

## THE EXAMPLE OF FREE MEN

I WONDER, sometimes," writes a subscriber, "where you are going with your radishes and spinning-wheel theme."

Candidly, at the moment, it does not seem of great importance where we expect to go with these ideas. Discussions like that of the cottage industries in India, or of the Borsodi type of farming and home industry in the United States, are hardly to be thought of as blueprints for the good society. They represent a kind of social exploration, in theory—an attempt to suggest, by describing the original thinking and action of some men, what might possibly be ingredients of a better life for all men, provided they will try to think and act as imaginatively and as persistently as Gandhi and Borsodi have done.

If we were so unfortunate as to acquire the Perfect Plan for social and individual felicity, we would take it out into the back yard in the dead of night and burn it up, saying nothing to anybody, on the theory that such plans are always fraudulent except as they stimulate the creative capacities of individuals. The solutions of other men and other societies for their personal and collective problems can never be more than symbolic in relation to our own problems, for the reason that the ways and means of meeting a human situation have their beginning and their ending in attitudes of mind. Detailed plans for social integration have mostly to do with external organization and the physical arrangements that will best serve the proposed relationships—they represent, that is, the practice of what may be called "social engineering." But no amount of social engineering can be substituted for desirable attitudes of mind. The utopian who thinks he can easily "engineer" wise and admirable people into existence is still operating under the delusive theology of Divine Predestination. The fact that

he, instead of Jehovah, plays the part of the Architect of Destiny is a relatively minor detail.

Or, to change the metaphor, this sort of utopian still believes in the dogma of the Vicarious Atonement. He, and not all the people whom he would serve, is going to perform the ultimately sacrificial and creative act. *He* is going to set the pattern of the good life, and after the people are fitted into it the world's troubles will be over. In either case—whether by his belief in predestination or in his hope of bearing the burdens of other men—the fallacy is the same: he wants to be the personal god or the personal savior of his fellows, not their helper, teacher, friend.

There are, of course, problems arising from this sort of analysis. Few people seem capable of exercising much imagination for their own good. This depressing realization helps to explain why so many social revolutionaries who, starting out with the idea of individual freedom as their first principle, have ended, after years of trial and disappointment, by adopting "realistic" fascist doctrines of social change. It also explains the phenomenon of the "tired radical," who retires from the struggle with only the generalized Steigian conclusion that "people are no damn good."

These, we think, are some of the lessons of the last hundred years of social history, and we see no point in continuing a discussion of the social problem in which these factors of disillusionment are ignored. That is why so much space in MANAS is devoted to metaphysical inquiry into the nature of man; why we are interested in any phase of human experience that seems to reveal some new facet of creativity; and why we refuse to ignore the question of the differences among men.

We shall know nothing, really, about the potentialities of human beings until we have opportunity to observe the behavior of men who think of themselves, not as weak, miserable sinners, dependent upon the inscrutable will of God; not as impotent offprints of biological heritage and social environment; but as self-determining, self-creating individuals with the potentialities of independent godhood in each one. So much of human achievement depends upon what a man *thinks* he can achieve, that it is folly to set theoretical limits to the capacities of people before we have found out, for ourselves, the achievements which are possible for human beings who think of themselves as free souls with unmeasured opportunities for growth and originality.

Any man who abandons the well-trodden highway of routine and strikes out for himself on a path of independent thought and action is a man who can teach us something about the potentialities of Man. Gandhi was such a teacher. He broke with the traditional pessimism of Indian thought in this epoch. He admitted that the age was dark, but he showed that an individual can be a light in a dark age. He told every Indian the same thing: You are not helpless in the clutch of fate: you can do something for yourself, for India, for the world. He said this to rich Maharajahs and to miserable Untouchables. He said it to the proud Brahmins, the prosperous merchants and industrialists, and the penniless peasants. He spoke to their hearts and he moved their hearts. And because the famished peasants were the great majority of the Indian people, he addressed himself primarily to them. Get strength, he said—moral strength—the kind nobody can take away from you. Do what you can for yourself, now, where you are. He taught them to spin and to weave. Years before England freed India, Gandhi was setting to India's millions the example of a free man, and of what a free man could do. A free man, he showed, can always do for himself. A free man, he taught, can always find a way to increase his freedom. He demonstrated that self-

mastery is the first step in liberating the imagination, and that when the imagination is free, other kinds of freedom will follow as effect from cause. The spinning and the weaving were the practical, evident accompaniments of a free life in India, at that hour, under those circumstances.

