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WANTED: NEW UTOPIAN IDEALS

MANY people in other lands are fearful of America these days, for the reason that they assume that we are incapable of maintaining economic prosperity outside of a war or a cold-war climate. They fear that the present administration is especially unequipped to prevent a major American recession leading to world-wide economic collapse. This is more than ever the case now with the Korean armistice in effect, so that military demands are not uppermost.

These apprehensions are not limited to foreigners. Many Americans, also, are afraid that business recession following the boom will lead to depression. The current stirring among farmers and other groups in the country is symptomatic of domestic misgivings about the stability of the American economy.

Despite the clear relationship between the present prosperity and military expenditures, despite the growing dependency of major groupings of people in our country upon armament production and military spending, there is good reason to believe that our economic prosperity need not depend upon a permanent war economy. Classical Marxist thought, of course, doesn't agree with this view. It was Lenin who wrote that "in the final stages of capitalism, the imperialist nations will arm to prevent economic collapse at home and to try to put down the revolution abroad." Sometimes it looks as though we are trying to make Marxist dogma come true. But there is no economic reason that we have to do this, or that what we must have is a depression. Actually, enough has been learned during the past thirty years to enable us to prevent any major economic breakdown. The only compelling reason for a depression would be psychological, not economic. If we are psychologically not ready to do the things that we know can be done, then we could have an economic breakdown. But there are really relatively few signs that many people are truly unprepared psychologically to accept the necessary controlling and planning which can insure continued economic well-being. Even some of the crustiest conservatives show that they have learned the economic lesson of the past generation. They may not like it; they may try everything else first; but if forced to it, they would be among those planning and controlling the economy.

But how helpful it would be for our general relationships with the rest of the world if this were only made explicit! It would be good for us, and good for others who depend on us at this point. One of the difficulties is that we don't yet recognize it ourselves.

A present characteristic of the American people, as of so many people in the so-called "free world," is a certain flatness of tone in all their political activities. Few people now have much of a taste for politics even though many take part at various levels. One of the chief reasons for participation in politics is a kind of external social pressure that requires it, and not a keen enjoyment of fulfilment flowing from such activity.

Outside of small, localized issues, we all feel pretty ineffective anyway—and have felt that way for some time. As a kind of compensation for political ineffectiveness, there has been a retreat to private life which in recent years has seen more home activity than has been in evidence for a couple of generations. The move to Suburbia; puttering around the house, adding a room, tilling the garden, building the house. In a world that is so big and alarming and out-of-control, it gives us some satisfaction to be able to grapple with man-sized, comprehensible situations.

We might consider, however, that our world is out of control, not only because societies have

learned how to mobilize scientifically into totalitarian forms, nor because they have developed the perfect totalitarian weapon of the H-Bomb, but because, in another aspect of our life, *we have run out of utopias.* Our technology has carried us past some of the wildest sweeps of imagination of the past. We are sobered by the result, for some of it is as horrendous as the promise was sweet. Reinhold Niebuhr and *Time* magazine have combined to give us the tragic view of life, a view that in the terms of our past seems exceeding "un-American." Now, because our belief in inevitable progress has been destroyed, we are told that we must return to the doctrine of original sin. We no longer dare to dream of an improvement in human affairs. This darkening of the perspective of Americans is so great that in recent years sociological surveys have revealed that large numbers of them are unable to imagine a better life than their present one.

The feeling of helplessness that is now so widespread among us is the result, then, of several factors: immense social forces which seem to work themselves out regardless of the wishes of individuals; a technology that tends to lend itself primarily to mass manipulation and largeness, to the continuing detriment of individual uniqueness; and there is also the fact that we seem to have reached a point where fresh thinking is no longer possible. It is not difficult to see that, in the eyes of a member of the present college generation, it might be dangerous psychically to aspire to anything better than securing a career job with some large corporation or the government, or to suppose that life might hold richer promise than the workaday chores such a career promises. A job, a home in suburbia, two cars, a wife, two children, one cat, and one dog, almost boxes the compass.

So it is that, in a period when the knowledge and techniques that were to set men free have blossomed to an extent that dwarfs the predictions of earlier utopians, the men themselves seem to have shrivelled and shrunk. Bold minds and daring thinkers give way to cautious clock-punchers and prudent realists. The last stronghold for imagination and hope for a better world seems restricted to science fiction. Outside of that field of literary endeavor, there is hardly a writer or a critic who would contemplate imagining a set of conditions that go beyond the present accepted limits. We are invited by most of our contemporaries either to accept the world as we find it, or to retreat to some earlier condition which, we are told, was good because simpler and more "integrated"; in such a world, it is said, we could have peace of mind and security.

