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ANOTHER LIFE

IT is dismaying to both readers and writers alike to find that the imminence of war is today the only subject which seems important enough to deserve serious discussion. Even more dismaying is the fact that practically nothing new is being said on this subject—that even oblique approaches to the problem invariably reach the hard-faced dilemmas which, in the past, have been resolved only by saints and conquerors. The saint lives above the battle; he cuts the Gordian knot by aiming his personal career in a direction which ignores the carnage and the struggles going on all about him. He treats the man-made catastrophes of his time with the same resignation or philosophic indifference that an ordinary man displays, or tries to display, in the face of great natural disasters which he cannot possibly hope to control or avert. The conqueror, on the other hand, makes the battle his life.

But for the rest of us, neither the saint nor the conqueror seems altogether human. The suicidal wars of the nations are not the same as natural disasters such as forest fires, floods, landslides, tidal waves and earthquakes. We feel that there is something of our emotion, our will and intelligence, or a culpable absence of both will and intelligence, in the great wars of the age. The saint offers a blindly moral solution to the problem of war, the conqueror a blindly amoral one, and we, looking at these two extremes, feel that somehow the factor of human intelligence has been left out of both.

Yet our attempts to understand our own history and the forces which seem to be pressing us on to inevitable ruin are marked by a weakness that is wholly unadmirable. Both the saint and the conqueror have a grandeur that we lack. They at least are consistent. They have made a clean-cut choice. There is no more of vacillation in their lives, no anxious self-questioning, no ignominious indecision until the sweep of history catches them up and disposes of them like the lukewarm who are spewed aside in the hour of judgment.

Must a man, eventually, to retain his self-respect, choose to become either a saint or a conqueror? This seems to be the verdict of the age we live in. Certainly war, the kind of war which now threatens us, or in which we threaten to engage, will tolerate no half-measures. And the man who sees this and makes up his mind to cast his lot with the conquerors will be a far better warrior than the one who still hopes to temper his military enterprise with liberal and humanitarian restraints. How can a man act, these days, except in extremes—the extremes of with or against the crowd? He can try to become a conqueror, or he can go along, half-heartedly muttering objections, which is no real action at all, or he can lie in the path of this regimentation for ruin, like a recalcitrant boulder to be kicked at, cursed, and finally bulldozed aside.

It is a question, actually, of whether a man has two lives or only one. If a man has two lives, then this Decision of the Hour, and many others like it, are looked at through the wrong focus. Its deadly destiny is a spurious appearance and the finality of choice only an illusion we have placed upon ourselves. We may still have to go through the motions of decision—live our way through this illusion until its potency is at last exhausted, its deceptions plain to all—but to know it for an illusion is at least to destroy its future, even while it shackles our steps in the present.

The question of whether human beings have two lives or one need not be only the old inquiry about survival after physical death. A considerable case can be made out for an inner psychological and moral existence which proceeds concurrently with our physical life, and to which the overt events which we *call* our life play a kind of audible

counterpart. Plato seems to have had something of this sort in mind in the *Republic*, where he tells (in Book VII) of a race of men who see only flickering shadows against the wall of the cave in which they are imprisoned, and take the shadows for reality. It is best to be plain and to admit that anyone who, with the Platonists, accepts the allegory of the cave and believes that the inner life is the real, while outer events are constituted of shadows, will be in danger of being branded as "subversive." Plato himself anticipated this difficulty, for he speaks of the man who, having escaped from the cave into the sunlight, returns in the hope of instructing his fellows who still live under the influence of the shadows on the wall. As Socrates put it:

> Imagine once more, I said, such an one coming suddenly out of the sun to be replaced in his old situation, would he not be certain to have his eyes full of darkness?
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> To be sure, he said.
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> And if there were a contest, and he had to compete in measuring the shadows with the prisoners who had never moved out of the den, while his sight was still weak, and before his ideas had become steady (and the time which would be needed to acquire this new habit of sight might be very considerable), would he not be ridiculous? Men would say of him that up he went and down he came without his eyes; and that it was better not even to think of ascending; and if anyone tried to loose another and lead him up to the light, let them only catch the offender, and they would put him to death.
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> No question, he said.

