

Please Note!

Owing to delay in receiving the manuscript of Dr. Jenkins' argument, we are not able to print this week the report of the debate between Dr. Jenkins and E. Haldeman-Julius. Mr. Haldeman-Julius' argument is already in type, but we wish the full debate to be presented in one issue. You will read this interesting and important debate without fail in our next week's issue.

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India's Struggle for a Free Position in the Modern World

An Interview with One of Gandhi's Leading Disciples

By Marcet Haldeman-Julius

A small, frail, unimposing man of sixty-one recently waded out into the sea at Dandi, India. Clean shaven, with large ears, on his nose large spectacles, dressed only in short, white, homespun trousers, he was not at first glance an heroic figure. But, as he filled a little bowl with salt water and waded back to land, the thousands on the shore and the watching world knew that they were witnessing a gesture that would never be forgotten as long as history endured. It was more than a defiance of the British statute establishing a government salt monopoly; it was a protest against the unwarranted subjection in which India is held by England. It was the echo, ringing down the decades, of the bitter cry for freedom with which we ourselves once hurled a cargo of tea into the Atlantic ocean. Everyone who cherishes liberty and justice must throb in sympathy with the efforts of Gandhi, one of the greatest of living men, to help his people secure the independence that is their right.

"We call him 'Mahatma Gandhi' because he is so beloved and 'Mahatma' means saint. No man in his lifetime has ever had so large a following!" It was Gopal Singh Khalsa talking. He is one of the three whom the Indian National Congress has sent to this country in the hope that, by speaking in colleges and meeting representative people, these men may help to correct the many misapprehensions concerning their little-understood country.

Khalsa, just twenty-six years old, was dressed in very modern clothes—with the exception of the white, neatly-wound turban which is the custom in Persia, Arabia, Egypt, Turkestan and Afghanistan as well as India. This turban, a narrow silver bracelet on his graceful wrist and the beard which to a casual eye almost disguised his youthfulness but which is typical of the part of the country—northern India—from which Khalsa comes were the only things which made him seem in the least different from ourselves, for he spoke English perfectly—as he does seven other languages. What is more to the point he spoke the language of all cultivated, completely debunked freethinkers. He is the editor of *Hindustan*, the most influential Hindu newspaper outside of India. He also writes steadily interpreting American civilization and culture to the Nationalist Press of India which means that his stuff is all syndicated, as we would say, and appears there in eighty newspapers.

Very tall, slender, eager, very much the polished cosmopolite, he sat on the overstuffed couch in our sun-room while I listened eagerly from the wicker chair which my friends in gentle jest call my "Graf Zeppelin." To the gentle rhythm of its slow rocking I fly to the many different countries, transported there by our various guests.

"Practically all of the leaders of the Nationalist movement in India," Khalsa explained, "are free thinkers." Of course the entire younger generation in Indian colleges are, without a single exception, free thinkers.

Gandhi, India's Beloved Leader

For two years he had lived with Gandhi, had eaten with him, slept near him. He made him very real to me. The son of a prime minister of one of the provinces, Gandhi lived a life of luxury in his youth and was sent to London University where he received the degree of Doctor of Law. He was admitted to the bar and entered active practice in which he was very successful. During the war he was decorated with different medals by the British government for his various services.

But when, in 1919, he saw thirty-two million of his own countrymen starving to death while three hundred and fifty million dollars' worth of the very wheat which should have fed them was exported to England at the point of the gun, he awoke to a full consciousness of personal duty to India. England, of course, bought this grain for her own self-preservation. Far better, she argued, that the Indians should starve than the British.

India, to put it plainly, is England's bread and butter. Does she want wheat—she draws on her subject country; does she want raw cotton—she draws on her subject country; does she want ore—she draws on her subject country; does she want men in time of war—she draws on her subject country. And always

the millions there provide her with a large and much-needed market.