What is needed, it seems to me, is neither the *status quo* nor mediaeval integration, but a new unleashing of fantasy and imagination. The world and the universe in which we live are not simple. Life is complex. There is contradiction, tension, and conflict in our lives. To long for peace of mind or of soul in this kind of world, if by peace we mean the elimination of conflict and tension, would be to accept the counsel of cowardice. An easy conscience in our world is the invention of the devil. But integration is possible if we don't shrink from the challenge of living in a complex world. The problem is not to eliminate conflict, but to find ways of resolving specific conflicts fruitfully, and therefore peacefully. New conflicts will arise as old ones are resolved. Peace, in this context, can mean neither passivity nor the adjustment of people to a set of diabolical social arrangements that destroy human dignity as they destroy human life. In the effort to resolve specific conflicts, we are faced with the job of reconciling men with irreconcilable philosophies. But this is a possible task. Irreconcilable philosophies will remain. But it is possible, and it has been possible historically, to reconcile men and communities of men holding utterly opposed philosophies. To do this, however, new meanings and symbols will have to be searched for and found; specific human and social problems will have to be solved. One of the first steps, therefore, will have to be that of fresh thinking.

We are faced today with a variety of cataclysmic possibilities; what we need to find are some non-cataclysmic methods of avoiding the disastrous possibilities. Since, in America, so few of our institutions have been able to avoid the corroding effects of fear, conformity, and prudence, there is no great likelihood that courageous searching and a liberated imagination will appear on the scene without some special nurturing. The task then falls to us as individuals to be alert to and solicitous of every sign of these qualities. One useful effort we can all make is to consider afresh, not just the problems, but the way we state these problems to ourselves. For example, as a result of the Great Depression that preceded the second World War, it is now a generally accepted axiom that one of the tasks facing America and the world is that of providing full employment. Only a few voices have dared to suggest recently that this may not be the problem at all—that, as a matter of fact, the problem for us is rather that of full unemployment! How, in other words, can we adjust ourselves and our institutions to the conditions that the new technology has not only made possible but probably inevitable: a society in which the masses of men will not have to work, at least, nowhere nearly as hard as they have had to work in the past. It is strange indeed that we have not heard the demand from either the labor unions or the intellectuals for a greatly reduced work-week. Yet in the next few years the problem of how to organize a society in which the chief work is done by machines may be one of our major problems.

Another misstated problem may be that of subversion in American institutions. Is it true that Communists, or more generally, subversives, are the major threat to American freedom and democratic government? Or could it be that the search for "subversives" is the real threat?

But how many among us dare to so state the problem? There is a certain irony, and perhaps poetic justice, in the fact that Harry Truman, who signed the famous loyalty order in 1947, was recently himself called to appear before the Un-American Activities Committee. The history of every use of "Terror" by governments supports the view that before the process is completed, the terror devours even the terrorists. There is little difference between the state of mind of some of the present, self-appointed guardians of American purity and Saint-Just, one of the purists of the French Revolution, and a terrorist *par excellence.* How appropriate to the mentality of the witch hunters are these words of Saint-Just: "There is no happiness to be hoped for as long as the last enemy of Liberty breathes; you have to punish not only the traitors but even the indifferent one; you have to punish anyone who is neutral in the Republic and does nothing for her." Thus, in the name of Liberty and the Republic, heads fell and dictatorship was established. Is it really true that subversives are the major threat to American democratic institutions and practices?

But beyond restating the problems, we need that creative imagination and human aptitude for fantasy which can lift us out of our present flatness and tonelessness to aspire for a better way of life for ourselves and all men. I for one am satisfied neither with the utopias of the past, nor with those declamations about the sinful nature of man which are designed to persuade me that we aren't capable of handling the challenges which confront us. In a recent issue of the *Manchester Guardian,* D. W. Brogan, in an article entitled "America's Way: Action Without Doctrine," may have come near to the truth by suggesting that one of America's greatest contributions to the world is that, in his words, "Americans may try to be political or social philosophers, but cheerfulness will keep breaking out." This temper, he suggests, may be part of the reason why Americans have the irritating fault at times of succeeding in spite of the rules laid down by the dogmatists and the pessimists.

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Letter from
CENTRAL EUROPE

INNSBRUCK.—The memoranda, articles and books which have been written about capital punishment would probably fill the shelves of a medium-size library. And yet very few countries have adopted a final decision on this question.

When Austria abolished capital punishment about two years ago, part of the public favoured and another part regretted the decision. Numerous specialists produced statistics which seemed to show that countries which had done what Austria did had not complained of an increase in criminality. The murderer, they emphasized, once having decided to kill, would act independently of the threat of punishment.