For modern appendices to Plato's allegory, one has only to read such books as Edmond Taylor's *Richer by Asia* and Carey McWilliams' *Witch Hunt* (which draws extensively on Taylor's analysis). Mr. Taylor is largely concerned with what he calls the cultural or institutional delusions which haunt the modern world, which create the "false fronts" of the nations and various racial groupings, and in terms of which wars are prepared for, fought, and new ones planned. The apparent "necessity" of the things we do, he shows, often springs from the delusions we accept about others. Arguing this thesis in *Witch Hunt*, Carey McWilliams writes:

> I know that I shall be told that I have never had to negotiate with the Russians at Lake Success. As a matter of fact, I never want to be given the assignment for I am painfully aware that Communists often *act alike* even though they are not alike. It is quite true that ideological delusions can deeply color a person's thinking about other groups and can influence his behavior toward these groups; but this is merely another illustration of "the self-fulfilling prophecy." Communists, of course, have their ideological delusions. Taught to believe certain things, associating constantly with those who also believe these things, they come to act upon the assumption that their prophecies about other groups are true. But the mere fact that people should act alike in certain situations and relationships does not make them alike and the belief that it does only gives vitality to the delusion. For when *we* act toward them as though their delusions about us were real, we convince them, as nothing else could convince them, that their delusions are real.

Mr. McWilliams assembles a ponderous amount of psychiatric opinion to show that a large part of massed human conflict is really a war between delusions, in which "mask meets mask" instead of man meeting man, although it is human beings who do the suffering and who pay the price of behaving according to stereotyped reactions. We are more or less adept at recognizing the petty illusions and personal misconceptions of others, but when it comes to cultural and national delusions, we are caught by the same fascination which holds all the rest in thrall. Lacking contrast, lacking examples of a basic *cultural* balance and sanity, we accept the twisted anxieties and suspicions of others as though they were the sole starting points for decision. It is a condition of mind and feelings to which Edmond Taylor has given generalized definition:

> Described in political terms, paranoia is the madness which makes individuals behave like states, which makes them self-patriots, self-chauvinists and self-racists. It is the self-sovereignty which makes the aggressions of others always seem persecutions, while sanctifying one's own persecutions of others. It is the condition of always being worried about one's status,

> perpetually suspicious of the designs of others. It is the feeling that murder to defend or even to enhance one's sovereignty is somehow not murder but a necessary sacrifice for a great cause. It is the habit of being one's own espionage service, of turning speech into political propaganda for the furtherance of self.

While Taylor, here, has used the typical behavior of nations to illuminate the traits of the distorted and self-centered psyche, this passage also makes clear how easily a man may embrace such delusions on behalf of his culture, while enjoying a relative immunity from them at the personal level.

Even so, it may be argued that these national psychoses have already become rigid and fixed—that there is nothing left to do but let the conflict work itself out in its own terms. Perhaps so. But if it can be established that cultural delusions are the ruling forces in modern history, something, at least, has been gained. And we may proceed further in the analysis to see if, anywhere, the delusions have become so strained and threadbare as to reveal their own falsity. For example, in the matter of loyalty oaths, it is rapidly becoming evident that the real motive behind the hysterical program of loyalty investigations and oath-taking is not an honest concern for security, but a drive for intimidation. Mr. McCarthy has caught no communists, and not even a breath of suspicion of communist sympathies attaches to any one of the twenty-six professors of the University of California who were recently discharged for refusing to take the required loyalty oath or to sign its contractual substitute. It is of interest that twentieth-century loyalty oaths originated in Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy, and, as Carey McWilliams points out, the managers of these totalitarian societies did not for a moment suppose they would catch any "traitors" by this means. It was a way to demoralize and rout the spirit of freedom and independence:

> With the Nazis and Fascists, the test oath was clearly a means by which political opponents were silenced and discredited and not a means by which loyalty was tested. Such an astute terrorist as Dr. Goebbels would have placed slight credence in an affirmation of loyalty from a German with an antifascist record; he understood the dual conflict of our times too well for that.

This is now a familiar tactic in the United States. The easiest way to dispose of a disliked citizen is through the spread of innuendoes which may be difficult if not impossible to disprove, and which still attach to him in the public mind even if they should be disproved. Manifestly, the struggle is not against communism at all, but against the humane temper, the non-partisan outlook, and the will to do justice to even unpopular men and causes. A recent comment in the British *New Statesman and Nation* characterizes this dominant mood in American life:

> In Congress and the press, the servile ally and the sycophantic friend are daily praised for their courage and intelligence: those who differ publicly with the present drift of American policy are either abused or grossly misrepresented. American relations with Europe, therefore, have become less a frank exchange of opinions about the future policy of the Atlantic alliances than a continual attempt by the United States to conciliate or frighten its associates into a precarious unity.

