

UNHOLY SECRETS

NO one who reads the news magazines can help but be impressed by the amount of attention gained, these days, by the junior senator from Wisconsin. McCarthy is indeed the most prominent American of our time, holding the stage as much for those who deplore his presence among us as for those who support and cheer him. Since, occasionally, we get a letter which hints that MANAS seems to be "going along" with the popular "liberal" habit of denouncing McCarthy, there may be point in looking, not at McCarthy—this is being done quite well by experts—but at what is behind McCarthy.

In the first place, to suppose that McCarthy himself menaces American liberty and freedom of thought is, we think, to miss the point entirely. It is as wide of the mark as the Senator's own tendency to recognize only one prevailing evil on the American scene—Communism, or what he claims to be Communism. McCarthy is no more than a symptom, an overt expression of deep-seated fears and guilts which afflict the American people. This, at any rate, is our theory, and while it cannot, perhaps, be "proved," certain things may be said, certain thoughtful writers quoted, in its defense.

Something very like our theory is expressed by Dr. Robert C. Murphy, a psychiatrist and psychoanalyst, in the *Nation* for March 27.

Most of us [writes Dr. Murphy] choose to remain blind to our own guilty part in the nation-wide social sickness which has recently reached a peak under Senator McCarthy. . . . As a matter of fact, if the Senator were to die tomorrow, there is no reason to think that McCarthyism would be cured or even diminished. Perhaps it would become even more menacing through being directed by subtler and more acceptable voices. . . .

The psychological keystone of the whole structure of McCarthyism is its success in stripping all meaning from the word "Communist." In Senator

McCarthy's book, for instance, the word appears between ten and thirty times on nearly every page, and yet there is no statement in its whole 101 pages defining a Communist or saying what a Communist believes—nothing to help the reader to recognize a Communist if he sees one. The effect of this failure to give content to the word is to reduce it to an almost pure communication of feeling rather than meaning. Probably no other word in contemporary English has such an impact of the sinister, evil, and mysterious. . . .

Actually, our chief problem is not communism but the fact that most of the inhabitants of the world are starving, diseased, and illiterate and that we are doing almost nothing about it . . . because it is less painful to us to attack the Communist than to try to relieve the misery of people living outside our rich and comfortable country. . . .

McCarthyism expresses and enhances our need to turn our hatreds outward and thus brings us closer to war. It should be pointed out, however, that our acquiescence in a war drive is entirely independent of the true nature of world communism. If communism is in fact an evil social movement, then we are using "reality" to blind ourselves to things we would prefer not to know about ourselves.

There, we think, is a large part of the true story of McCarthyism. McCarthy is, in fact, a valuable man, in that his power has become an accurate measure of the psychological and moral weakness overtaking our civilization.

The power of McCarthyism begins with its failure to define communism with any impartial exactitude or with any realizing sense of the broad current of European history from which modern communism has developed. Those who use the methods of McCarthyism are in some cases doubtless quite aware of the unwillingness of many Americans to consider careful definitions and analysis of communism. This reluctance is evidence of the "guilt" which makes men vulnerable to McCarthyism and helps them to become its acquiescent or vociferous supporters.

Communism, some will argue, as though nothing further need be said, is *Materialism*. This is true. Theoretical communism is dialectical materialism. It has no room for transcendental forces or purposes. It shows only contempt for what men term "spiritual" ideas. But an impartial historian is bound to notice and to declare that, in past epochs, the most determined defenders of human rights—the leaders of the American Revolution, in fact—have been dubbed materialists. The traditional religious institutions which lay claim to preserving spiritual ideas have been traditionally insensible to crimes of injustice and opposed to the great forward movements of history.

A moral energy initiated the revolutionary movement which ended—and failed, we think—in modern communism. It is foolish to ignore or deny this, or to refuse to consider the possibility that the materialism of modern social movements has been a direct reaction to the crude indifference to human suffering shown by orthodox, institutional religion.

But communism, it is insisted, would take away by force the right of the individual to private property. This is also true. But is it the idea of losing our property which offends, or the idea of force? We are perfectly willing to admit that totalitarian communism is a travesty of the ideals of the early socialists—and admit, further, that the socialists may have been extremely naïve in their hopes for a classless society in which possessions no longer count for anything with anybody. But the record of our moral ideals must nevertheless be kept straight. The men or Gods whom we admire the most are not remembered for their attachment to property, but for quite other qualities. The idea of sharing one's possessions freely *is not a subversive idea*. The idea of not caring about possessions at all is a noble conception honored in every great philosophy the world has known. Let us admit it, however much we protest that the world is not "ready" for such arrangements.