Experience since, however, reveals an increase in killings, many of them peculiarly gruesome in details. Some murderers have even admitted that they long wanted to kill, but that the possibility of a death-sentence had previously restrained them. As the problem has become acute, a Viennese Cabinet Minister recently pleaded for the revival of capital punishment as soon as possible.

Pacifists and Christian groups declare that no one has the right to take another's life, while their opponents advocate merciless punishment of those who indulge criminal instincts. A third group, which seems to be gaining ground, is of the opinion that pacifists are right in principle, but that they ought to start with their good work on the other end. To stop killing, so the members of this group argue, would in the first instance mean to stop wars, but since this is a far-reaching objective, the pacifists, they argue, ought to concentrate first on routine events which result in the death of so many innocents, as for instance traffic accidents, industrial accidents, deaths in sports, and similar loss of life, before they think of saving the lives of bestial criminals. However, this third group also proposes that criminals—being victims of their own morbid tendencies—ought not to be "punished," but treated like any other person who has been so unfortunate as to inherit or pick up an infectious disease.

The most important of their contentions is that a dangerous criminal, once excluded from public life, should not have opportunity to regain his freedom and commit a similar offense. Release from prison, they argue, has become easier and easier during the past fifty years. Not only are criminals sufficiently clever to behave well for a time, and so win a parole, but they also often escape from prison. Further, the frequent changes in the political regime of Austria during these fifty years has made political prisoners seem more important than the criminal ones, so that "general amnesties" often affect only the latter. When the Americans and the Russians came to Austria in 1945, they opened the doors of the concentration camps, without noticing whether the inmates had been political or criminal offenders.

A few days ago, an Austrian judge, while sentencing a convicted man to five years' hard labour, took opportunity to call public attention to the fact that the accused had first been committed for the same offense (violence to little girls between eight and twelve years old) in the year 1900, and that although very often imprisoned since, he had had many opportunities to regain his freedom through amnesties, etc., so that, to date, he had the record of having inflicted harm upon not less than one hundred girls. The judge added that the sentence was the severest he could give under existing law, but that he was quite sure that the man would be freed sooner or later, by an old-age amnesty, or something of the kind.

In relation to such cases, the adherents of the third group declare that they are in opposition to capital punishment, and that they even would agree to kindly treatment of the prisoners, so long as the authorities will take steps to make a return into public life impossible for dangerous criminals.

CENTRAL EUROPEAN CORRESPONDENT

REVIEW
HUXLEY ON EVOLUTION

JULIAN HUXLEY'S latest book, *Evolution in Action,* is an encouraging statement of the philosophy of "Naturalism" (Harper, 1953). This distinguished British biologist, who also became widely known as Director General of UNESCO, here undertakes to provide the general reader with a brief account of "evolution as a process affecting nature and man." "All reality," he says, "in fact, is evolution, in the perfectly proper sense that it is a one-way process in time; unitary; continuous; irreversible; self-transforming; and generating variety and novelty during its transformations."

In his Preface, Dr. Huxley starts out by recalling the conviction which led so many biologists of the last century to attack citadels of theology with the fervor of crusaders. "It makes a great difference," he writes, "whether we think of the history of mankind as something wholly apart from the history of the rest of life, or as a continuation of the general evolutionary process, though with special characteristics of its own." The feeling of "the oneness of life"—man's close relation to other degrees of sentient existence—was explicitly denied by theology. The early Darwinists were determined to close the gap between man and the rest of life, and, in effect, to repudiate all doctrines which invoked "divine authority" for the separation. These "crusaders" thus threw out the God who was supposed to have no concern for the progress of the lower animals—and tossed out with him such words as "spiritual," "soul," etc. But now these same terms, clarified, and given less partisan and exclusive meaning, are allowed entry into scientific vocabulary—a trend we have been noting since the first issue of MANAS. In his concluding chapter, Dr. Huxley puts it this way:

> I find myself inevitably driven to use the language of religion. For the fact is that all this does add up to something in the nature of a religion: perhaps one might call it Evolutionary Humanism. The word "religion" is often used restrictively to mean belief in gods; but I am not using it in this sense—I certainly do not want to see man erected into the position of a god, as happened with many individual human beings in the past and is happening still today. I am using it in a broader sense, to denote an over-all relation between man and his destiny, and one involving his deepest feelings, including his sense of what is sacred. In this broad sense, evolutionary humanism, it seems to me, is capable of becoming the germ of a new religion, not necessarily supplanting existing religions but supplementing them. It remains to see how this germ could be developed—to work out its intellectual framework, to see how its ideas could be made inspiring, to ensure their wide diffusion. Above all, it would be necessary to justify ideas by facts—to find the areas of frustration and point out where they were being reduced, to show how research into human possibilities was providing new incentives for their realization, as well as demonstrating the means for realizing them.