What does it mean and where will it all end? What it really means is that we are fighting the wrong battle, are caught on the horns of a dilemma which is largely the product of our own imagination—ours and that of our "enemies." Our fears betray themselves as false in two ways. First, we see them revealed as false in such carefully documented studies as Mr. McWilliams' *Witch Hunt.* The witch hunters are not really hunting witches, but freedom. Second, when we fight the battle through to a finish, we gain none of the things we hoped for and were promised by our leaders. Both the world wars of the twentieth century were fought to free the world of tyranny, but each war left us with more extensive despotisms than it erased. The victories have not been glorious, but filled with somber doubts and multiplying injustices. Each time it is the same war, fought against the same, or the same sort, of evil—even the advocates of war tell us that it is the same war, that we must do "a better job" this

time—and each time the peace becomes the cynical parent of new and greater tensions which lead to war.

It seems so simple, so *obvious* that we have been fighting the wrong war, accusing the wrong enemies, suppressing and purging the wrong suspicious characters. Unless we adopt this conclusion, we are forced to accept another one—that the world is irredeemably divided into Good People and Bad People, and then we have to say that Good People can become suddenly and unaccountably infected with Badness, so that it is almost impossible to tell, from year to year—or from day to day—which ones are *really* Good. Badness thus becomes a kind of political filterable virus which is carried from nation to nation by the unpredictable winds of international affairs. It differs from physical infection chiefly in that we hate its victims instead of pitying them and trying to help them.

The irony of this war is that it is always fought in the name of our other, our inner life. We *say* we fight for freedom, for the eternal moral values upon which our society is founded. We *say* we shall be ennobled by the sacrifice of war, and that the languishing democracies of the world will be lifted up and supported by our resolve. But we come out of these wars, weaker, not richer, in moral values. Our other life, the life by which we grow in inner courage, by which we become wiser, more serene people, more able to practice simple friendliness, is viciously attacked by the inevitable by-products of our angry militance.

And so, the problem is not war at all, but *why* we permit such delusions to blind us to the nature of every lasting and genuine good in human life. Why do we continue to torture ourselves so? The good man, caught in the grip of the same cultural delusions, is as miserable as the bad man—more miserable, perhaps, because his inner life is closer to the surface of things, his conscience endowed with more articulate voice.

Is it that we waste our minds and our hopes in continually trying to resolve the traditional dilemma—Shall we be saints or conquerors? Where does this choice obtain its compulsion, save from acceptance of the evil in human life as a moral inevitability, and not something that can be encompassed by understanding? Have we forgotten that the Original Sin, from which come all our "inevitable" ills, was the crime of seeking knowledge—knowledge of both good and evil?

This other life of ours, which we live as through a glass, darkly, which we daily starve and mutilate, could be a life of knowledge, if we were determined to make it so. Neither the saint's blessed virtue nor the conqueror's destroying power gives fulfillment of man's inner life. We need not nourish the blindness of either course with our vain efforts to resolve the unresolvable. We could, if we would, nourish with our mind and our feelings only the progressions of that moral existence, that other and deeper existence rooted in our hearts, and keep close to this life in all our thoughts and acts, until our haunting delusions, unfed by human emotion, dry up and fall away.

Letter from **JAPAN**

TOKYO.—Despite the fact that public opinion polls conducted by vernacular newspapers reveal a predominance of sentiment for Japanese rearmament, the general feeling of the people for taking up arms once more is still at an extremely low ebb. There is certainly no wholehearted welcoming of the shift of opinion among the nations of the West toward seeking Japan's rearmament as a measure of defense against the growing intensity of the Communist offensive.

(The newspaper surveys can hardly be trusted. Two recent polls conducted within a week of each other revealed, in the first instance, 43 per cent for rearmament and 38 per cent opposed, and in the other, 65 per cent for and 16 per cent against. With such results, doctoring of polls to fit the editorial opinion of the newspapers may be suspected.)

Only a year ago, such a statement as General MacArthur's New Year message to the Japanese people, in which he tacitly gave the go-ahead sign for Japan to rearm as a measure of "self-preservation," would have evoked bitter opposition from the democratic nations, especially Japan's neighbors in Asia. Not so today. Ideals vanish rapidly, it seems, in the face of necessity.