We do not know, we cannot say, how many of the people of India learned from Gandhi how to free and regenerate themselves, but we are convinced that what took place is somewhat as we have described it. We are also convinced that the process will continue. The plan of spinning and weaving, of the entire Gandhian economy, grew, not from blueprints and statistics of social reform, but from the attitude of mind of which Gandhi was the exemplar, from the religion of freedom which he practiced.

The United States, historically speaking, is very different from India. India has an old civilization, America a new one. India is united by certain great common denominators of religious philosophy. America's unity is of another sort. And yet, psychologically, America is impoverished, too. Americans have the misfortune to believe they know what are the conditions of happiness. They accept, for the most part, the idea that industrial and commercial greatness will mean prosperity and the good life for all. This idea has created shackles of enslavement to a number of quasi-omnipotent delusions. First and most important is the delusion that human possessing the "best" political system, Americans are convinced that they need only more money, more money for everybody, to realize the good life for everybody. Meanwhile, the good life does not come. Instead, we get depressions and wars and slums and inter-racial strife. We get more centralization of power and less individual freedom, year by year.

In principle, Mr. Borsodi has tried to show that while you cannot buy the good life, you can make it. He is an economist, and, with devastating effect, he has turned the methods of economic analysis back on the theories and

practices which brought them into being. We can't say, at this point, just how much he has "proved," but we confess that he has largely persuaded us of many of his contentions.

His major point is that Americans are not compelled to live entirely according to the money-theory of the good life. A man can work to produce something worth while, instead of just for money. The idea that a man works in order to "make money" is a horrible obsession of our civilization. It is the parent of most of the frustrations from which we suffer and it results in the subtle but omnipresent decline in the *quality* of our lives.

Mr. Borsodi has some practical suggestions on how a man and his family can learn to give fewer hostages to the money-system; how to become more independent, competent human beings, and to find happiness and dignity in working out the problem. First and foremost, Mr. Borsodi calls attention to the fact that the problem exists—that so many people are only half alive. This, we think, is much for any man to do.

These are some of the reasons why we discuss radishes and spinning wheels.

## *Letter from* **GERMANY**

HEUCHELHEIM.—For the time being, the Germans are oscillating between fear and hope. The currency reform, long waited for, was followed by a good psychological result. According to German notion, a large quantity of various goods was confronted with the new money, and, with the new esteem of labour, the working men's self-consciousness rose correspondingly. Though the goods became two and three times more expensive than in normal times, prices seemed endurable compared to ten- and hundred-fold black market prices which formerly prevailed. The apprehension of economic experts with regard to the effect of the currency reform on the whole German economy did not discourage the generally hopeful feeling.

Suddenly, this feeling changed. The subsequent currency reform in the Russian Zone and the currency conflict in Berlin with its resulting hunger-blockade of 12 million people renewed the fear and distrust of the residents of the Western Zone. Again, enormous aircraft are flying across Western Germany. Food is their load, and yet their activity has the same effect as if their load were dynamite. The Chinese people originated the expression "armed negotiations." In Germany, today, Russian anti-aircraft guns threaten the air-bridge to Berlin while diplomatic notes are being exchanged, and the jet-propelled planes of the U.S. Army near Munich are a topic of daily conversation. The hope for early resumption of normal and stable conditions is darkened by the icy fear of another world war. People no longer wonder apprehensively *if* there will be another war, but *when* it will become probable.

While the Berliners, like most capital residents, are not loved by the rest of the German people, they have won the respect and sympathy of the entire country during this period of stress—

a fact which suggests the unpopularity of the Russian attitude and policy. A change in the German view of the political situation was also to be seen on the occasion of the conference of ministers some months ago, when the representatives of Berlin, who had previously stood for an abstract "unity" of Germany, then argued for the energetic recovery of Western Germany, even without the Russian Zone.

Until recently, the German people have been the passive object of world politics, but before long they will have to arrive at some important decisions. It may be supposed that the Russian oppression of Berlin is intended as a means to re-open the discussions between the Allied Nations concerning the fate of all Germany. If this is the case, the Russians will probably propose that all occupation powers leave Germany. Speaking practically, this would mean that the Russians will remain at the borders of the Oder and in East Prussia, while the U.S. Army would have to retire beyond the Atlantic. Germany would be left alone with a totalitarian military state as an immediate neighbor, with the result that German politics would follow Russian wishes. Thus, there may come about the grotesque situation in which the German people of the Western Zone will be pleading for the unpopular occupation powers to remain in Germany.