Surveying the whole panorama of evolutionary process, then, Huxley introduces the concept of moral responsibility—not responsibility to "God," but responsibility to everything that lives and breathes, much in the mood of the ancient pantheists:

> Once life had become organized in human form it was impelled forward, not merely by the blind forces of natural selection but by mental and spiritual forces as well.
>
> In the light of evolutionary biology man can now see himself as the sole agent of further evolutionary advance on this planet and one of the few possible instruments of progress in the universe at large. He finds himself in the unexpected position of business manager for the cosmic process of evolution. He no longer ought to feel separated from the rest of nature, for he is part of it—that part which has become conscious, capable of love and understanding and aspiration. He need no longer regard himself as insignificant in relation to the cosmos. He is intensely significant. In his person, he has acquired meaning, for he is constantly creating new meanings. Human society generates new mental and spiritual agencies, and sets them to work in the cosmic process: it controls matter by means of mind.
>
> It is not true that the nature of things is irrelevant to the interests of man, for the interests of man turn out to be part of the nature of things.

For a conclusion, we have reserved two paragraphs which relate to ideas developed in our recently completed "Books for Our Time" series. Here a leading biologist stamps with his approval the approaches to psychology chosen by Karen Horney and Erich Fromm, just as in his earlier discussion of "Evolution and Humanism" he speaks of the necessity of such experiments as conducted by Rhine in investigation of "man's hidden potentialities." Dr. Huxley writes:

> The possibilities of man's inner life are as important as those of his active existence. The achievement of inner harmony in the building up of the personality is as important as was the development of self-regulating mechanisms in the evolution of the animal body.
>
> This leads on to the subject of morality. Morality in the usual sense of the word is concerned with something outside the self—the individual's relations with others, with God, with society as a whole. But this needs relating with a morality concerned with the self—the rightness of free creative activity, of personal fulfillment. Psychiatrists like the American Erich Fromm have developed this idea in a very interesting way. And finally, for the evolutionary biologist, both must be related with a third sort of morality—the rightness or wrongness of the relation between man and his future. From this angle, anything which permits or promotes open development is right, anything which restricts or frustrates development is wrong. It is a morality of evolutionary direction. Here again, the Americans seem to be doing more than anyone else to explore the subject.

Here Huxley leads us along a highway of thought made famous by the ancient Greeks, who were not only pantheists by natural inclination, but also intellectually convinced that the most important issue for the mind of man to ponder was "rightness or wrongness" in relation to man's future. The Greeks had wonderfully flexible minds, because they were neither bound to the past nor to any prevailing *status quo* of politics, religion, or philosophy. Thus they were also expert psychologists, decrying claims of "absolute truth" as possessed by any particular authority, for they knew that all men who insisted upon dogmas were simply ridden by irrational compulsions.

The theme which runs through *Evolution in Action* was earlier evident in a paper prepared by Huxley for the William Alanson White Psychiatric Foundation, a year or so ago—"Knowledge, Morality and Destiny." There, too, the now philosophical biologist declared that the way was presently clear for the renewal of a "spiritual" terminology in scientific expression. The pendulum of modern thought, he suggested, having reached an "anti-spiritual" extreme in reaction to authoritarian theology, now shows some promise of returning to equilibrium. So we may indeed expect that philosophy will become respectable once again, and that the "soul" of man may ultimately gain prominence in scientific reflections.

The recently exposed hoax of the "Piltdown Man" is, perhaps, but one dramatic demonstration that scientists, avid in their determination to discredit theology, overshot the mark, creating for supposedly "scientific" thought quite a cloud of presumptuous dogmas of later than medieval date. Huxley, for one, is now more than willing to reinterpret "Materialism."

COMMENTARY
THE MYSTERY OF CHILDREN

THERE are moments when we are led to suspect the "Children . . . and Ourselves" Department of succumbing to the "Children-are-just-too,-too-wonderful" cult, which has replaced the more ancient view that the lives of the young are watched over by good fairies, and otherwise blessed by an innocence which is theirs for a few, short years.