Various reasons may be given for Japan's opposition to rearmament. One would be a sincere hatred of modern war, the people having once experienced its horrors. And they fear they would be drawn into its very vortex should they be armed under the auspices of the West as against the East in the confrontation between democracy and communism. Another is their fear of choosing the wrong side; they want to be on the winning side this time. Thus it is that as strong as the traditional aversion of the Japanese people to the Russians may be, it is not enough to make them throw all caution to the winds and join the Anglo-American camp without adequate reassurance. They realize that while the United States and Britain are thousands of miles away, Red China and the Soviet Union are only a stone's throw from their shores. And if they should be abandoned to the Reds, a few arms would be worse than none. Still another is their fear of the revival of militarism and the arrogance of the police system under which they suffered so much in the past. Again, many people believe that their Constitution, in renouncing war, is making a real contribution to the cause of peace. Others feel that Japan should bide her time shrewdly in the hopes of gaining concessions as well as full equality before committing herself.

But the important thing about the rearmament issue, for both Japan and Germany, is that it reveals the extent to which the nations of the world are proving that it is Realpolitik and not principles and ideals that governs the actions of men and nations. The complete demilitarization of Japan and Germany could have become the starting point for a world-wide disarmament movement. Instead, a great struggle is being waged to fill in the vacuum left by the fall of the Japanese and the German empires. And these two nations who have no great desire to rearm are being urged to pick up their guns once more. If the bait is attractive enough, they will probably do so.

How speedily times can change! Only a short while ago the Japanese Constitution with its war renunciation clause was being hailed as one of the world's most progressive constitutions. Now the very powers that inspired that charter are calling upon the Japanese people to revise it in the name of "self-preservation." The Japanese do not yet see from what they are going to preserve themselves, although they realize for whom. Unless Japan is given her full share of a free life, impossible under an occupation no matter how benevolent, her citizens will not feel the urgency of defending a homeland which is still not truly theirs, although five and a half years have elapsed since their defeat. Without giving the people freedom, one cannot tell them to fight for freedom. After all, the reputed slavery under the Communist system to them is only hearsay, while the restrictions of military occupation are real.

Japan's rearmament would mark a serious setback for the cause of peace, since it would mean that 80 million people, dedicated to the highest principle of peace, will be forced to shift their sights to a lower level. The situation is as ironic as it is tragic. But Japan's war renunciation seems destined to become another victim of the "cold war," for it is becoming more apparent daily that Japan, just as Germany, will be given the "opportunity" to contribute her manpower to stem the tide of communism.

JAPANESE CORRESPONDENT

REVIEW

NOT ENOUGH COMMUNISTS

OUR reason for continuing to scan current periodical literature for unconventional approaches to the America-Russia question should by this time be sufficiently obvious. The fate of the world seems to rest upon the chance that the freest people—that is, in the last analysis, the people least bound by prejudice—will exercise their broader understandings as compensation for the hate and ignorance of the "less free." Therefore, any *simpatico* attitude toward Russia or the Communists, provided it is not meant nor taken to be endorsement, and all intelligent criticism of our own American failures to free ourselves from the authoritarianism of our own political dogmas, are to the good.

The Dec. 30 issue of the *Nation* enables one to approach the matter of Communism from an interesting vantage point. Jean-Paul Sartre, requested by the *Nation* editors to address himself to "The Chances of Peace," brings us the perspective of an intelligent Frenchman, caught, like his countrymen and most of the rest of Europe, in a gigantic pincers movement between East and West. The renowned Existentialist—famous, too, as playwright and novelist—does not mince words in giving his candid impressions of U.S. policy. The *Nation* asked for this piece of Sartre's mind, though we doubt that the editors expected a contribution quite like the one they received, for Sartre's psychological analysis of our attitude towards Communism makes nine tenths of our propaganda and all our red-baiting equatable with the inanities of warped adolescence. Sartre's most important contribution, perhaps, lies in his observations about the great psychological dangers of anti-communism. The first necessary condition for peace, obviously, is the desire for peace; but it is impossible to desire peace in relation to someone or some country one thinks is enormously evil, the personification of all that is to be feared. Having made this introductory point, Sartre continues:

> Now your anti-communism is much more dangerous than ours—for a strange reason: that you have no Communists. Frenchmen who hate Communists or fervently condemn Soviet policy meet Communists every day and everywhere. Thus, however violent their antipathy, they have to recognize that their opponents are men and not devils; they know that it is possible to talk to a Communist. It is difficult and irritating and does not always give results, but it is possible. In short, for French anti-Communists, Communists are a civilian adversary. For Americans they are already a military enemy. And because the enemy is unseen and unknown, he is the devil and must be fought to the death. Moreover, he appears to be everywhere, just because he cannot be pinned down in a definite place; suspicion grows, infects everybody. Is this man a Communist? Or he? Or he? With us, if a man belongs to the party, we think him perhaps a fanatic, with you he is of necessity a traitor, because by definition he is ranged on the enemy side. And since communism is evil, all that is evil is Communist. In that way we try to explain the paradox that the United States, which has virtually no Communists and where there is not the slightest danger of a red revolution, is obsessed by fear of communism. It is because it fears treason much more than revolution. The American public, it appears to us, has been so blinded and exacerbated that it has gradually acquired a war mentality.

This article should be read carefully and in its entirety. It can make one fairly happy for the existence of the *Nation* as a magazine, recalling to mind the principles of equal-mindedness for which the publication long stood under Oswald Garrison Villard. (Incidentally, an editorial disclaimer of agreement with M. Sartre does not vitiate the service provided by the publication of such an article.)

Sartre sees political Americans as moralists, puritanical, sometimes hypocritical—and sometimes genuine. But because we are so given to moralisms we do little for the cause of world peace:

> Your Manicheism leads you to divide people into two groups: everywhere, in France, in Italy, in the Far East, you find the good and the bad. The good are those who take your side, the wicked those who do not, or only partially. But those who are on your side, even in countries where Communists really exist, reach that pitch of hysteria to which the absence

> of Communists brought you, and become the wildest reactionaries and even fascists. Citizens of the United States find in them a violence of feeling like their own, but that is the only common ground. These people are opposed to democratic liberties, to social progress—that is, hostile to the American spirit; among them are Greek monarchists, Chiang Kai-shek's corrupt minions, Franco's Falange. Your ethics are generous and puritanical, but you pursue a policy which contradicts them. Unfortunately, Soviet cunning leaves you no support but that of oppressive minorities. The Communists everywhere defend the exploited and oppressed though they feel free to abandon them if Russian interest demands it.
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> To this you answer, and you are right, that in Russia there is a concentration-camp government. But what do starving peasants care about the Russian penal system? Or even undernourished French workers when their just strike is being supported by the Communist Party? You cannot persuade people whose opinion is already formed. As a result, the U.S.S.R., without making any overt move, without compromising its position, can touch off or support uprisings, revolutions, or civil wars wherever it wishes. In many countries communism has won the sympathy of one-third to one-half of the population. But your sympathizers are not numerous enough and are often not strong enough to defend themselves; they depend on your aid, and you can only help them by open intervention. If Franco is admitted to the United Nations and if the Spaniards try to overturn him, what will you do? Will you go so far as to defend him?

It appears obvious, also, as soon as Sartre mentions it, that the European feels he is being regarded primarily as potential matériel for buffer resistance against Russia. To those who wonder at the effrontery of this or any other so critical European—presumably once saved from the Nazis by our fighting, then saved from starvation by the Marshall plan, and now being protected against the Soviets—come a few sentences of explanation. Sartre writes that, "in the last few months your generosity, which a short while ago aroused our enthusiasm, has seldom appeared disinterested enough to be owed unmixed gratitude. The moment that you cease to regard us as soldiers, you will rediscover us as friends. As neutrals but determined to resist every aggression, we shall be more useful to the cause of peace than we could be to your war as partisans without resources."

While on the subject of *simpatico* feelings for the Communists, we should call attention to an article on Communist China by a correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian Weekly* (Dec. 7, 1950). Once again, this is not something written by a political sympathizer of the Soviets. But the *Guardian* writer apparently feels that the positive qualities of the Chinese Communists are things we need to know about, need to understand and even perhaps admire, to partially balance the very much in Communist policy which we cannot admire at all.

> Communists are noted for their simplicity and austerity. . . . Communists and all those who work in the ever-growing bureaucracy receive only a subsistence allowance. Whatever they get out of their position, it is certainly not money. Observers have been looking for signs of corruption. Such matters as have come to light are not very serious. . . . One cannot but be impressed by the seriousness and sense of purpose in life which is absent in democratic countries. All things must be made to serve one purpose—the creation of a truly Communist society.