Such a development will not so much embarrass the Western occupation powers, as mean a "hic Rhodus, hic salta" to the German people: *i.e.*, despite their weakness, and despite everybody's longing for peace, they will have to participate in world politics.

GERMAN CORRESPONDENT

## REVIEW

### HERBERT HOOVER—AMERICAN LIBERAL

EUGENE LYONS' recent volume, *Our Unknown Ex-President—A Portrait of Herbert Hoover*, deserves to be read by every American who makes claim to an educated political consciousness. This, despite the fact that Eugene Lyons is a "roving editor" for the *Reader's Digest*. Mr. Lyons' study of a man whom he once joined zealous New Dealers in castigating brings to light many obscure episodes of American history in the period between the two great World Wars.

The first six chapters seem poorly organized and somewhat gratuitous in content. The reader who begins at the beginning may wonder if Mr. Lyons is going to say "Hoover is a great man!" "Hoover is a great man!" all the way through. But with telling the actual story of Hoover's life, the author has been able to turn his research into a contribution of some educational magnitude. Perhaps the chief value of a work of this nature comes from its revelation of the capacity of the American public for vilifying a man of integrity on the basis of propagandizing misinterpretations and falsifications. The case of Hoover is one of the most striking of this type known to history, since a sober study of the facts completely reverses almost every one of the popular myths regarding our thirty-first President.

This reviewer asked a politically active devotee of the Democratic Party to outline from memory the chief grievances against Mr. Hoover. In view of Mr. Lyons' documentary evidence, it may be worth while to comment upon our Democrat's version of "The Hoover Myth."

First and foremost—and this criticism seems to be common to most New Deal enthusiasts—the Hoover philosophy is considered as a typical representation of "big business." The fact, illustrated in numerous statements by Wall Street financiers, is that Hoover was almost universally feared and derided by men of this group. Never a

speculator himself, Hoover was by nature antagonistic to "coupon-clipping" as a means of gaining income. From his first experiences as a successful mining engineer who owned stock only in companies receiving his personal professional attention, he repeatedly warned against both the personal and social effects of "get-rich-quick" stock promotion. Further, the mines which Hoover managed in Australia and elsewhere maintained conspicuously better wages and better conditions of employment than did other mines in the same areas. He consistently sought to demonstrate the advantages of higher wage scales and spoke and wrote against the practice of underpaying labor. Once, in condemning a bad labor situation, he said that "the disregard for human life promotes cheap mining." This phrase, taken from context, was later used to imply that Hoover had callously admitted disregard for the needs of labor, and that he viewed the productivity of mines solely from the standpoint of financial return. His actual view of the labor movement may be stated in his own words:

As corporations have grown, so likewise have the labor unions. In general, they are normal and proper antidotes for unlimited capitalistic organization. . . . Such unions exist in dozens of trades in this country, and they are entitled to greater recognition. The time when the employer could ride roughshod over his labor is disappearing with the doctrine of *laissez faire* on which it was founded. The sooner the fact is recognized, the better for the employer.

One invidious connotation of the phrase "big business" comes from the assumption that all men who have acquired wealth have desired wealth more fervently than anything else. Hoover turned down \$500,000 a year for life, offered if he would manage the Guggenheim fortune, in order to accept a post at \$15,000 as Secretary of Commerce under Harding—a job, incidentally, which held no promise of political power. And in accepting the Cabinet post, Hoover (whose personal resources had greatly dwindled while he supervised the post-World-War-I Food Relief Program) refused to accept a cent of the

Secretary's salary, instead, turning the money over to various charities. This was Hoover's practice in respect to all money received as compensation for service in public office. He did not believe that men should confuse private gain and public service.

When the clients of a prominent firm of mining consultants (Bewick-Moreing) —in which Hoover was a partner—suffered from the hands of a forger, a man employed by the firm, Hoover made restitution. Both Hoover and his partners were completely absolved from legal obligation, yet he presented a plan for repaying the entire amount to those whose funds had been wiped out by the incident, thus exhausting his principal savings from eight years of successful mine superintendency simply on the basis that he wished to see no one even indirectly harmed through a firm with which he was associated.