If only by reaction, the other side of childhood behavior keeps suggesting itself—the ruthless "meanness" which apparently sweet little boys and girls impose on each other, their endless imitation of their playmates, and of their elders, and their fits of measureless anger and fantastic preoccupation with what they *want.*

But then, upon reflection, it seems quite possible that the cult has ample justification, if it can help us to adopt the view that children may instruct us in phases of human nature which are usually entirely covered up in adults. In other words, we are quite prepared to admit that children *are* wonderful, if this be taken to mean that the wonder is a kind of natural revelation of what we all might be, all of the time, if we only knew how.

This week's "Children" is concerned with what amounts to "mystical experience" in the lives of children. From one point of view, this idea seems a little like "infant baptism," since mystical experience, properly speaking, ought to belong only to those who hunger after hidden secrets, just as "baptism" was originally symbolic of the second birth into religious conviction of those who have entered a life of deliberate moral striving.

But if children do enjoy, sometimes, a species of "second sight," what then? Why should a child, untried by life's ordeals, without the yearnings of the heart which sometimes spring up in those who are weary of the world, be so favored of nature?

We have been able to think of only one answer to this question—an answer which must have occurred, in some form or other, to all lovers of children, to Friedrich Froebel, to Bronson Alcott, and to others of like inspiration. Its most persuasive terms, we think, are found in Wordsworth's "Intimations"—

> Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:
> The Soul that rises with us, our Life's star,
> Hath had elsewhere its setting,
> And cometh from afar. . .

Why not suppose that the perceptive powers sometimes manifest in children belong to what might be termed their *egoic* heritage is, in fact, the hallmark of some former maturity?

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves

WE note that Dr. J. B. Rhine (of ESP fame) has published the results of experiments which indicate that school children, as well as adults, have a marked capacity for telepathy (September *Journal of Parapsychology).* And not only school children, but also cats!

It may not be very gracious to brush aside such important announcements with the assertion that we knew these things all the time, but it happens that we *did.* We have personally observed some cross-species telepathy, too, as between kitties and kiddies, and even once knew how to make the thing go ourselves. However, as one gets older, the old *rapprochement* with cats seems to diminish in effect. Now, if we pick one up by the tail and swing it around, we get scratched—doubtless because of forgetting how to telepathize an explanation to the cat of why we want to indulge in this odd bit of exercise, and why it might be fun for kitty, too. The younger the child, the better this sort of thing seems to work. We have seen some cats put through tortures which would have given the Inquisitors of Torquemada several new ideas, with scarcely an interruption in their purring. Such cats, of course, are the superior kind whose mothers and fathers have taught them how to take a joke. "After all," they seem to reason, "fun's fun, and each innocent creature should be entitled to his own tastes. Then there's *noblesse oblige.* These small humans not only allow us to catch birds, they encourage us to hunt; while the big ones throw rocks."

But these reminiscences are off the subject. Cats have already had their share of space, here, and whether or not they can give or receive telepathically is not at the moment of great import. The case for telepathy in children, however, raises considerations of significance. For instance, we might here have a scientific explanation of why it is that we can't fool children so easily as we can the rest of the world as to our attitudes and intentions. If we can fool adults who are also telepathic, this may be because they, in the very process of living long enough to become adults in our society, have fooled themselves so often that they no longer can read signals correctly when someone is fooling them—even though still able to outperform children in Rhine's laboratory.

The case for telepathy in children is stated in the *Journal of Parapsychology* by J. G. van Busschbach. A government-inspector of elementary and secondary schools in Amsterdam, Holland, van Busschbach arranged his experiments to conform with standards set at the Duke Parapsychology laboratory. The tests were made with 673 primary school children, "mostly between the ages of ten and twelve years; composing twenty-one different classes." Words, symbols and colors were used as "target" material—which means, in Duke parlance, that cards were held up for the children to see before the test proceeded. The report gives these details:

> The teacher (A) seated himself at a table at the back of the room in a sort of cubicle constructed of cardboard. His back was to the subjects and theirs were turned to him. He was totally screened from their view and mine by the cardboard. On the table in front of (A) were placed face-down the five cards. (A) determined the one-to-five order of these cards arbitrarily, and I, as experimenter-observer (E), did not know the order during any test.
>
> A list of 10 random numbers from 1 to 5 was given to (A) just before the beginning of the test. This list indicated the target card for each of the ten trials in that set. The list was prepared by someone other than (E) and was made up from digits in a telephone directory. The last digits on randomly selected pages were used.
>
> Each child was given a record sheet with spaces numbered from 1 to 30 in which to write his "guesses." He also filled in his name, sex, and age. Another set of five target cards like those which (A) was to use was fastened in arbitrary order to the blackboard to remind the subjects of what they were to guess.
>
> When all was ready and (E) was certain that everyone understood the instructions, he told (A) to pick up and look at the card in the position indicated by the first number on the list. When (A) had done so, he said, "Yes," which was the signal for the subjects to write down their guesses."
>
> After a brief interval, (E) said, "Next card," and the test proceeded in this way until 10 trials had been made.
>
> The total data resulting showed "a total of 20,190 trials, or 6,730 trials for each of the three

types of target material. There was an excess of I74 direct hits over the number expected by chance. . . . In view of the precautions taken to exclude the possibility of error in the experiment, these results may be interpreted as being due to the presence of ESP. Table I shows that the highest rate of scoring was made on symbols and the lowest on words, but the differences are not significant."