We are now able to identify with some precision what we think is wrong with communism: it destroys the right of the individual to share his possessions according to his own decision. Communism attempts to constrain the practice of a moral ideal, and in doing so completely changes its character. Compelled sharing is not moral, and it is not, therefore, sharing. Least of all is it the realization of an ideal, for a *human* ideal must be freely chosen by human beings.

Unless we pursue this analysis, and arrive at this conclusion, or something like it, we may easily fall into the trap of imagining that Capitalism and Free Enterprise are somehow *moral* systems which are endangered by the *immoral* system of communism. The only thing that can be said about Capitalism and Free Enterprise, in this connection, is that they have not as yet been constituted absolute barriers to moral—that is, free—behavior by human beings. And to this should be added that the customs, practices, and folklore of Capitalism and Free Enterprise have few if any interests in common with genuine human freedom; that it is something of a historical accident that they seem, at this juncture, to go together.

There is a certain satisfaction for comfortably situated people to be able to confuse their economic system with religion and social idealism. McCarthy gives that satisfaction a large and generous security. To question McCarthy, then, is to threaten the feeling of righteousness which this confusion of ideas permits. There are those, for example, who say that they do not especially like the way McCarthy goes about what he is doing, but after all, "it has to be done," and, by God, he is rooting out the reds. But these people are not interested in the other things which he is doing. Dr. Murphy is excellent on this subject:

Since the word "communism" always suggests evil, it implies the personal guilt of anyone who listens to and is affected by it. . . . While you know you are not a Communist, the probability that the Communist stands for the intensely personal concept

of evil that you are striving to keep out of your own life makes him dangerously close to home. Of course you are not a Communist, but better make sure no one mistakes you for one. Perhaps it is better to deny all your "inner self"—including, it may be added, any dissatisfaction with the existing order and all hope of change or growth—than to take chances on having the finger of shame pointed at your most private thoughts. (After all, you have a wife and family and business position to maintain, and while you know that Tom is only a little liberal in his ideas, it might be best not to seem too close to him, at least until all this "hysterical" talk blows over.) It is, incidentally, precisely through this denial of the "inner self," which is to say of all creative expression, that McCarthyism endorses our most vulgar and stereotyped emotions and condemns all people who think with sensitivity and freedom, lumping them together as "confused intellectuals."

The ability of the word "Communist" to dredge up an unconscious concept of evil accounts for its all-or-none quality; in the unconscious, things are either totally black or dazzlingly white. . . . If one meets the word "Communist" thirty times per page in Senator McCarthy's book and a thousand times per week in newspapers and broadcasts, one is less likely to be worried about sin and salvation, poverty and race relations, inflationary spirals, the democratic functioning of one's own community. If all these problems can be subordinated to the threat of communism, then it should be possible to take apart our existing social structure and more or less simultaneously put it together again under the protectorship of McCarthyism, in which life is infinitely simplified and there is only one "evil" and one "good."

There is a dark emotional glory in sweeping condemnation, a shoot-the-works grandeur which human beings with bad consciences dearly love. It is like going off to war to settle the world's misfortunes once and for all. Meanwhile, a few men—men like Robert M. Hutchins, Stringfellow Barr, and Justice William O. Douglas—are all we have to keep us sane—they and our own consciences. A man like Douglas thinks and writes without reference to labels. He travels around the world and sees the tragedy which remains, whatever names the sufferers are called. Branding a man a communist does not make him less hungry, less deserving of three meals a day

and a place to sleep at night. But even to say this, these days, is regarded in some quarters as lending aid and comfort to the enemy.

The power of McCarthyism lies in the fear of people to think, lest they discover that they have been wrong—not wrong in disliking communism, obviously, but wrong in failing to try to understand the origins of this dark cloud which now hangs over about a quarter of the world's population. Recently a popular magazine printed an article to reassure Americans about their scientists. The scientists, we learn, are not in revolt. They are dutifully working on atomic and hydrogen bombs to protect us from the enemy. So we hug our bombs, and fear and hate the communists, as though this simplification of the horrors behind McCarthy has hope of lasting and somehow being transformed into the peace we want for the world in which our children will have to live.

We are tired and we don't want to read a biography of Lenin, or an explanation of what made Proudhon declare that Property is Theft. We know by a Big Intuition that those embittered Europeans were wrong, that we are right, and that by some means or other everyone in the world must be made to see that we are right.

What is so difficult for Americans to understand is that being right in one way can turn into being wrong in another, from losing the original virtue which once enabled them to be right. Being right does not lie in knowing and repeating the True Doctrine, although true doctrines may result from being right. Being right lies in fearlessness, in friendship, in sympathy, in patience, and in refusing to condemn others who have never had our opportunities for thinking and acting in other ways. Being right can even become contemptible and mean, when those who are right are merely the inheritors of the fruits of fearlessness, friendship, sympathy, and patient tolerance.