Another common criticism is that launched against Hoover's Depression policies. He was blind, it is often said, to the need for direct relief measures by the Federal government. Hoover did believe in the minimum-government-interference principle of political philosophy—a principle which has every right, today, to respectful attention. During Hoover's first campaign for the presidency in 1928, he said:

You cannot extend the mastery of the government over the daily working life of a people without at the same time making it the master of the people's souls and thoughts. Every expansion of government in business means that government, in order to protect itself from the political consequences of its errors and wrongs, is driven irresistibly without peace to greater and greater control of the nation's press and platform. Free speech does not live many hours after free industry and free commerce die.

Hoover also recognized, however, the necessity for federal regulation of monopoly on behalf of precisely the same principle. A few years later, he balanced the above statement with another in his volume, *American Individualism*, published in 1934:

The entrance of the Government began strongly three decades ago, when our industrial organization began to move powerfully in the direction of consolidation of enterprise. We found in the course of this development that equality of opportunity and its corollary, individual initiative, were being throttled by the concentration of control of industry and service, and thus an economic domination of groups builded over the nation. At this time, particularly, we were threatened with a forming autocracy of economic power.

Our mass of regulation of public utilities and our legislation against restraint of trade is the monument to our intent to preserve an equality of opportunity. This regulation is itself proof that we have gone a long way toward the abandonment of the "capitalism" of Adam Smith. . . .

Dr. Broadus Mitchell in *Depression Decade* (1947) outlines an honest criticism of Hoover's view of the Depression, his chief point being that Hoover took "too long" to recognize the need for Federal intervention. Dr. Mitchell may be right, and Hoover, faced by an entirely unprecedented situation, may have been unwisely conservative. Yet it needs to be remembered that Hoover's concern for going slow came from his persistent belief that the Welfare State very easily becomes the Totalitarian State. Mr. Lyons, however, shows that the theory that the President delayed federal aid "too long" during the Depression is not the only credible view of Hoover's policy:

The country suffered economic slumps and depressions in the administrations of Van Buren, Buchanan, Grant, Cleveland, Theodore Roosevelt, and Wilson. In not one of them did the government take serious official action to relieve individual or business distress. It would have been considered a shocking federal intrusion. The established theory was that an economic calamity must run its ordained course, squeezing out the weak for a new start.

The latter-day myth-makers imply that the country from 1929 forward clamored for Washington intervention but that President Hoover stubbornly resisted. The truth is the exact reverse. In projecting the government into the situation he was cutting boldly across prejudice, tradition, and honest opposition within his own official family.

Hoover concluded, and announced from the White House, that the Federal government must assume responsibility in any major economic breakdown, and that no American willing to work should go hungry. Since the worst part of the Depression came after the termination of Hoover's ordeal as president, it is possible that he would have set up satisfactory agencies had he continued at the head of the government.

Another popular criticism of Hoover is that he supported a hush-hush policy regarding the full extent of the Teapot Dome scandals while he was Secretary of Commerce. Mr. Lyons claims that Hoover advised President Harding to reveal immediately the entire series of manipulations to the public at large, and thus establish the integrity of the administration. Lyons says, further, that Hoover was waiting for Harding to do just this when the latter unexpectedly died. Hoover had also hoped to ascertain from Harding the degree of complicity of members of the administration. Harding had refused to comment, for instance, when asked by Hoover whether or not Attorney General Daugherty was mixed up in the affair.

Another mistaken impression is that Hoover's anticommunist views once prevented him from allowing an equitable distribution of food at the time of the famine in Eastern Europe after World War I. The fact that, after 1920, Hoover became a target for world-wide communist attacks helped to conceal several significant bits of data. As early as 1919, when he was food administrator, Hoover was trying desperately to bring relief to the Russian people, asking of Maxim Gorki only that there be release of Americans held in Soviet prisons, and that all Russians, regardless of "class" origin, receive equal treatment in the allocation of food. The Soviet government Praised Hoover's effort loudly while it was under way, presenting him with "a decorative scroll expressing extravagant appreciation." The scroll thanks him and the A.R.A., through whose "entirely unselfish efforts . . . millions of people of all ages were saved from death." Gorki himself wrote to

Hoover: "I know of no accomplishment which in terms of magnitude and generosity can be compared to the relief that you have actually accomplished." But the communist press, with its typically delirious misrepresentation, stated that Hoover had worked for Russian relief as a kind of personal barter, hoping that "his mines in the Urals would be returned to him." At this time Hoover had absolutely no mining interests or connections in Russia, and he was contributing personally to the Russian relief program by paying all of his personal expenses during the period of negotiation and distribution of food.