During the war she promised India that at the end of it she should have dominion status. Instead Britain sent over a commission to decide whether or not India was ready to govern herself. The Indians rightly considered this commission an insult and refused it all cooperation. They knew that its conclusion was already foregone and that it was only a gesture to give Great Britain an excuse for doing what she wanted to do.

When on April 12, 1919, England shot down four hundred people in Amrit Sar, Gandhi—brilliant, sophisticated, educated man that he is—placed all that he had and himself at the service of his country. He gave all his property to the nation. As a protest against the use of British material he dressed in a homespun loin cloth and blanket. His wife and sons were wholly in sympathy with him and his wife, accustomed like Gandhi himself, to living the life of a wealthy Indian aristocrat, adopted his own new method, wearing only homespun clothes, eating the simplest of food and doing all of her own work even to her washing.

With great foresight Gandhi realized that the people of India would fail if a revolution were attempted, even as they had failed in 1857. But he began patiently, brilliantly, to cement and direct their national consciousness with his doctrine of "Non-Cooperation, Non-Violence and Passive Resistance." (Forty-seven thousand people have willingly followed Gandhi to jail.)

At present he and his wife live not far from Ambed, where Gandhi was born. Here in a little village tucked away in the woods he has a college in which several hundred young men and women are constantly being trained as political workers. His sons are grown. One of them is an influential editor and follows closely in his father's footsteps. One believes "arms" is the answer to India's problem. To Gandhi's simple little house near the college come, at one time or another, all of those who are interested in India's struggle for independence and all of those who are powerful in the government as it is today. The present Viceroy, Lord Irwin, who like Macdonald personally believes that India should have dominion status, finds his way to this spot which is the very center of modern Indian thought. One day a week Gandhi fasts. One day a week, because his life is so full and busy, he does not speak to anyone but spends the day in writing and thinking.

There is in his heart no hate for Englishmen. He has repeatedly said and means it: "I love an Englishman even as I love my brother, but I hate the British-Indian administration. It is a satanic institution." His life work is to help his country throw off the rule of this unjust exploiting conqueror.

The Indian National Congress

One of his most important instruments is the Indian National Congress—not to be confused with the Council of State which is official, hand-picked by the Viceroy, and, for obvious reasons, pro-British. Half of it is appointed directly by the Viceroy (who represents the crown); the other half is elected by the Indians—after the Viceroy himself has placed the men he wishes in nomination. For instance, in one province he may nominate both a Mohammedan and a Hindu. Sometimes in a province he nominates several men, any one of whom he believes would be agreeable to Great Britain and help to further her interests. This gives the Indians—or so the British feel—the illusion of choosing their own leaders. But even for these lay figures only those Indians can vote who pay a certain amount of taxes. This leaves out most of the workingmen and peasants, an arrangement which has at least one good result—it unites these two great forces.

In this Council of State two-thirds of the members are elected from the fifteen provinces over which are "governors," the other third are selected from the seven hundred and twenty-six princes who rule the other third of India, subject to Great Britain. One of these princes, His Highness Maharajah Singh Malvendar Bahadur of Nabha (the only Maharajah unanimously respected by the Indian masses), dared to support Gandhi—and for that England promptly took away his state and put him in prison. Later he was released with the restriction, still in force, that he remain within a definite confined area.

The Indian National Congress, on the other hand, is a genuinely elected body. It came into being forty years ago, thrown to the Indians as a sort of sop to their feelings. But it was not until 1905, when the Nationalists began to take real hold of it, that it assumed power. It has no official authority but it is a legal body and recognized as such by the British government. All the provinces of India are represented, which means that the congress consists of between fifteen and sixteen hundred Indians whose dominating thought is

the welfare and independence of their country.

Before 1928 this Indian National Congress was for the dominion status. They asked only that India be given the same rights and privileges that Canada, Australia, and The Union of South Africa enjoy today. This the British failed to grant and at midnight on December 31, 1929, the Indian National Congress adopted a resolution demanding complete and immediate independence. England has dabbled too long.

"We feel now," Khalsa explained, his fine eyes alight, "as your own Patrick Henry did when he said, 'Give me liberty or give me death.'"

