happy ending" occur.

What happens when the story ends? It closes upon what has been, and offers the protection of silence to what may be. The happy ending

signifies that life is now beginning in earnest, that the chief actor is prepared to take on the subtler hazards of the inner battle. He can and should live happily ever afterward, so far as extraneous conditions are concerned. No disaster, no hardship, no inconvenience visited upon him by the winds of circumstance need be feared: henceforth the real storms will arise within himself, be grappled with interiorly, and abated by the inherent power of will. What is this but liberty—the freedom to exist unhampered by "forces beyond our control"? What is this but the pursuit of happiness, if happiness be thought of as a balance of the mind, a lightening of the heart, a just and generous wielding of the will?

The proposition that suffering is inescapable cannot be struck from the record, but to this must be added the corollary proposition that joy is likewise inescapable. If suffering were the only constant factor in existence, we would not call it suffering, but "life." The awareness of pain and sorrow proves the presence of their companion-opposites, joy and pleasure. Without both equally perceived, we could not know either. Shut inside one or the other, we temporarily give ourselves over to an intruder. Again, our "story" can be recounted, for we are no longer secreted in our own citadel. We have resumed a role created by someone or something else; we play upon the boards of a public theatre, living a character who is not ourself. But the play cannot go on forever, and sooner or later we return to the "play within the play," which we cannot step out of, which is the inner life no one else can add to or subtract from.

The play within—our life apart from all "supporting roles"—is the continuing character that remains when everything else falls away, departs, or vanishes from sight. In that play we are *ourselves*, writing the scene as we act it, watching the action as we play it, and planning new scenes in which we are simultaneously playwright, actor, audience, and critic. This play has no ending, happy or otherwise, for we seem to

know that as long as we live we shall continue the private drama—and who can imagine himself as dead? In the theatre of self-consciousness we are always alone, but, intensely occupied, we never feel loneliness. Loneliness overtakes us only when we lock ourselves out of the theatre, and try to find employment elsewhere, in second-hand parts, threadbare plots, and worn-out characterizations.

What is our play about, or what are we about? It concerns the principles we live by, and we are experimenting with their permutations. We believe, for example, in honor and fair play. We take the role of honor, create a scene revolving around that theme, act it out, and wonder how it can be improved. Our self-made and self-executed dramas are not, however, "imaginary." In fact, they are the very substance of our lives, intimately correlated with all our experiences, and usually suggested by the striking incidents in our relationships with others. Our conscience maintains a running commentary on the events of our lives and our conduct in them, but conscience, being only an after-voice, would make "cowards of us all," were it not that imagination—more spirited than conscience—presents pictures of what might be, filling the future with new designs for self-conquest.

Has it occurred to us that if we incline toward a "happy ending," we shall always expect the best of life, and the most from liberty? We know that no *ending* can be happy, because we ourselves go on. Happiness, to be happiness at all, must be continuous. By the same token, we do not mistake any particular happiness for an end in itself. The fact that we conceive no finality in our lives nor in our life with others, supplies the courage we need to pursue life happily "for ever after," and to accept all experiences as a boon to understanding.