Nothing is more characteristic of Mr. Hoover's social doctrine than his reply to a woman who questioned him about the appeal for food for the Russians: "Aren't we going to help bolshevism by feeding these people?" Hoover banged the table with one of his few demonstrations of anger and said: "Twenty million people are starving. Whatever their politics they shall be fed!"

The foregoing covers the points raised by our democrat friend, but there are other conceptions of Hoover's character and official service which need revision. Hoover is often written down by his critics as a "plutocrat" and as a "do-nothing" president. As Mr. Lyons puts it, "the nothing that he did, presented in bare outline, fills a closely printed book of 550 pages." Least of all was Hoover a do-nothing sort of man. He learned the habit of hard work the hard way. At Stanford University he handled the laundry of other students and was regarded as of slightly inferior caste, being unable to finance a fraternity career. After obtaining his mining degree, he worked as a day-laborer in the Sierras with government surveying gangs and in various mining areas. His first job at full miner's wages was in a pit at the Mayflower mine. His personal success began when he impressed a mining company with accurate and penetrating reports on the conditions of mines that were failing. This ability led him finally to consultation fees of \$100,000 a year—

two decades later, after much practical experience in superintending mining enterprises.

According to John Hamill, who made a career of vilifying the Republican president, Hoover's gravest political crime was that he, "alone of all our presidents, belonged to a sect [Hoover had a Quaker upbringing] which permitted each member to be the final judge of his own actions, his own morality—an infinitely dangerous power to give to any man."

However much Mr. Lyons may have exaggerated the problems are primarily political and economic. Already case for Hoover as man and public servant—in repentance, perhaps, for his earlier attacks—Mr. Hoover emerges unmistakably, we think, as the greatest example of personal integrity in the recent history of American politics. His attitude toward public office, his attitude toward business, toward labor unions and toward war were all cut from the same cloth. Those who undertake Mr. Lyons' volume may come to regard our description of Herbert Hoover as a "liberal" as inadequate—may even think it not inconsistent to consider Hoover as a genuine revolutionary, so far as morals in politics are concerned. Another lesson to be learned from this book, as before intimated, is in considering the Hoover myth as an example of the depths of misrepresentation to which contemporary politics can so easily sink. The susceptibility of the general public to misrepresentations of fact remains an insurmountable obstacle to political maturity.



## COMMENTARY

### QUALIFICATIONS FOR CITIZENSHIP

NICOLO TUCCI, an Italian who wants to become a citizen of the United States, apparently made the "mistake" of being as honest as he knew how in his relationship with the officials of the Immigration and Naturalization Service. As a result, his petition for naturalization was recently denied by a Federal Court in New York. It seems that personal integrity may be a serious obstacle to American citizenship.

When Tucci was fourteen years old, the Fascists gained power in Italy. He received a fascist education and came to this country twelve years ago, obtaining a job at the Italian consulate. His work was with fascist propaganda. However, by 1941 he was no longer a fascist, but a determined anti-fascist; and something more—he became critical of all Statism. In the *Nation* for Sept. 25, Professor Gaetano Salvemini of Columbia University tells the story of Tucci's conversion from the fascist faith. It was no half-swing of the pendulum:

After working for three years or so with the official Enemies of Fascism in Washington, he [Tucci] realized that the great difference between the nobodies (representatives of "The State") of Washington and those of Rome consisted in this: that in Washington they spoke English, and in Rome Italian. The only things the Washington officials really dreaded were criticism and maturity of mind. They believed themselves mature because they had stopped asking questions a child would ask. When he saw this, he resigned from his post and decided that from that day on he would speak and write only from the level of his own perplexity and ignorance. "If those who are now leading the world happily to its ruin are the adult, I would be less ashamed to be seen in a baby carriage on Fifth Avenue, sucking my left toe, than in an official car of the United Nations."

As Salvemini remarks, "One can say everything about those ideas except that they are those of a Fascist." Yet Tucci was denied American citizenship because in 1939 he made a speech reflecting what were then his admittedly muddled fascist views, and because, in the opinion of the Court, he now "is

contemptuous of some of our national and political beliefs."