Educating the Indian Masses

But there is a division of opinion as to how to get this independence. Gandhi and his party, who control more than half of the congress, counsel non-resistance. The other group, headed by Subhas Chandra Bose, would resort to arms. (The English at once arrested and put him in jail for these sentiments. His sentence was for one year.)

Gandhi realizes that he is dealing with great masses of uneducated people. Great Britain, in her wisdom, spends five cents a year per person on the education of her Indian subjects as against three dollars and a half on the education of her own people. Ninety-two out of every hundred Indians are illiterate. (Seventy million cannot afford two meals a day. They are starving.) Gradually Gandhi—great psychologist that he is—prepares the minds of these slow-thinking, under-nourished masses, making them realize their need for education, how cleverly they are being exploited, how little interest the English can and do have in them, and what a powerful country they will become when they govern themselves.

While practically all of the leaders in India are free thinkers and the present president of the Indian National Congress, Pundit Nehru (a young man of thirty-three years and one of those arrested in the recent salt protest) is an atheist, the priests are all pro-British. It is to their interest as well as to the interest of England to keep the people ignorant and under thumb. Also most of the seven hundred and twenty-six princes are pro-British. They know that their own time would be short if India gained her independence. England's arguments against giving India self-government are:

First, that she is over populated. In view of the fact that there are only one hundred and seventy-five people to the square mile in India as against six hundred and fifty to the square mile who live in England this seems an absurd reason. Moreover, as Khalsa points out, as education becomes more general families decrease in size. Birth control information can be legally taught in India and is more and more widely disseminated even among the less cultivated Indians. As others learn to read it is only logical to think that they will avail themselves of the knowledge which is denied to the masses in this supposedly more enlightened country of ours. At present there are too many people engaged in agriculture in India, but as soon as she has her own factories and industries there will be a flocking to them and a wider variation of sources of income.

England's second avowed reason is that there are too many races in India. There are two: (1) the Caucasian, to which the great majority of Indians belong, although like the Latin people their skin has darkened, and (2) the Negroid race in the south. The others are intermixtures of these. If too many races were an argument against self-government one wonders, really, how our own manages to stagger along! If there is any country in the world that is full of diverse races it is the United States. In passing, let me refresh your minds as to the reason why Hindus are refused the right to citizenship here. Our supreme court admits that they are white—but insists that they are not free white. It is only too bitterly true that they are not.

England's third excuse for withholding what she has already promised in India is that there are too many religions and that the Hindus and the Mohammedans could not get along together. Now in India the Mohammedans are to the Hindus in much the same relation that, in this country, the Catholics are to the Protestants. To be elected president of the Indian National Congress is the highest honor that lies in the power of Hindu and Mohammedan alike to bestow upon one of their countrymen. Yet more than a dozen Mohammedans have been elected to this office while this Protestant country of our own has never been able to quite bring itself to put a Catholic in the White House.

"But," said Gopal Singh Khalsa quietly, "you have more religious fanaticism in this country than we have in India."

The Old and the New India

He is constantly surprised, this keen young man, to find religious superstition among the cultivated, intelligent people in this country. He repeatedly stressed his astonishment at the fact that it is to be met with among professors, lecturers and writers. Such a state of mind would be impossible in a comparable people of India. There, religious superstitions are fostered only among the uneducated.

I think I never realized before the vastness of India. As large as all Europe, with the exception of Russia, she is capable of being entirely self-supporting. Take the one matter

of cotton. India exports to England yearly millions of bales of the raw material. There it is made into cloth and the finished product is shipped back to India. It is easy to see what the latter's income would be if she had her own factories and could reverse the process and herself ship, instead of the raw cotton, the finished product to England. But there are practically no factories in India. The products which should feed, clothe and put beauty and joy into the lives of the Indians go pouring into England. She brazenly batters off her subject nation and prattles in conferences of justice and peace!