This writer concludes:

> This is the first ESP experiment to be carried out with Dutch primary school children in the classroom situation. There have been, in fact, few such experiments in the history of the field. The significant results obtained indicate that this approach may be a good one for getting evidence of ESP from children in this particular age group. Similar tests are being carried out with older children and these will be reported later.

Here, as in the reporting of other Rhine-guided projects, the tone of restraint clothes rather startling discoveries in matter-of-fact expression, yet even such apparently dull research as that undertaken by van Busschbach invites endless speculation. Is it not possible, we again may ask, that while children are thus shown to be less telepathic than adults when *conventional word symbols* are used for comparison, the very young may be far more intuitive in general? Intuitive perception, it appears, is natural for the child--often he "listens with the inner ear." A talent for telepathy and an active intuition may not be quite the same thing, yet grow from common roots in some as yet unexplored dimension of the human psyche. In Raynor Johnson's collection of accounts of mystical experience in *The Imprisoned Splendour,* for instance, we note how often quoted autobiographical accounts of mystic experience refer to childhood years. Mary Austin's "Experiences Facing Death," for example, included the following passages:

> I must have been between five and six when this experience happened to me. It was a summer morning, and the child I was walked down through the orchard alone and came out on the brow of a sloping hill where there was grass and a wind blowing and one tall tree reaching into infinite immensities of blueness. Quite suddenly, after a moment of quietness there, earth and sky and tree and wind-blown grass and the child in the midst of them came alive together with a pulsing light of consciousness. There was a wild foxglove at the child's feet and a bee dozing about it, and to this day I can recall the swift inclusive awareness of each for the whole—I in them and they in me and all of us enclosed in a warm lucent bubble of livingness. I remember the child looking everywhere for the source of this happy wonder. . . . :

Richard Jeffries reported in *The Story of My Heart:*

> I was not more than eighteen when an inner and esoteric meaning began to come to me from all the visible universe; and indefinable aspirations filled me. I found them in the grassy fields, under the trees, on the hill-tops, at sunrise, and in the night. There was a deeper meaning everywhere. The sun burned with it, the broad front of morning beamed with it, a deep feeling entered me while gazing at the sky in the azure noon, and in the star-lit evening.
>
> I was sensitive to all things, to the earth under, and the star-hollow round about; to the least blade of grass, to the largest oak. They seemed like exterior nerves and veins for the conveyance of feeling to me. Sometimes a very ecstasy of exquisite enjoyment of the entire visible universe filled me.

In John Buchan's *Memory-Hold-the-Door,* we find similar admission that some special awareness is a common childhood gift:

> In South Africa I recovered an experience which I had not known since my childhood, moments, even hours, of intense exhilaration, when one seemed to be a happy part of a friendly universe. The cause, no doubt, was largely physical, for my long treks made me very fit in body; but not wholly, for I have had the same experiences much later in life when my health was far from perfect. They came usually in the early morning or at sunset. I seemed to acquire a wonderful clearness of mind and to find harmony in discords and unity in diversity, but to find these things not as conclusions of thought, but in a sudden revelation, as in poetry or music. For a little, beauty peeped from the most unlikely wrappings and everything had a secret purpose of joy. It was the mood for poetry had I been anything of a poet.

These isolated bits of testimony seem to show that children are *born* with some wondrous ability to transcend the limitations of time and space. What van Busschbach shows in the classroom has often been demonstrated in other ways, and more impressively, perhaps.

FRONTIERS

A Home of the Free

IT is a minor irony of these bewildering times that, when people living in the "free world" are neurotically fearful of political communism, there should be a number of practical experiments in non-political, voluntary community living proceeding in various countries, often with remarkable success. Any one of these experiments presents evidence to explode most of the anti-communist clichés about "human nature." But they are equally a reproach to political communism, which seems able to retain power only by means of periodic purges and terrorism.