True to his decision to act only from the level of his own perplexity, Tucci submitted to the Immigration and Naturalization Service all the evidence that was used against him in denying the petition. He brought to the examiner his 1939 speech, saying that it had been "very confused." He also gave the examiner two articles he had contributed to *Politics*. In one (October, 1945), he had discussed the responsibility of the scientists who worked on the atomic bomb; in the other (November, 1946), he inquired into the nature of the State. Tucci believes "in an extremely decentralized democratic form of government in which the state does not scare the individual into obedience but leaves intact the dignity of the individual." He does not think that America has much of this sort of democracy and he does not mind saying so, which is one of the things the federal court disapproved.

We confess a great admiration for Mr. Tucci. The precious fruit of his resolve never to write pompously about things he does not understand is plain from his articles in *Politics*, and from one on Albert Einstein in the *New Yorker* for Nov. 22, 1947, to which we have before referred. We think that America can ill afford to refuse men like Tucci citizenship: it is too much like declaring Thomas Jefferson a subversive character.

Tucci will undoubtedly appeal from the District Court's decision. Meanwhile, private citizens can inform themselves by reading the *Nation* article, and Tucci himself in *Politics* and the *New Yorker*. Then, if they think the matter important, they can write letters to the newspapers expressing their feeling, and, if they like, to the Commissioner of Immigration, Department of Labor, Washington, D.C., who shapes the policy of the bureau which first denied Tucci his papers.

## CHILDREN ... AND OURSELVES

AS we have expected, every commentary upon the problems of "sex education" in this column brings response from readers. And, as we have *hoped*, the majority of criticisms have cut back to consideration of principles of philosophy—and we think that discussion on this subject, to be constructive, must do this.

A letter dated Sept. 11 indicates that its writer at least agrees with the editor of "Children and Ourselves" that discussion of the specifics of sex education is inconclusive and confusing unless considerable attention is given, first, to basic questions regarding the nature of the human being. The letter reads:

In your comments on sex education [Sept. 1], which show your usual impartial handing out of approval and disagreement, the crux of the matter is reached in the phrase, "the inherent integrity of the free human spirit." The burden of proof here rests dearly on the writer, I think, to show that the response of this spirit is any other than the adaptation which the whole natural world demonstrates. Yet there is clearly implicit in every page of MANAS the desire to place humans beyond the absolute sway of this process of adaptation. The moralist with his "Original Sin" is easy to attack on fact and motive, but he *is* the outstanding historical exponent of freeing the human mind or soul from the bonds (?) of the rest of creation. The more advanced form of his attitude—that of consciously balancing social and selfish action—is not something I am sure we *could* entrust to the "untrammelled human spirit." If the purpose of MANAS is anywhere close to what I have assumed, few of its analytical (as opposed to factual) articles can afford to ignore the difficult problem I here suggest, and which is so inconclusively treated by du Noüy and many others.

An expression such as "the inherent integrity of the free human spirit" is, of course, one of many designed to suggest that man is actually endowed with an inherent moral sense enabling him to be more concerned with the principles of justice and right action than with immediate personal advantage. We have elsewhere argued (MANAS, Aug. 11) that historical examples in

plenty indicate that men can live a fully balanced life while thoroughly devoted to matters of principle, and while refusing to recognize any need to conform to prejudicial circumstances in the political or social environment. This, we hold, is an entirely *different sort of adaptation* from that demonstrated by the "whole natural world." We feel no compulsion to admit that the habits of a Socrates or a Eugene Debs imply the existence of a *supernatural* quality in man. Rather, it might be maintained, agreeably to some thoughtful biologists and physicists, that we have not yet come to an adequate understanding of all the component parts of the human being. It is "natural" for men to have a sense of justice and a conscience, whether or not they profess fear of supernatural punishments in hell or some other nether world.

Assuming that "consciously balancing social and selfish action" is a desirable objective—we might state the idea in other terms—it can, we think, be entrusted to *no other* agency than the "untrammelled human spirit"—because no man acts in a fully constructive manner under the fear of external compulsion or punishment. Something of this sort has been maintained by psychiatrists for almost a generation. Unless we find some base of *fearlessness*, some sense of inner security, whatever social action we undertake will be colored by anxieties of a personal nature, and it is always difficult for disturbed people to understand the needs of others.