In Communism, all the social virtues have gone totalitarian. They have become cruel,

graceless compulsions which amount to ultimate betrayal of the motives from which they sprang. This is authentic materialism. But because Communism was propagated by angry intellectuals, and adopted by embittered masses, the rest of the world is now preparing to submit itself to the guidance of angry anti-intellectuals, supported by the fearful and resentful rest of the masses of the world. This, too, is authentic materialism.

This tragedy, now a possibility, may become an actuality, chiefly because those who know better are refusing to think.

THE ARTS OF PEACE

SOME years ago, a British educator and economist, David Mitrany, wrote a pamphlet, *Functional Means to Peace*, in which he suggested that if the nations of the world are unable to get together on the big issues, they can at least obtain some practice in cooperation in the areas where they do agree, and in this way acquire the habit of working toward common objectives in an atmosphere unclouded by mutual suspicion. A recent announcement by the UN indicates some progress in this direction.

According to *Peace News* (London), the eleven experts who form the UN Sub-Commission on Discrimination and Protection of Minorities—including representatives from the United States, Great Britain, Soviet Union, and eight other countries—have voted unanimously to investigate discriminatory practices in schools throughout the world. Here is one principle, at least, upon which Americans and the Soviets find themselves in agreement. The investigation will examine all types of discrimination in education—such as discrimination because of sex, religion, or any similar bias condemned by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The research, to be undertaken by the participating governments and UNESCO, is expected to occupy at least a year.

The policy of racial equality long ago adopted by the Soviet Union is one thing of which the Russians may be justly proud, and it is not surprising that the Soviet representative on the UN Sub-Commission voted to collaborate with the United States and other nations in this investigation. Meanwhile, it is to the credit of the United States that fear of adverse publicity concerning discrimination against Negro children in the South did not prevent American agreement to the program. It is even conceivable that Americans may learn something of value about both themselves and the practices of other countries from this investigation.

Also of interest is the announcement by Gunnar Myrdal, executive secretary of the UN Economic Commission for Europe, that the falling off of trade between Western nations and countries in the Soviet bloc has stopped, and that there is hope for better participation by the Eastern countries in the work of the Economic Commission's committees. "I have never believed," said Dr. Myrdal, "in the possibility of a big international peace settlement which would restore world-wide harmony at one stroke." He added that "in this slow process of political healing which now seems to be developing, the Economic Commission for Europe can make a modest but important contribution."

REVIEW

AN ENGLISH PERSPECTIVE

LONG on the MANAS exchange list, but seldom mentioned, is the British magazine, *Eastern World*, published monthly. Actually, since the passing or transformation of *Asia*—first into *United Nations World*, and now, simply *World*—*Eastern World* offers about the best current material available on contemporary events and cultural affairs in the Orient. Devoid of journalistic tricks and the elaborate "feature" treatments of American magazine publishing, *Eastern World* provides the reader with excellent articles and reviews. Discussions seem typically impartial, which means that a magazine of this sort becomes increasingly valuable to the American reader at a time when the United States tends to measure the civilization of another country by the degree to which it exhibits hostility to Soviet Russia and Red China. (*Eastern World* is published at 45 Dorset Street, London, W.I.)

It happens that two of the reviews we wish to quote from *Eastern World* are of books and articles published in America, and while this may seem the long way around to get review material, its appearance in a British journal, with comment from British reviewers, should be of independent interest. One article deals with the volume, *Americans and Chinese*, by Francis L. K. Hsu, an American-educated anthropologist now teaching at Northwestern University. Oddly enough, Prof. Hsu finds China and America suffering from common problems—problems "caused by the application of external pressure on a society whose internal mechanisms were not fashioned to meet them." . . . "America like China rejoiced in its isolation. . . . The Great Wall psychology was as true of America as it was of China. Then, almost without warning, the wall crumbled, the oceans were reduced to ponds." The author sees the appeal of Communism in the West affording "the restoration of a sense of longing and the provision of a purpose in life." In China, the response of the people to Communism has been a

result of the drastic reduction in the costs of government and of the militantly anti-Western policy of the Reds. As Prof. Hsu puts it:

The Communist triumph is the latest in a long series of Chinese attempts to solve the dilemma created by the country's ancient ills which were added to and aggravated by the impact of the West. The Communist response is more streamlined than the ones which it followed and in its multifold aspects carried with it implications which reach far beyond China, but to the average Chinese it probably does not appear essentially different from anything that preceded it save this—it has thus far succeeded where others failed.