This revision of the life of China is, of course, tyrannical, in that each bit of power acquired is immediately used to force compliance. Further, "On this country, with its emphasis on family life, on face and traditional courtesy, a new way of life is now being imposed, which if successful will sweep away every trace of Chinese customs and manners." Yet how can we blame the Asiatics for admiring those who live simply among them, tirelessly working for a cause that promises economic benefit for the masses? Often the Russian-inspired Communists have identified themselves with the poor classes in impressive ways. As Sartre remarked in his *Nation* article,

The Communists everywhere defend the exploited and oppressed."

The United States, on the other hand, while playing a game of power politics similar to that of the Russian bureaucrats, has not yet thoroughly

realized the need for assuming the full responsibilities attendant upon political intrusion. An article such as that by Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas in *Look* for Jan. 16 ("We *Can't* Save Asia by War Alone"), is a rare exception. Few men of public name and influence see so clearly the immaturity of our approach to the basic economic and social problems of Asia, or that the U.S. often leaves Chinese, Koreans, etc., no really advantageous alternatives to identification with Communism. All that Douglas writes, incidentally, serves to make more understandable why Sartre does not think the U.S. approach to the problem of opposing Communism is in any way effective. He rather sees, in the countries over which the U.S. hopes to exercise patriarchy, the greatest potential strength of opposition to Communism in Europe, as coming from the now unfortunately decimated ranks of the Democratic Socialists—Socialists who struggled long in France, Germany, and Italy for a platform combining public representation procedure with public ownership, in the hope of eliminating want and insecurity for the peoples of Europe.

COMMENTARY
FAREWELL TO ARMS?

MAYBE, our Japanese correspondent hints in this week's letter, it will be better for Japan to have no arms at all, if another war comes. There are special circumstances, of course. If the Japanese were abandoned to an invasion of the communist powers, he says, a few arms would be worse than none. A number of the smaller nations around the world are in the same situation. Their being armed makes no sense at all except in constituting them allies of some much larger power. For these nations, national independence has become a thing of the past.

What if they, recognizing the fact of their military dependency, were to renounce the idea of a military establishment altogether? To be sure, a special sort of moral courage would be necessary for this step, but, what might be the result? First of all, a country abandoning its armament would practically double its wealth almost at once. The money being spent on arms and military training would become available for other purposes. So would the men. Taxes would drop immediately and trade and manufacturing would gain an enormous stimulus. The domestic affairs of the country would become the envy of the world.

The threat of invasion—what about that? Well, what about it? Does armament really reduce the threat of invasion? Well-armed nations always say so, but they are invaded just the same; or they do the invading themselves. It is just possible that an unarmed nation might not be invaded sooner than an armed nation. And a deliberately unarmed nation would be better able to resist an invader through civil disobedience than a nation whose youth have been suddenly slaughtered in war. An invader rules a conquered nation through fear—but an unarmed nation has already renounced fear.

While an experiment like this one might be a relative failure, its results could be better than a military failure; they might even be better than a military success. And to say that the experiment would surely fail overlooks the feelings of the countless people all over the world who are literally starving for peace—for peace without arms, which is the only peace worth talking about. *They* can make peace, and might make it, if they could see the practical results of deliberate peacefulness, even in the midst of a war-mad world.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves

THE Children's and School Librarians' section of the American Library Association has apparently found out a lot about how to select good books for young people. We have for review two excellent productions, *The Little Island* by MacDonald and Weisgard, and *The Little House* by Virginia Lee Burton, both winners of the Caldecott Award, issued by the American Library Association to the publishers and authors of outstanding works for children.

Since we have for years been receiving requests from subscribers for the names of good children's books, and since so seldom have we been able to find any worth special mention, our discovery of these books is particularly encouraging. The first of the two, *The Little House,* was first published in 1942. It is a 40-page picture story, with simple but well designed and *pleasant* illustrations. (One of our perennial worries about Grimm's and Andersen's fairy tales has been their illustrations—so easily inspired by the morbid psychology in most of the stories.)

The picture story of *The Little House* tells about the growth of a community, showing how the house was first built on the side of a hill, near farm lands and trees and flowers. Gradually the city began to grow around, encroaching first with simple country roads, and later with steam shovels and various highways. Soon it was noisy around the little house, and finally noisy up above, too, for apartment houses and tenements rose for several stories beyond her little red chimney, leaving her isolated on the crowded city block. Things went from bad to worse as street cars and elevated railways also moved in upon her, and, finally, came noisy conveyances even underneath her, for there was dug a subway. As the story tells us, "The little house was very sad and lonely; her paint was cracked. . . . She looked shabby . . . though she was just as good a house as ever underneath."