The child lives in a constantly expanding world. New types of personality and new social configurations are always entering his horizon: Each new person the child meets is apt to be afflicted with one or another form of prejudice, and these prejudices are finally traceable to fears which are recorded in family or social habit. Unless the child is encouraged to break his allegiance to *all fear*, the radius of his contacts with his fellow human beings in later life will be foreshortened by timidity.

Our correspondent's reference to du Noüy suggests a dissatisfaction with existing attempts on the part of both psychologists and men of religion to discover the key for "balancing social and selfish action." It is precisely from this point of departure that the suggestions offered in this column and elsewhere in MANAS are meant to extend. We have had only two basic attitudes toward the "human moral sense" in Western history: first, the theological idea that man's moral sense had been initially corrupted in some obscure way; and second, the theory that morality can never be more than adaptation to the conditions of physical environment. Both of these culturally dominating concepts ignore the strongly felt need for moral growth in human beings.

The *desire* for moral and spiritual growth cannot be traced to the influence of any theological formulation, for it seems a common heritage of all men of all times. It exists between the lines of such books as pragmatist John Dewey's *Human Nature and Conduct* and his textbook, *Ethics*. Many suppose that they seek moral improvement for the sake of posterity, and our mediievally inclined thinkers say that they seek a better relation with God; but the only undeniable *fact* is that men continue to have a concern for moral growth, regardless of whom or what they say they do it for.

It is characteristic of the type of argument propounded by our correspondent—and this is not meant disparagingly—to say that, after all, we cannot "trust" the "free human spirit." While it is certainly true we cannot trust someone's "free human spirit" always to do those things which are socially useful, and to refrain from doing those things which injure others, we *can* trust people to do anything as long as we are willing to share *with* them the consequences of their actions—in the hope that both we and they will learn something worth knowing. We do not need to maintain, with the Christian Scientists, that the universe conspires to create an inevitable

"good," in order to believe that only the good" will finally survive, and that those whom we cannot trust to do good, and who will, consequently do evil, will eventually destroy themselves—and not anything else.

## FRONTIERS

### MAN—THE NEW GEOLOGIC FORCE

FOR some years, now, it has been the custom of travelers to far-off lands, and of a few sociologists, to compose wistful essays about the natural life of non-industrialized peoples. The white races, we are told, engrossed in their machine civilization, have cut themselves off from Mother Earth. Ward Shepard, writing in the *Scientific Monthly* a couple of years ago (February, 1946), invites his readers to consider the Hopi Indians, who have, he says, "much to tell us about the essential eternal values required for sustenance of the human spirit." He does not, of course, propose to sophisticated Westerners that they live in pueblos on arid deserts, but he does suggest that modern man might imitate the Hopi way of life by adopting certain of its principles. "It is possible," he thinks, "for modern civilization to create a rich, selfless, intense manner of social living, to reorient itself to the production of full human personalities, who in turn devote themselves cooperatively to great social ideals of beauty and excellence."

These are wonderful, mouth-filling phrases. Well, how might it be done?

We have asked this question, not in order to look narrowly at Mr. Shepard's enthusiasm, but to try to make the start of an answer, ourselves. The obvious need, we think, is to generate the kind of conviction about the meaning of life on earth that will make men *want* "to create a rich, selfless, intense manner of social living."

Our theory develops from some thought given to books like *Our Plundered Planet* by Fairfield Osborn (Little Brown & Co., Boston). Mr. Osborn, who is the zoologist son of our favorite anthropologist, Henry Fairfield Osborn, confirms our feeling that there is a natural economy in the moral affairs of human beings—that with the decline of old-time religious controls over human behavior, other influences become available to provide the basis for social wisdom at another level of perception. *Our Plundered Planet*, for example, is a Revelation for agnostics: it declares the radical unity of the earth and all organic life. The book also bears

out another of our impressions—that naturalists, men who study the wide world and its living inhabitants, almost always root their convictions in an instinctive religion which grows, imperceptibly, from what they do and say, and emerges for recognition regardless of vocabulary. Often the living content of their thought is itself a religion.

Mr. Osborn makes it impossible for the reader to escape the conclusion that there are laws of life on this planet, and that they are being disobeyed. First, a few figures. There are no more than four million acres of arable land on the earth (other estimates give a much lower figure), and the world population is over two billion people. If at least two and a half acres in average production are needed to feed each human being, obviously, some people are going hungry right now. And for every acre lost, another person will get less to eat. "No wonder," says Mr. Osborn, "there are worldwide shortages, and that the people of a number of nations are facing starvation."