Readers may recall the book, *All Things Common,* by Claire Huchet Bishop, reviewed here about a year ago (MANAS, Dec. 3,1952, which tells the story of the French Communities of Work—brotherhoods of practical sharing which unite men of all religions and political faiths under the ethical ideals of community living. It is as though a new breath of inspiration has overtaken old Europe, moving men to discover the freedom of a non-acquisitive life.

There is no passage of greater social potency in the Bible than the one in the Acts of the Apostles which reads: "And all that believed were together, and had all things common; and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need." All through the centuries of Western history, there have been men and women who found inspiration in these words. Every epoch of transition has had its exemplars of community who gave up the thought of private property, often exerting a civilizing influence of wide and lasting scope. The Brothers of the Common Lot, founded at Deventer in the last quarter of the fourteenth century, counted among their number such illustrious men as Thomas à Kempis and Nicholas of Cusa. In large measure, the re-education of northern Europe, after the Middle Ages, was in their hands.

The need, today, however, is not for scholarship, but rather for men and women devoted to the ideal of brotherhood. It was a perception of this sort, perhaps, which led Eberhard Arnold, a secretary of the Student Christian Movement in Germany, to take to heart the example of the early Christians spoken of in the *Acts.* With some others, he founded in 1920 the Society of Brothers in the town of Rhoen. The idea was to do their best to practice the ideals of the Sermon on the Mount. Their community home became known as the *Bruderhof,* which means, literally, the place where the brothers live. Seventeen years later, when the Nazis took over, driving the Brothers from the country, the Brotherhood had grown to 130 persons and left behind extensive farm buildings and living quarters.

It is of interest that Eberhard, while a man of cosmopolitan education, at the beginning knew nothing of the fact that there were then in existence some eighty Hutterite Bruderhof communities, representatives of a movement which had begun four hundred years before in Moravia. Persecuted almost to extinction, the Hutterite communities have nevertheless survived, mostly in Canada, where they came at the end of the nineteenth century in search of a peaceful life. When the Brothers associated with Arnold learned of the Hutterites, they linked themselves with the older Christian fraternity. There is, however, a distinction between the two groups, noted by Grace Rhoads in an article in *Fellowship* (July, 1952):

> The ways of internal government are those of the Hutterites whom the Society of Brothers joined in 1930 as expressing most clearly and fully the beliefs of the Society. The main difference between the two groups is that the Hutterites wish to withdraw from the world, whereas the Society of Brothers regrets its forced isolation and is constantly reaching out to others of similar mind, . . .

When the Nazis closed the Bruderhof in 1937, the Brothers were able to move to England where, in anticipation of this necessity, a farm had been secured in Cotswold the year before. Eberhard, meanwhile, had died (in 1935), but the group had so grown in its commitment to common ideals that his loss was not a weakening influence. During the next four years in England, the community experienced rapid extension. There were thousands of visitors, for these were years when thoughtful people everywhere were looking about for ways to make a new beginning. Here was a community which, while Christian in inspiration, exhibited none of the oppressive methods of the more traditional and authoritarian groups. Many of the members were well educated, as contrasted with the peasant background of communities with a heritage reaching back to the Anabaptist revolt. There is very little emphasis on "doctrine" among the Brothers, who feel, rather, that religion is a matter of practice in daily

life. They have no formal "church," nor do they speak of "services," and a spirit of social intelligence seems to have kept any feeling of being "the chosen people" at an absolute minimum.

It was not strange, therefore, that the Brotherhood grew strong during the '30's. In 1939, however, England was confronted by war with Germany, and since the Community now numbered 350 persons, many of them German, there was the problem of their being interned as "enemy aliens." The group resolved to emigrate again. With the help of the Mennonites, the Brothers secured a large tract of land in Alta Paraguay, where the Paraguayan government agreed to allow them the freedom they sought. Leaving three members behind in England to liquidate their holdings, the Brothers set out for Paraguay. It must have been quite a pilgrimage, for at least half of the 350 were children. They came in six different groups, in quick succession, and eventually found themselves set down in the midst of Paraguayan prairie and forest with practically no roof over their heads. The three members who remained in England to conclude the sale of the Cotswold Bruderhof were having their own difficulties. Months passed, with no settlement. Then some like-minded English joined the three and soon a new Bruderhof was in the making. Before long the English group, now twenty strong, had purchased a new farm in Shropshire, then another, and then a third. These three centers now form the Wheathill Bruderhof of England, with two hundred members.

Meanwhile, on the *stancia* of twenty thousand acres in Alta Paraguay, the Brothers established three *hofe* or villages—they find that when more than two hundred persons live together, relationships and administration become too formal and unwieldy—each with its own communal facilities. These villages house the thousand members of the Paraguayan community.