In the end everything comes all right again, for she is removed to another hillside and allowed to breathe the fresh air. The world of beauty had not disappeared, and helping hands enabled her to find her way back to it. These few pages tell a sympathetic rather than a hateful story, and though children may be led to feel a little bit like the Borsodis who "fled the city" for a life closer to agricultural roots and to more basic ways of feeling happiness, they will not "hate" the city nor feel that it is merely ugly. This little story, as all good little stories, does not try to say too much, and therefore each child may read into it whatever he or she wishes; so with parents or teachers, who will probably enjoy the book themselves.

The other Caldecott book, *The Little Island*, is more a study in natural history, which the drawings of Leonard Weisgard help to make very enjoyable for children. There is a poetic simplicity and natural beauty in the descriptive lines used, for instance, in telling about the life of the lobsters that crawl in from the sea to the rocks and ledges of the island. And these lobsters are pleasant-looking, also. From the description of all the Little Island has to offer to the animals of land and the creatures of sea, we pass to a story with psychological content, the hero of which is a little kitten, left by picnickers. It learns many things it never knew before, as all children may like to think of themselves doing. First, the kitten demands knowledge imperiously, threatening a little fish with extinction unless queries about the world under the water are answered in just the terms prescribed. But then he is forced to see that there are some things he cannot learn by demand. There are the *deep* things to learn; neither he nor the Little Island is separate from the rest of the wide world. Underneath, the island is linked to all other land, a part of the One. The kitten sees mystery and beauty and meaning for him in what the fish tells him, and he lets the fish go. "The cat's eyes were shining with the secret of the thing. The fish told the kitten how all land is one land under the sea." While it is difficult, nearly impossible, to suggest how profound impartations

of philosophy may occur in such a little book, still we can aver that they are indeed there, and invite readers to look for themselves to see.

Some two years ago we spoke with admiration of *Call it Courage* by Armstrong Sperry. *Li-Lun—Lad of Courage* by Carolyn Treffinger is a book with a similar central theme. The latter tale is somewhat different, however, for instead of a lad who completely conquers his fear of the sea, we see how Li-Lun becomes a pioneer of new ways for his village by determining to be useful anywhere else *than* on the sea. In other words, he does not lose his original fear, but he shows tremendous courage and pertinacity in learning how to grow grains of rice, even on the mountain top to which he is banished by his father. In so doing he proves to all what only the wise men of the village knew—that their land was not so barren as they had thought, and that perseverance might bring them their own rice crop and make costly importation unnecessary.

This book does not "equal" Armstrong Sperry's, nor should we expect it to, any more than we can expect a truly stirring poem to be "equalled" or adequately replaced by another. But Treffiinger's is a very instructive book for young ones and interesting enough along with the instruction to hold attention. It is published by the Abbington Cokesbury Press (94 pages) and is appropriate for children who have been able to read stories by themselves for a year or two. It is also a good "suspense story" for reading aloud.

It seems to us that the best criterion for a "good" children's book lies in the quality—and the quantity—of stimulation to the imagination. The image-making faculty of the human mind, even the child mind, moves naturally toward the creation of symbols, and the symbols of youth, in turn, become powerful determinants of future attitudes in adulthood and parenthood. So we need inspiring symbols, instructive symbols, and pleasant or beautiful symbols. The traditional children's stories, Grimm, and Andersen in part as well, were loaded with unpleasantness. Apparently no one had then discovered that fear is the worst possible conditioner of a child's behavior. "Scare them good" was the religious word of the medieval day, and of many days afterward. And "Scare them good" became the pedagogical word, too. We have hangovers of this view in the bloody illustrations on comic strips—ostensibly designed to influence against a life of crime—affording horrible and timely illustrations. Illustrators from medieval times to the present have doted, moreover, on faces of violence, perversion, greed, and lust for the villains. But children need no villains. They need a "pro-life," not a fear-and-distrust-of-life philosophy. This is not to keep them from discovering that there is "evil" in the world, but to insure that they will not confuse evil with people's faces, nor think good and bad to be located in persons. Good and bad, truly, we know, are located in people's attitudes and ideas—or, if we wish, in the symbols they have "imagined" into being.

FRONTIERS

So Much From So Little

MR. TRUMAN'S Point Four program for economic aid to undeveloped countries, launched about two years ago, has been moving slowly on its way. For reasons suggested here about a month ago (Jan. 17), we have no wish to support some of the theories of industrialization described by Willard Espy in his dramatic Point-Four tract, *Bold New Program,* nor does it seem of any point to rehearse the familiar for-and-against arguments about aid to distant lands. Further, we have no Washington-sophistication expert on our staff and no way of distinguishing with any accuracy between honest, do-gooder philanthropy and other factors of motivation behind the Point Four program.