In the whole great country of India where there are three hundred and twenty million people there are only about one hundred and fifty thousand Englishmen. No wonder England spends sixty-three percent of the revenue she gets from India on the British military and naval forces. It is only by force that she can keep this rich empire under heel.

It is a significant fact that when the bill to prohibit child marriages came up, all the pro-British Indians were against the bill—all the Nationalists were for it. It passed. Child marriages are no longer legal. Among the uneducated masses there still are child-betrothals in which the children are promised in marriage but the marriage does not take place until the girl is grown. The Nationalists in India do not approve of these betrothals. Miss Mayo, who wrote *Mother India*, refused to debate with Madam Sarojini Naidu (ex-president of the Indian National Congress) when challenged by the latter to do so. That mischievous book of Miss Mayo's, written at the instigation of the British government, has spread many erroneous and unfair impressions. In answer to it Khalsa is writing one entitled *My Mother India* with an introduction to it by Gandhi. Surely Khalsa should be able to speak with authority for he is a descendant of one of the oldest and most martial Sikh families in what, until 1849, was a free state.

In that year three great battles were fought between them and the British. Two were won by the Sikhs, but the decisive one by the British and thus again, by force, England added to the ever-growing domain which she began one hundred and fifty years ago in India. In this warfare against the Sikhs the British had used other Indians, Mohammedans and Hindus. Therefore the Sikhs cherished a bitter feeling against them. Accordingly, when in 1857 a revolution broke out in India headed by these same people, the Sikhs, of whom there are some five millions, foolishly turned pro-British and fought against their own interests. Since then they have learned wisdom.

Sidelights on Indian Character

I got the distinct impression from Gopal Singh Khalsa that while there are only five million Sikhs and there are seventy million Mohammedans and two hundred and ten million Hindus, the Sikhs are a powerful motivating force for the complete independence of the people of India.

"Only seventy-one years ago," he explained, "my grandfather, one of the Sikhs in the northern part of India, was a free man; but we, his grandchildren, are slaves."

This same grandfather died two years ago. Like many of the young Sikhs, you see, Khalsa came up in direct personal contact and under the direct influence of men who had known complete independence and had been smarting under England's domination even as we would, if today, we were to become subjects of another nation. In his own country young Khalsa himself wears always a sword. Essentially he is a man of action although circumstances and a keen mind have made him, for the present at least, an adherent of the doctrine of passive non-resistance.

As we sat later at the dinner table, where the children joined us, their eager questions brought out many little sidelights which all together composed into the general picture Khalsa had painted for us of India and her struggle.

Asked as to that country's attitude on prohibition, he explained that they do not have prohibition; they simply do not drink. It is not a problem. Nor do the Sikhs smoke.

"What are their vices?" laughed E. H.-J., and he asked about the sex life of the people. "In the cities," Khalsa explained, "there is of course much of the looseness that is to be found in all countries, but in the villages there is a most sane and moral condition." He went on to amplify this by saying that the young men were taught to consider the girls in their own villages in the light of sisters and to go to other villages for their wives. Inter-marrying in the same village brings disrepute not only to the young couple but to the village itself. The reason is that many of the families are closely related.

Disease and lack of food kill many but, granted normal conditions, Indians live to a ripe old age. In most families who have not known too severe privations, one will find one or two over eighty years of age and in nearly every village there are fifteen or sixteen over a hundred years old.

A tranquil-tempered, clear-thinking if on the whole as yet slow-thinking people, with fire in their blood because of the injustices to which they are subjected, they live in a beautiful country whose richness is denied to them. They are—and this is most important—at peace with their great bordering nations, Russia, China

and Afghanistan. Although the Indians speak fifteen major languages, all of them come from the Sanskrit or Hindustani. This—Hindustani—is spoken in the Indian National Congress and is understood by nearly everyone.