The reviewer begins his discussion of this book by speaking of the profound misunderstanding which exists between "Americans and those races which are richer in their past though poorer in their present lot and face a doubtful future." This seems a fundamental note of criticism. It is carried further in a reference to America's "continued inability to recognize the equality of free Asian nations with out mental reservations, the arrogant assumption that the 'white fathers' know what is good for backward Asian peoples."

For example, American interest in Asia's quarrels with old imperialisms is openly predicated on the assumption that Asians are incapable of defending themselves against the inroads of Communism, and must be saved from Communist expansionism. In another article in *Eastern World*, a reviewer discusses the work of an anonymous Indian writer who signs himself "P." This writer considers differences in foreign policy between the United States and India, replying to typical American criticisms. He effectively counters the assumption that intervention from the West is necessary to save the East from Communism:

Given a chance, say the Americans, the Chinese Communists would push south and overrun Southeast Asia. "P" cites the case of Burma which four or five years ago had an enormous internal Communist uprising. All that uprising wanted was leadership and inspiration; two large Chinese Communist armies

were on Burma's northern borders; General Li Mi's Nationals were sitting in Burma and harassing the Chinese Communists, which provided the excuse to cross into Burma if the Communists wished. But because Peking had informed Rangoon that it would respect Burmese sovereignty, the Burmese government has been able to strengthen its position, and, what's more, crush the internal Communist insurrection. That makes nonsense of the American theory that Peking looks with constant hungry eyes toward Southeast Asia.

Still another view of the turbulence in Asia is provided in *Eastern World* by Hellmuth Hecker of Hamburg, who writes of the surge toward freedom of the entire East. Hecker regards it as in part a spiritual renaissance:

. . . throughout history in general Asia has been the home of spiritual and religious attainment. *Ex oriente lux*. . . And all the more highly developed religions have come from the East. To call Bolshevism "Eastern" or "Asiatic" is to show a profound ignorance of the real East.

The West generally has very little knowledge of the cultures of the East. Neither the existing literature about India and China, nor the intellectual discussions about Vedanta and Taoism have done much to dispel European ignorance of the East. The general attitude toward Asians—a mixture of fear and a sense of superiority—is proof of that. The term "Asia" is usually coupled in the imagination with backwardness, ignorance and squalor, or with pictures of wild nomads. . . . By materialistic standards it is thought that one day Asia might take revenge for the injustices done to her. If the law of "an eye for an eye" were the only one, that fear would indeed be amply justified.

Colonial imperialism is the outward symptom of that superior attitude toward Asia. It is responsible for Asia's painful history, so deeply stirring to anyone who takes the trouble to study it. Europe has caused Asia unspeakable suffering, and it is shameful and bitter to have to admit that Western influence has meant practically nothing to Asia but misfortune, misery, exploitation, poison and oppression. While Christian missionaries were preaching peace and statesmen were boasting about the blessings of civilization, Asia was being stripped naked more ruthlessly than any Jenghiz Khan could ever have done it. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that Asia has a deep-rooted suspicion of Europe.

What, then, can be done to lessen suspicion and hostility and to create friendship between East and West? The fact that neither India nor China are, or by their very nature ever could be, imperialistically inclined is a very positive factor in that relationship. But the first condition to be fulfilled in order to reach agreement is the complete renunciation by Europe of every kind of imperialism, open or disguised. There can be no friendly negotiations so long as there are European troops on Asian soil and so long as the West asserts that, while French resistance to Germany was justified, Indo-Chinese resistance to the French was treasonable. Asia's problem is her fight against Colonialism. The mix-named "East-West" conflict between America and the Soviet Union is often quite understandably incomprehensible to the Asians. Though it is realized that communism was originally the answer to oppression, India is, for instance, cautiously refraining from showing sympathy with communism, because it recognizes in the inhuman and materialistic methods of bolshevism the fatal spirit of the West. . . .

This writer concludes with the suggestion that the West has intruded upon India political tensions which do not belong to India at all, and that this has prevented a true exchange between East and West, at the level of spiritual culture. Some may suppose that this is a visionary flight of the imagination to mystical clouds, but the fact is that India is not naturally preoccupied with politics. *Time* for May 3, for example, reports that India's respected (anticommunist) socialist leader, Jaya Prakash Narayan, after a lifetime (he is fifty-one) in the political arena, has announced his withdrawal from politics to join Vinoba Bhave's *Boodan* movement—dedicated to obtaining free land for India's landless peasants. Conceivably, to forget politics entirely and to deal with Asians as human beings might be America's most successful foreign policy. Perhaps we overlook that an intense demand for political partisanship has the effect of causing others to react adversely, and in political terms.