One of the communities is provided with a hospital with thirty-six beds and four doctors which receives about 5,000 patients a year. This community also has charge of the cattle-raising, representing the largest investment of the Society. Another of the villages has the sawmill and the carpentry and engineering workshops, and the central storehouse. Here is carried on the work of woodturning, for the Brothers manufacture finely made articles of utility and decoration from the beautiful hardwoods of South America. (Sale of these articles is an important source of income to the Brotherhood.) The third community, originally founded to make a new home for European children orphaned by the war, and adopted by the Brothers, has the shoe-making and tailoring shops, the bakery, and the library. Each community has its own farm, dairy, truck garden and orchards, but there is full cooperation between the three. The Bruderhof dairies, incidentally, have the highest rate of yield of milk in Paraguay.

One gets the impression from reading about the Community and talking to its members that the work activities are carried out with considerable efficiency. While lacking in industrial equipment and heavy machinery—such as the bulldozers needed to clear forest land of hardwood stumps—the Brothers have accomplished virtual miracles during the brief twelve or thirteen years in Paraguay. From the point of view of human outlook and attitude, one tremendous advantage they enjoy is complete emancipation from many of the personal insecurities of an acquisitive society. No one need fear losing his job. He is not "competing" with any one else. He has his work to do, and if he finds his assignment too much for him, more than likely he will be the one to call attention to the need for a change. He has only to discuss the problem with his *brothers.* Tribulations there have been in plenty, of course, but no one has had to face economic trials in loneliness and with the sense that nobody cares what happens to him. They *share* troubles without thinking of private advantage. Then, a large part of the difficulties of the community have come only because the world about them has been in such bitter turmoil. The Bruderhof has made three beginnings, almost from nothing, in the thirty-three years since 1920, and after each beginning has soon grown to a healthy, happy, and economically stable community. Surely this is evidence of both courage and efficiency! Also to be considered are the works of brotherhood afforded to those outside the community, such as the thousands of Paraguayan patients treated in the Community Hospital, the mothers with fatherless children taken in and given homes, and the European war orphans adopted in large numbers. It should be remembered, also, that children always form a very large proportion of the Bruderhof population. The typical Bruderhof family has between six and eight children!

Each family has its private quarters, where parents have breakfast and afternoon tea with their children (the sub-tropical climate caused the Brothers to adopt the Latin-American custom of *siesta).* Lunch and dinner are eaten communally by the members. During the day, the children are cared for in nurseries, kindergartens and schools.

For the adults, lunch and supper are occasions for discussion or the reading of books, articles, or letters of general interest. Each of the various work departments has its own overseer appointed by the Brotherhood. Here, the "Brotherhood" means all the men and women in the community who have chosen to identify themselves unreservedly with the primary commitments of the group. Each member takes upon himself full responsibility for everything and full participation in decisions is a duty of membership. The whole community meets two or three times a week. Unanimous agreement is sought on important decisions.

When asked how the community life actually "works," a man who joined many years ago in Germany replied:

> The answer cannot be easily communicated in words. It lies perhaps, in the readiness of the individual to have a single aim, wanting one thing, above all else. To put away everything which would work against the fellowship all cherish, and to oppose whatever is contrary to it, by such means as are consistent with the spirit of fellowship. New members pledge their willingness to admonish or be admonished and to challenge gossip over a third party. Following this simple rule has brought about a spirit of trust and cooperation hardly to be found elsewhere, although it can never be taken for granted, but must, as one learns from experience, be born each day anew. Through many hard struggles and actual privation, this fellowship has stood firm. Very rarely has a member been lost, and the children of the Brothers, who on principle are sent away from the Community for their final education, invariably return. This decision on the part of the young is entirely their own. In fact, this going away has for one of its purposes to enable the young to choose freely which sort of life they want.

The Brothers, while not "evangelically" inclined, are eager for the rest of the world to examine the way of life they have worked out. One might say that, while they are not "proud" of what they have accomplished, they are serene in their convictions. Here, perhaps, one may see the suspicion of a feeling that true brotherhood cannot be practiced except in Community. One may question this conclusion, while noting, also, that a community which holds all things common is at least a place where you cannot *pretend* to practice brotherhood.

One thing more: the work of the Bruderhof and of other communities certainly explodes the myth that men need the acquisitive motive in order to drive them to effort. The lives of these people show, instead, that normal happiness and contentment are much easier of achievement once the drive for possessions and power over one's fellows has been abandoned. The world, therefore, owes all those who are living in practical brotherhood in this way a great debt of gratitude—gratitude for demonstrating the peace and the strength which may result when men forget their differences and rivalries in order to serve a common ideal.