The human race is wasting its precious heritage of topsoil at a fantastic rate. Instead of members of a great world-civilization in the making, we are a race of desert-builders preparing wastelands to leave to posterity. Even the man usually hypnotized by political headlines should be persuaded by reading *Our Plundered Planet* that politics has little to do with the enduring future of humanity. Take the case of Greece. The United States is supporting Greece as a vital part of American national defense. Greece is an impoverished country, but not merely because of the war. Greece is poor because her fertile soil is almost gone. "Probably not over 2 per cent of the entire country has its original topsoil, and this can be found only in those isolated regions which are still forested." Wheat production in Greece is less than half the normal yield per acre. Once, 60 per cent of Greece was covered by fine forests. Today, only five per cent is forested. There is less than an acre of cultivable land per inhabitant. More than half of the cereal foods consumed in Greece must be imported. Meanwhile the land continues to deteriorate.

The condition of Greece may be extreme, but read what Mr. Osborn says about the United States, about Australia and South Africa. Everywhere the story is the same: the removal of organic materials

from the land—necessary to replenish it with vital elements and their disposition as refuse in the large cities; the destructive cultivation of areas that should have been left for grazing only; the over-grazing of slopes with consequent denudation. Read the agricultural history of Spain—the story of the ravaging of the countryside by the Mesta, a combine of wandering shepherders who, with the help of Ferdinand and Isabella, wore away the fertility of the soil; and then read about the present land-grabbing tactics of livestock-owners in the United States—read it in Mr. Osborn's book, and also in Bernard DeVoto's hard-hitting articles in recent issues of *Harper's*.

Mr. Osborn reserves for the end of his book the section devoted to the plundering of the resources of the United States. Once, about 40 per cent of this land area was covered with virgin forest; today, only 7 per cent has its original forest cover. Some 20 per cent more is forested with new growths, but compared with consumption, reforestation proceeds at a snail's pace. During the 36 years from 1908 to 1944, the entire supply of remaining "saw timber" in the United States was reduced by 44 per cent—nearly half. At present, annual consumption exceeds growth by more than 50 per cent.

Yearly losses to the United States due to uncontrolled erosion amount to nearly four billion dollars. It would take a freight train long enough to reach around the earth eighteen times to carry off a load equal to the annual erosion-caused loss of soil from American lands. City-dwellers, Mr. Osborn points out, are insensitive to the meaning of such catastrophic deterioration of the land. Of the billion acres available in the United States for farming and grazing, more than one quarter have already been ruined or badly damaged. Further, the quality of crops declines along with the soil. Domesticated animals are only a fraction of their former number, and artificial manures lack the plant nutrients needed to produce healthful foods. Agricultural food products are sold long distances away from the places they are grown or raised, and organic waste materials seldom find their way back to the earth to replenish the soil. A dramatic instance of soil depletion is given in the experience of a famous

racing stable which found its thoroughbred horses, once winners on every track, losing their speed. They won fewer races and the mares began dropping stillborn or deformed colts. Study showed that the soil used for pasturage was lacking in essential mineral elements and that earthworms had practically disappeared. After five years of natural manuring, plowing under green crops, and the introduction of earthworms, the horses began to win races again. The new colts were sound and normal. Mr. Osborn makes the obvious point: that if, out of 14,000,000 men examined for the draft, only 2,000,000 were fully qualified, the soil of the United States may have something to do with the condition of this vast majority of unfit. Even the 12 per cent rejected for mental reasons may suffer, indirectly and in part, from the failure of the soil to provide nourishing foods.

In *Our Plundered Planet*, Mr. Osborn has been able to present contemporary facts which show something more than human disregard for conservation: they are facts of staggering significance for the almost immediate future—not the "geologic future," but twenty and thirty years from now, and the next century, when the great grandchildren of the babies now being born may go hungry and starve because of the present alienation of man from nature.

This book proves, we think, the vast immorality of acquisitiveness, of getting and spending as a motive for life. It is preemptory in its demand for a new evaluation of what the land is for and of man's relation to it. It is not enough to vilify imperialism among nations, standing idly by while the ruthless and irreparable conquest of the earth continues. Our life and the life of the earth is a common one. This is what their ancestral religion taught to the Hopis, but what *our* ancestral religion did not teach us, and what we must learn before it is too late.