COMMENTARY

AMERICAN DILEMMA

REFLECTING on the international news, these days, and the comment of American leaders, statesmen, and publicists, one is drawn to the conclusion that the growing sense of emergency, and even desperation, expressed concerning recent world events originates in the demand for a "sure thing" in political decision. We would like to see the spread of attitudes we think are fundamental to a "free world," yet we don't want to take any chances on the possibility that the policies of other countries—particularly Asian countries—will swing in the other direction.

This is really a sort of schizoid requirement, as a little thought ought to make plain. The simplest verities arising from educational experience inform us that free human beings cannot develop except in circumstances which permit failure—that freedom *means* the voluntary rejection of actions which circumscribe and confine human choice to a single pattern.

Authoritarianism or totalitarianism is itself precisely the theory of government or order which distrusts the capacity of human beings to be free. Authoritarianism insists upon a "sure thing" and maintains conformity by means of threat of punishment, used in conjunction with a dogmatic ideology which defines human and social good. Authoritarianism is an evil solely because it restricts or destroys the element of choice in human behavior.

When a democratic society, haunted by fears and ominous uprisings in other parts of the world, adopts the authoritarian prerogative of demanding a sure thing in its relations with other peoples, the basic difference between democracy and authoritarianism is at once obscured. When a democratic society like the United States is heard, on the one hand, to make reverent declarations concerning the self-determination of peoples, yet uses military strength to make sure that particular peoples do not make "mistakes," the rest of the

world may become suspicious of its intentions. Already one hears the cry in Europe that America and Russia are no more than rivals in a materialistic struggle for power, with America assuming the "white man's burden" of nineteenth-century imperialism, and Russia taking full advantage of this apparent betrayal of America's libertarian traditions.

There are plenty of Americans who see this growing disaster, yet feel helpless to do much about it. A basic change in American policy would have to result from a willingness to give up the demand for a sure thing, which would mean, in many cases, the reversal of a lifetime of psychological habits. The real question is this: How did we acquire those habits? Who persuaded us that the ultimate values in life can be "guaranteed"? For this is the belief which, when clung to by millions, turns the vision of our best leaders into despair, and their courage into impotence.

CHILDREN ... and Ourselves

AFTER an introductory discussion last week, the conviction grows on us that our schools, from bottom to top, should be devoting themselves to more training in the disciplines of rational thought. What is "logic," anyway? A hard and complicated question to answer, but important enough so that our children and adolescents should be helping us to improve the answer we make, year by year.

A friend recently remarked that Senator McCarthy is a dangerous man primarily because, like Hitler, he refuses to be logical. This is indeed the essence of demagoguery, and if we wish to prepare future generations to withstand the blandishments of dictators, a knowledge of what is "rational" and what is not is of primary importance. The dictator appeals to mass emotions, derides the qualifications of judgment insisted upon by sober minds, and inevitably calls for action without thought.

Of logic, of course, there are many kinds. We are here less interested in the orthodox analyses of college textbook writers than in the fact that men *can* reason according to disciplined canons, whether or not they have ever heard of the categories of formal logic. Socrates could hardly have been aided by Cohen and Nagel's *Logic and the Scientific Method*, but he was a most educational arguer just the same. Moreover, if we are to credit Plato's account, he used terms which anyone with a mind could understand. Logic is not the chattel or the invention of science; in fact, science has often been most illogical in attempting to restrict the number of things about which man can be held to reason with profit. Socrates reasoned about everything, less about the things he could see, hear, touch, taste and smell—for he clearly thought he knew enough about these, anyway—than about the intangibles of life.

The prevailing prejudices of the scientific age have been notably different. Only the "unrealistic," we are told, play around with the

intangibles. Questions such as "What is the meaning of life?" and "Is immortality possible?" are not questions with meaning at all, it is said, because they cannot be given definitive answers. But Socrates differs. These, he says, are *the* questions, since what we can't easily pin down is bound to be what we most need to know about. Socrates spent all his time doing something with logic not contemplated by Cohen and Nagel; he examined the first principles of his opponents' philosophies, taking for granted that any fool, allowed to select his first premises without question, can produce conclusions to his liking.

This is the kind of logic we favor—the discipline of thought which aids us in probing the first principles of everyone's philosophy, including our own. All we can do with a discipline of thought, of course, is to establish an enlightening comparison between men's opinions, or between a former opinion of our own and a new one we are struggling to bring to birth. But to have such comparisons before our eyes is to increase the chance of intelligent decision. Along with Graves and Hutchins, we maintain, for instance, that no one can make an intelligent decision about "Communism" unless he has studied it, knows what its first premises are, as represented by its proponents, and can compare them with other first principles likewise held to be desirable. Thus it is "logically" impossible to prepare American youth to withstand communism unless they are taught to understand communism—and, moreover, under the conditions described. If our democracy has a theoretical superiority over the present Russian State, it is because we at least still pretend to believe in the free interchange of opinions, the open forum for rival theories, whereas the Russians, so far as we know, make no such claim, even theoretically.