But when we learn that, during the fiscal year of 1952, the United States will spend a total of sixty-six billion dollars on past, present and future wars—an expenditure amounting to 88 per cent of the national budget—the Point-Four appropriation of ninety-five million (a little over a tenth of one per cent of the 1959 budget) seems nothing to quarrel about. You might even say that this is little enough to spend on a peace-making activity—the only kind of peace-making activity the Government of the United States seems interested in—and want to be for it just as a protest against all this insane spending for war. Then there is the further consideration that most of the opposition to Point Four is for the wrong reasons. The people who argue against "throwing away" our money on backward countries are seldom if ever the people who show concern about spending for war purposes.

Meanwhile, the kind of thing which Dr. Henry Garland Bennett, new head of the Point Four program, proposes to do in some countries we are helping is extremely encouraging. According to one Washington correspondent, Dr. Bennett is primarily interested in increasing food production in places where the people do not have enough to eat. He thinks it may even be possible to double the food supply in some areas. He is not, at this point, hoping to set up great TVA-like projects that would provide power for industrialization. To mechanize industrially backward lands, he says, would only bring on mass unemployment. Instead, the work of Horace Holmes, a Tennessee county agent who went to India several years ago, illustrates what Dr. Bennett has in mind. According to Peter Edson, writing in the Cincinnati *Post* (Jan. 19):

> Horace Holmes was hired by the United Provinces government of India as an agricultural adviser. He went to work on a 100-square-mile area near Lucknow. In less than three years he was able to increase wheat production by 67 per cent and Irish potato production by 200 per cent. He did it without tractors and without fertilizer. He did it simply by taking what he found and using it to better advantage.
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> He found the natives plowing with one spike on a stick. They barely scratched the surface. Their furrows were four inches apart and they plowed the field both ways. It took forever and the crops were often washed out by heavy summer rains.
>
> Horace Holmes simply rigged up half a dozen spikes on the sticks, and he set them so that they plowed deeper. Then he taught seed selection. And by the speed-up of gang plowing with his half-dozen spikes he saw that the crops were planted before the big rains came.
>
> When it came time to harvest, Holmes found the natives walking one team of oxen interminably around a threshing floor. This was the way their ancestors had threshed for thousands of years.
>
> The American county agent thought that if he could rig up a big drum and pull that around the threshing floor, it would cut down the time. He tried it out and it worked. It cut threshing time 90 per cent.

There are famine conditions today in India. Dr. Bennett is sending Horace Holmes back to India to take part in a Point-Four program worked out with the Indian Government. The plan is for Holmes to help other Indian farmers to increase their production in the same way that he taught the Lucknow farmers. As Peter Edson says, "If he "Holmes] can do it over a big enough area, he can

put to an end the pleas now being made for American grain to end a famine in India."

According to Mr. Edson, thirty-five countries have formally applied for Point-Four assistance, and 70 per cent of all the requests are for help in increasing food production. "Most of the world is still hungry."

What can the "backward" countries do in return? In most cases, an answer to this question would take considerable research. India, however, would have no difficulty in helping us. For example, India could show us how to accomplish the conquest of China successfully. That seems to be what we are most interested in, right now. Of course, India's methods of conquest have been different from ours. India won China through Buddhism, over a period of about 1200 years (from 200 B.C. to 1000 A.D.).

During the first century B.C., Buddhist monks travelled from India to China, bringing with them the wisdom of Gautama in oral and written teachings. Centers of Buddhism were established in China, and by the fourth century A.D., Chinese Buddhist scholars and monks had begun to make return journeys with the intention of studying the doctrines at their source, and to learn to make better translations of the Buddhist texts, So extensive was the resulting religious and cultural interchange between these two countries of Asia that the friendship which grew up became an achievement almost without parallel in human history.

This extraordinary project in international relations is carefully chronicled by Prabodh Chandra Bagchi in *India and China,* a work recently published in a new and revised edition by Hind Kitabs, Ltd., of Bombay. India, through her great philosophers and teachers of the past, has been able to enrich the soil of human understanding and has reaped, through the centuries, a harvest of respect and admiration from the Chinese people. And this, perhaps, is what we need to learn from India's example—more, it may be, than India needs the services of our agricultural specialists.