How Gandhi Dramatizes Revolt

Gandhi, realizing that the people must think of themselves as homogeneous, made one of his characteristically dramatic gestures. He adopted for his own daughter one of the so-called "Untouchables." I found considerable difficulty in understanding just what was meant by an "Untouchable." (This caste system was introduced by the Brahmans in the south of India. The Sikhs have no more patience with it than you or I.) To make clear to you just what Gandhi did, I must ask you to picture to yourself a southern family thoroughly steeped in all the traditions of its section. Now consider that they adopt a quite dark mulatto child as their very own. The little girl, whom Mrs. Gandhi is raising so tenderly, is about ten years old. There is considerable Negro blood in her, as her kinky hair shows. Race prejudice does not differ much in different countries—nor fortunately does the attitude of civilized people toward it.

All Gandhi's gestures are purposely dramatic. No one knows better how to catch the attention not only of his countrymen but of all the world. As a trained orator sweeps in brilliant phrases to the logical climax of his thought, even so Mahatma Gandhi sweeps to his in a crescendo of well-timed actions. In this recent salt protest, for instance, he started with one hundred and twenty of his closest disciples from his native town in a four hundred-mile march to the sea.

From village to village thousands followed the little inoffensive-looking man. Often as many as a hundred thousand clustered around him. To each and all he explained why they should refuse to recognize the English monopoly on salt.

"If they arrest you, make no resistance," he constantly instructed those in the listening crowds. "If they confiscate your property, let them take it."

By the time he filled his bowl with sea water and proceeded to boil it, the whole background of attitude was ripe. One day and that not far distant, Gandhi may ask the farmers to refuse to pay the taxes on their lands. Only last year when the British raised the taxes in one of the provinces, the farmers, urged by Gandhi, refused to pay this increase; and the result was that the British were forced to decrease them to the original amount. Trusting him as they do, eventually the Indians will refuse to pay land taxes altogether. The result will be a revolution. For eighty percent of the Indians are agriculturists.

The Modern Temper and Hope

If Khalsa (who is also ex-president of the Hindustani National Party of America) is to be taken as a typical Indian, they have not only great charm and courtesy of manner but also a delicious sense of humor. It bubbled out constantly. We spoke of Buddha and Khalsa reminded us that this man had preached "There is no God" only to be himself deified. (Three hundred years before Christ was born the Buddhists were sending out missionaries to convert the infidels!)

I asked Khalsa about Madame Naidu, for whom I have long had a genuine admiration. He explained that although herself a high caste Brahman she had married a brilliant Oxford student, now a well-known physician in India who was one of the so-called "Untouchables." By him she has had four children all of whom are still living, two boys and two girls. Her election as president of the Indian National Congress would be comparable to being elected speaker to our own House of Representatives. At twelve she was ready for an English university but had to wait until she was fifteen before she could enter. She was at one time mayor of Bombay, the second largest city in India.

The Nationalists, young and old, are liberal in their attitude toward everything: toward woman, toward science and religion, toward art and letters. Speaking of Tagore, Gandhi said: "Not all men can be statesmen. He too has his place." He has indeed. When one thinks of him, majestic, nearly seven feet tall, venerable, one of the greatest living poets (one can find few men in England who can bear comparison with him in this) one realizes afresh the just indignation that seethes in the hearts of the Indians at the unwarranted assumption of superiority with which the British dare to treat them. One does not wonder that their battle cry is now, "Let us be free or slaves."

At present the National Indian Army has no guns, but they are being trained by Gandhi in cooperation with each other and quiet resistance toward their oppressors. When one reflects that in the British Indian regular army there are two hundred and forty-seven thousand Indians as against seventy thousand Britishers one does not doubt that should the day ever come when guns shall be put in the hands of the Nationalists they will be invincible.

Gandhi may or may not succeed in his hope of bloodless revolution. But those who know best the conditions in India firmly believe that some time during the present decade she will achieve the free position to which she is entitled in the modern world.

Around the Table By E. Haldeman-Julius Chats Among the Editor and His Readers

THE STORY OF PETER OCHREMENKO

I shall tell my readers about a case that will not get any dramatic headlines in the newspapers, yet that has an important bearing upon the progress of international culture.