Traditionally, the Marxists and the democrats believe two different things about the nature of man. The Marxist believes that environment makes the man, whereas the Jeffersonian democrat believes that the real life of man is the

potentially independent life which goes on in his own mind. Now, what do we do to prove that our version of human nature is the truer? Obviously by living as if we did have, in fact, independent minds, fearing no competing ideology, either for ourselves or for our children. If we act as "man in the mass," we adopt the communists' first premise, which is that man always has, always does, and always will, act "in the mass." Moreover, if we maintain that the Russians are incurably mistaken in their opinions, we have adopted another Russian first premise that environment makes both man and mind. The parent or teacher who has attributed all human qualities to environmental conditioning has a great deal in common with the communist, whether he knows it or not. Fortunately, he can be confounded by any small boy who poses the question propounded in Joseph Wood Krutch's *Measure of Man*: "This lousy report card. What do you think is the trouble—heredity or environment?" Heredity, in this case, is just another sort of environment—something which presumably conditions us.

The children need to know two things about logic. First, that no one can be trusted to use the tools of logic fairly unless he is more devoted to the discovery of truth than to the defense of his current prejudices. Logical argument can be impassioned, vehement, involve the pounding of tables and the rending of hair, but the logician is the man who, even in the midst of such histrionics, will grant a telling point when it is made. The logician can be a highly emotional person, but his mind must always rule in the end. He will be willing to follow a train of thought wherever it leads, whether or not he likes where it leads him. Such a man is finally ruled by reason, and such a man, alone, is capable of ruling himself or governing others. The demagogue rends his hair and pounds the table, too, but in a different cause. He is merely trying to mislay the vital issue at hand, and, if things do not go his way, he will drop the argument altogether and take up another highly irrelevant one.

Children also need to know that all men operate on the basis of certain philosophical first principles they have come to accept—whether through environment, heredity, or independent thought. The best way to learn the measure of another's mind is to inquire into his first principles, for if you get these clearly formulated, you can just about predict what he will say on any subject under the sun, pre-supposing consistency. Therefore the child needs to evaluate the first principles—or first prejudices—of his teachers and parents. Teachers often know that they should be helping children to form such criteria of evaluation, but they also know that most parents get het up when their boy comes home from school and starts patiently disagreeing with them. Few teachers are of strong enough stuff to withstand the ensuing complaints about "lack of respect in the home," just as few men of any profession will admit to unpopular views during national turmoil. But the ones who keep devoting themselves to working for the reign of reason are the ones who should be teaching our children—and teaching us.

The teacher who strives to be a man of impartial mind is always the first to admit and to delineate his own prejudices. He will tell his class, briefly and competently, what his own "first principles" are, and caution them that whatever he says must be evaluated with the potential "bias" of his first principles in mind. Because he is fair-minded about himself, he will be fair-minded about those who hold rival opinions, and teach his students to be the same. The man of unsure mind, of deep and irrational prejudice, on the other hand, will see no point in mentioning that there are two sides to a question, since, for him, only one side exists.

Just as our teachers are supposed to know a good pupil when they see one, so do our children have to learn to recognize a good teacher, and to respect him.

FRONTIERS

"Come Again, With Me, Lucille—"

PHILIP MAC DOUGAL'S diatribe last week on the American automobile involved two major criticisms: one socialistic, and the other aesthetic. Both arguments can be supplied with interesting appendices, and we have a few in mind.

As Mac Dougal pointed out, the auto industry reflects so much monopoly control that changes and improvements for nearly all makes of cars proceed only by way of tacit agreement among the manufacturers—yet at the same time this top-heavy management is not employed, as it would be (at least theoretically) in ideal socialist planning, to benefit the public. From the socialist point of view, one may certainly wish that the many mere duplications of types of motors and bodies were reduced. Let us say that each person is entitled, for instance, to his preference in motor design, body type, passenger area, luggage space, etc. He *could* have what he wants in any of three price ranges, without having to sift the advertising claims of numerous manufacturers, all producing the same basic product, and building up general cost through competitive finagling of minor stylistic details. Chrysler now builds three V-8's, Ford three, General Motors three, and Studebaker one with more to come in the near future.