I am puzzled as to why Ochrenko should be obstructed for a minute in his wish to renew personally his cultural connections in the United States.

Ochrenko translated Dust into Russian and he is now translating Violence. He is plainly a most useful worker in the field of international education.

The following is the letter which Mr. Freeman has written to me:

Dear Mr. Haldeman-Julius: I appeal to you as I have already done to Sherwood Anderson and Hendrik Van Loon to write at once to Senator Borah in Washington and back up my appeal to him to ask the Soviet government to release Peter Ochrenko for a few months' study of English in the United States.

I am the old man to whom Will Durant makes a habit of inscribing all his books and as it was he who made him widely known you may be interested in a letter which I received from him the other day, in which he tells of two personal invitations received while on his world tour.

tures which have scandalized all the ladies on board but were vastly enjoyed by Ross Skinner, Thomas Cook's agent on board, who has given him a cabin de luxe on B deck with bath for his exclusive use as a writing shop for that "Story of Civilization" in five volumes which is to keep him busy for the next ten years.

While I have this opportunity permit me to express my personal appreciation of the quiet, unobtrusive work which you are carrying on for so many years in leavening the heavy loaf of our material (and so-called) prosperity.

But to return to Peter: Borah promised me that he would and could get Ochrenko out. That was in December and nothing has been done.

Naturally, I complied at once with Mr. Freeman's request and suggested strongly to Senator Borah that Peter Ochrenko should be helped in his plan to visit America.

My Dear Senator Borah: May I recall to your mind that I made an appeal for your aid in securing a six months' leave of absence from the Soviet government of Russia for the Russian translator of American books?

As a boy Ochrenko came here from Russia bearing a letter from

Tolstoy to Thomas Edison, who at once gave him work in his laboratory. I personally helped the boy to learn, speak and write English and gave him schooling in the high school in West Orange, N. J.

While I was traveling through Russia in 1912 on my second visit there, in company with Will Durant (today well known as the author of The Story of Philosophy), Peter was our guide all over the country and we found him thoroughly versed in the history, art and literature of his country.

On this trip in 1912 I introduced Ochrenko to our American Consul-General in Warsaw, Mr. Snodgrass, and later Peter procured a position with the Chesapeake Oil Company through the good offices of Mr. Snodgrass.

At the beginning of the revolution Peter was elected to the presidency of his district on account of his superior education, but he has never been active politically nor in conflict with the government at any time.

Ochrenko has been so long away from English speech that he wishes to have six months to study and improve his English in America and to accept the hospitality offered to him by the many authors who have invited him to visit them at their homes since he has translated their books into the Russian language.

The case seems very simple to me. Peter Ochrenko wishes to visit in the United States—and why should he be denied that right, even if his object were merely idle and personal? It is not pleasant to think that he is a prisoner in Russia.

As an editor, I have to reject a good many opportunities. Occasionally I receive a manuscript which is a masterpiece in the eyes of its author—and maybe I should agree, if I could read the manuscript, if it were written intelligibly.

do you Buye Stories I write wonderful Stories the life of real people. And I sell them cheap what ever you pay me I take so if you would like to have me send you one of my Stories then let me know and Ill send you one.

THE SAVAGE AND THE PROFESSOR Contrasts or resemblances are often illuminating. Take, for example, a primitive man and a modern college professor—what is the difference between them? Or are they, in a significant way, alike?

offer two exhibits. The first exhibit is a quotation from a letter written by Prof. Henry W. Elson, New York University, which appeared in this department in The American Freeman dated April 12. Prof. Elson naively declared:

I have not a doubt that if the Bible were proved to be a tissue of myth, fable and falsehood, the people would be religious anyhow. They can't help it. I am a good example myself. I have read all manner of anti-religious literature and yet my belief in God is almost as deep as my belief in my own existence.

It is difficult for those who have not lived among savages to perfectly realize their faith. When told that his gods do not exist, the savage merely laughs in mild wonder at such an extraordinary observation being made.