A socialized program of planned production, encouraging each manufacturer to specialize in an engine type of one or two sizes, would certainly cut down waste and cost. The public could have a good L-head 4, a good valve-in-head 4, a good L-head 6, a good valve-in-head 6, a good L-head 8, and valve-in-head V-8's in two or three categories of engine size. These would serve all conceivable needs and could be available now if the major manufacturers were as devoted to the best interests of the consumer as they would have us believe. Since manufacturers are already adept at maintaining monopoly agreements, one wonders why such suggestions have never been forthcoming, since carrying them out would be

extraordinarily simple. Moreover, a production allotment scheme of this sort would focus attention on the genuine engineering advantages which each type of motor affords, according to the usage intended.

So here we have a good argument for socialism. When monopoly-control reaches an advanced stage of development, no room exists for the radical "free-enterpriser" anyway. Capitalism, as a system, is also infinitely wasteful of material and infinitely conducive to an increase in population of style designers and advertising men. Under monopoly, in other words, we have most of the expected disadvantages of bureaucratic control—with numerous other disadvantages added. It may, therefore, some day be concluded, as Lyman Bryson reasons in *The Next America*, that there are areas of our economy in which socialized control is both inevitable and practical. We *need* not feel, either, that socialized control of part of the national economy means the death of "individualism." Individualism is of the temperament and mind; we need it in our schools and periodicals more than on our assembly lines, where it has never really existed. And, in view of the obvious facts of the present-day automotive industry, it would be hard to imagine less "individualism" there, in any case.

Mr. Mac Dougal's subsequent criticism seems to us in part an emotional one, though excusably so. He wants his automobiles to have definite "character" and, in truth, nothing is more "bourgeois" than our American four-wheeled vehicles. European cars have distinction, reflecting in part the fact that most owners of European automobiles come from the upper strata of society. Now, as Kenneth Purdy remarks in his 1952 survey of automobiling, *Kings of the Road*, American manufacturers are becoming interested in the compact body styles prevalent in Europe since the beginning. The purely stylistic bulgings which have adorned the American chassis may be on the wane. Yearly or bi-yearly body changes are also superficially "bourgeois," reflecting the

ostentation of newness rather than any interest in essential quality. Of all the radiator ornaments produced in the entire world, that of the Rolls Royce is still the most significant, and its owner the proudest. That ornament is a symbol of quality, and it has not changed in any basic respect since the first models, while American cars have created bizarre innovations every year. All of these discouraging observations help to explain Mr. Mac Dougal's point of view, but we suggest that there is a further cause for dissatisfaction among car lovers, which also needs inspection.

Cars simply are not as much fun to drive as they were twenty-five years ago, because little skill is required in learning how to operate them. This seems to be one of the psychic disadvantages of great wealth when implemented by advanced technology. More and more do mechanical devices perform for us the tasks we once felt a glow of accomplishment about doing well. (See Ford's latest ad: "The '54 Ford takes the 'drive' out of driving.") When machines do most everything for us, leading us to forget that there is much difference between good and bad driving, we have more accidents. We have more accidents, too, because little interest and attention are given to the techniques and responsibilities of maintaining a car. We don't know what could counteract this trend satisfactorily, except, possibly, a voluntary impoverishment, but a good case could be made for the superiority of a culture wherein fewer people went into debt to buy the latest gadgets, where adequate and proficient driving was more of an accomplishment, and cars in general were much less expensive. As Purdy says in *Kings of the Road*:

The automobile is here to stay. And all the fun has gone out of it. Perhaps it had to be that way? Certainly not. To qualify for its ordained function—the transportation of a nation—it was not required that the American car grow 500 pounds heavier than it need be, it was not graven on stone that it had to have a huge prairie of hood for the hapless pilot to peer across, wondering vainly where his right fender might be. Whose fiat laid down that every car should look like every other, so that only the most

knowledgeable of knowledgeable small boys could tell them apart 20 yards away? Chrome piled on chrome and tin upon tin, they look so much alike that only the ineffable vulgarity of a squirrel-tail flag on the radio antenna marks Jones's from Smith's. They look alike and they act alike—so much so that only the expert, with stop watch, measured mile and much experience in his bones, can tell the difference in performance.

We have raised a generation of Americans who have been cheated out of one of life's important pleasures: the joy of driving a light, fast, safe and supple automobile, a vehicle to sit *in*, not on, a vehicle that steers where it's told, stops when it's bidden—and goes like the devil the rest of the time. Wonder of wonders, these same Americans are sure that their cars are the world's fastest, safest and best. .

Mark you: for reliable day-in, day-out transportation, for the carting of the limp and supine body about from pillar to post, Detroit delivers the goods. It's not safe transportation, it's not economical transportation, but it's reliable, as reliable as the regular appearance of the 5:05 around the bend this side of Whisker Junction, and just about as exciting.

It *could* be reliable, safe, cheap and a hell of a lot of fun to boot. Once upon a time, it was, right here. In some other places in the world it still is, right now.

In Purdy's terms, and, we think, in Mac Dougal's, automobile driving should be interesting and adventurous. We sympathize, chiefly on the ground of the increasing rarity of the spirit of adventure and accomplishment in respect to the details of daily living. Thus, belatedly, we find well-to-do hobbyists purchasing foreign cars, and, through growing momentum of such purchases, obliging American manufacturers to adopt some alterations. Thus the aristocrats of Europe are beginning to raise certain standards in "democratic" America. Lest, however, we feel that the European way is in all respects superior, it should be remembered that the very plenitude of cars in this country has made it possible for practically everybody to own one—new or secondhand. Used cars, in a surplus market, are cheap. Youngsters from the poorest families can gradually piece together a quite individualistic

contraption out of the leavings of manufacturers' models, plus well-designed accessories. (And they choose the smaller cars of an older era to build from, on the basis of indisputable engineering principles, when maneuverability is the object.) They can even race, moreover, if they have a mind to, whereas the owning, driving and racing of automobiles in Europe has been the privilege of the comparatively few. We are not here saying that the gas station boys who drive jalopies around the quarter-mile track in your home town are necessarily benefiting their souls, but it is a sound principle of democracy that it is good for the soul to have as many free choices as possible. Here, at least, the automobile, such as it is, belongs to everyone.

Is this, finally, *another* argument for socialism? In part it may be, especially if we realize that individualism in automobiles, even among the wealthy, depends much more upon alterations of stock designs and the adding of extra equipment to the motor than upon the free-enterprise manufacturers themselves. Socialized control would put a lot of advertisers and style-designers out of work, yet save the best and more useful of them for the accessory and speed-equipment trade. It would *not* be as wasteful as our current economy. Britain's experiment in socialized medicine is not comparable, because automobiles and medical services are entirely different things.

Whatever improvements are ultimately going to come, however, will have to come, it seems to us, as a result of consumer education. Mr. Purdy, who is nearly as indignant as Mac Dougal about the current automobile, lauds the European vehicles' gear boxes, "sprouting from the floor, as nature intended." But, seriously, nature didn't intend anything about gear boxes at all; if it did, family men who prefer more room in the front would be justified in feeling aggrieved at the cosmos. What is necessary is that the intelligent and interested consumer realizes that the simplest devices are often the best for really fine driving.

The one theoretical advantage of monopoly control of production by manufacturers, instead of by government, is that the manufacturers, insensitive as they insist upon being, cannot forever resist consumer demand, whereas a socialist government can. The people *did* ask for utility vehicles, and some very competent, all-metal station wagons and ranch wagons finally made their appearance—typically American innovations which, in one respect at least, put the European semi-racing designs to shame.

The general public, as we suggested last week, may be in large part responsible for the unfortunate dominance of the industry by style designers. If even a substantial number of people were concerned with the endurance capacities of an automobile, engineers would be kept jumping to improve quality. But the public is not so concerned, as evidenced by the fact that both major consumers' magazines have little or nothing to say about how long a given motor, etc., is apt to last. It would be beneficial for some consumers' report organization to pay particular attention to this aspect of quality—in many respects the best criterion of all—and rate a given car on time and mileage duration before its motor, transmission, or rear-end is likely to need major overhauling. Some cars, for instance, have been equipped with gear teeth case-hardened to the point where they became excessively brittle. Such a car may be manufactured over several successive years by a manufacturer, causing each average owner two to four transmission overhauls within a period during which another model, with a different degree of hardening, is managing without repeated repairs.

Perhaps it is in the field of more intelligent consumers' reporting that much can be done to improve conditions in the auto industry. Even a small research magazine could reach a large group of interested readers with reports which treat exhaustively the subject of durability, allowing the consumers to balance this factor against the other considerations now so heavily weighted by

Consumers' Union and Consumers' Research Bureau. The consumers' magazines reflect, of course, interests more typical on the East coast, but this is all the more reason why other aspects of cars, especially those having to do with durability, should be noticed, since many more miles are traveled annually by inhabitants of the Western states.

So it may be argued that, to a certain degree at least, the public deserves what it gets because it does not demand reports and information which would enable presently neglected engineering factors to be given the proper amount of attention. But, then, Americans are notoriously weak in realizing the advantages of the "endurance factor" in anything. Whatever else our Olympic athletes have proved, they have certainly demonstrated that, as a people, we lag far behind other countries in appreciation of the factors that enter into endurance generally.