Winwood Reade died many years ago and so he didn't have the benefit of Prof. Elson's acquaintance. Had he known Prof. Elson, Reade would not have written: "It is difficult for those who have not lived among savages to perfectly realize their faith."

A Story of a "Big Man"

Not so many years ago I wrote a book called The Goose-Step, in which I had much to say about the influence of Columbia University as a source of reactionary propaganda in American education.

In Pasadena, as everywhere else throughout America, there is going on a struggle between the educational machine and a few liberal parents and teachers, who would like to respect the individuality of their children and pupils.

The very great man has been an educator for forty-seven years, according to Who's Who, and a professor in the Teachers' College of Columbia University for more than thirty years.

Word was conveyed to the "big man" that some of the ladies who were paying part of his expenses would like to do him the honor of calling upon him at his hotel.

How can anyone fail to see the contradiction between religion and progress? It is the theory of religion that the world is the handiwork of a perfect Creator.

We are not impressed by mystics and sentimentalists who talk in a vague style about "the wisdom of love." We observe all too readily that they are quite without the love of wisdom.

Bigots, charlatans, stywants, liars and swindlers have always had a pronounced distaste for mystics.

Radicals and Police Clubs

An Exchange of Letters Between a Worried American and Upton Sinclair

[One very important truth is brought out as a clear and timely—always a timely—reminder in the following exchange of letters: the truth, namely, that policemen's clubs are the most ignorant and dangerous weapons for dealing with any social question.]

The Viewpoint of Fear and Repression Upton Sinclair, Pasadena, Calif.

I shall be much obliged if you will answer a question relative to your conception as to what should be the attitude of the conservatives towards the Communists.

We know that after twelve years of Communism and more than five years after the disappearance of all serious resistance to their rule, the economic position of the emancipated Russian workers is worse than that of the American workers whom we call wage slaves.

Knowing this, why do you deny the right of self-defense to the intended victims of the Communists and insist that it would be an outrage for these victims to make any effective effort to escape the deplorable fate planned for them?

Yours truly, BENJ. P. HORTON.

The Viewpoint of Realism and Free Speech

Benj. P. Horton, Oak Park, Ill.

I have your interesting letter. It goes to the heart of the problem of civil liberties. Many other persons are asking these questions, therefore I will answer your letter at length, and publish it in The American Freeman.

Your statement as to what the Communists say to their opponents is hardly exact. The first sentence may be literally true, but it gives a very wrong impression.

The statistical facts are these: Industry in the United States is increasing at the rate of three percent a year, while industry in Russia is increasing twenty-three percent a year.

Your general idea is correct; that the Communists propose to overthrow the United States government, and to establish a dictatorship of the proletariat.

by Adams, Hancock, and others of our violently revolutionary forefathers. It is an historical fact that the American revolution was put through by an active minority of the colonists.

It is also a fact that the system under which we live at present purports to be a democracy, but it is really the world's most arrogant plutocracy, maintained by fraud and force, and far worse than anything suffered by the colonists under the rule of King George.

As a Socialist, I am hoping that this change can be brought about by peaceful means; therefore I am not endorsing the program of the Communists.

I judge from the way you phrase the question that you are not aware that the police power is now actually being used in this way.

You subtly phrase your proposition to indicate that these sluggers are defending "our hard-working minor executives, professional men, farmers, small business men, clerks, and our numerous more prosperous wage earners who have accumulated some property."

I have lived fifty-one years in capitalist America, and during thirty-five of those years I have been watching our political affairs.

Suppose that the Socialists should endorse the plutocracy in the violent putting down of Communists, what would be the result?

and turn it upon the Socialists. We

saw that during the world war, and I, for one, learned my lesson. You, as a "conservative," should accept Washington as an authority, so I quote to you: "Government is not reason, it is not eloquence—it is force! Like fire it is a dangerous servant and a fearful master; never for a moment should it be left to irresponsible action."

Of course capitalist government will go on clubbing and jailing Communists, and will not stop for the protests of Socialists, or for our little group of idealists of the American Civil Liberties Union.

I am aware that it is sometimes hard to draw the line; but it can be done—and at least the effort should be made.

Folly and servility have always been considered, theologically, as passports to a heaven. Wisdom and independence have always been considered as passports to a hell.

Those who talk the most loudly about virtue present it most forcibly as a rule for others.

It is sad but true—the lover of bunk is bored by wisdom.

Sincerely, UPTON SINCLAIR.

Editor E. Haldeman-Julius

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The Antichrist

A Popular Edition of Friedrich Nietzsche's Masterly Attack on Christianity

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In the World of Books

Weekly Reviews and Other Literary Ruminations Isaac Goldberg

TO THE GREATER GLORY OF THE DEVIL: OR, MENCKEN AND THEOLOGY, PLUS MENCKEN AND THE JEWS

Treatise on the Gods. By M. L. Mencken. New York. A. A. Knopf. \$3.

It is not generally known, though Mencken has not kept it a secret, that the editor of The American Mercury is one of the foremost theologians in the nation. He is fond of religions as a bacteriologist is of germs; and for a similar reason: the purpose of understanding the sources of disease and of eradicating them from the body politic and social.

Mencken has gone at his task with a sanative commingling of science and humaneness. It would have been easy for him to shoot the whole subject full of gaping holes. I am of those who believe that the religious scruples of the old should be respected in the same way that the inevitable infirmities are respected; in the young they should be ridiculed, for youth is the plastic material out of which we build tomorrow.

The book consists of five main divisions: (1) The Nature and Origin of Religion; (2) Its Evolution; (3) Its Varieties; (4) Its Christian Form; (5) Its State Today. There are no footnotes, few dates, an utter absence of ponderosity; and there is that straightforward style which made even so specialized a monograph as The American Language not only easy to read, but most unphilosophically entertaining.

essentially it would be something like this: Poetry and the other arts may well be illusions, but they are illusions that we accept knowingly. Religion, to those who accept it, is not seen as illusion but as higher reality. I shall come back to this at some later time.

Treatise on the Gods will best fulfill its function as an undogmatic, common-sensible introduction to the subject. For this purpose it is so admirably adapted that it is to be strongly recommended to all agnostics, in whatever state of dubiety. It will undoubtedly bring to Mencken a new class of readers, and they will be surprised to discover how human he is, after all. In fact, if you will take the trouble to read the account of his youth in my book, The Man Mencken, you will discover that he was actually baptized. Only yesterday he wrote to me that he could not recall the ceremony, but that, according to eyewitnesses, he "howled like a prohibition agent caught in a bear trap."

Long before the appearance of this book Mencken was accused of anti-Semitism. That is, when he wasn't being accused of being a Jew. If Mencken is an anti-Semite, so am I; for he detests just those types of Jew that I do, and for similar reasons. Mencken is not the man to trim his opinions to the winds of popularity. As a spectator at the farce of life he has had his say about all the actors, regardless of their racial or religious origins. It is not new that his former intellectual partner, George Jean Nathan, is a Jew; it is not new that his publisher, A. A. Knopf, is a Jew; it is not new that Charles Anoff, the assistant editor of The American Mercury, is a Jew. It is even rumored that I, his authorized biographer, am a Jew.

The cause of the recent outburst in the Jewish press is to be found on pages 345 and 346 of Treatise on the Gods. Here is the excerpt upon which the main attack on Mencken is based: One might go still further. The Jews could be put down very plausibly as the most unpleasant race ever heard of. As commonly encountered, they lack many of the qualities that mark the civilized man: courage, dignity, incorruptibility, ease, confidence. They have vanity without pride, voluptuousness without taste, and learning without wisdom. Their fortitude, such as it is, is wasted upon puerile objects, and their charity is mainly only a form of display.

I was sorry to read that. Mencken is a keen observer of mankind and has perhaps been peculiarly unfortunate in the Jews that he has met. But I have met just the same kind of Jews—and, without necessarily accepting their attributes as characteristic of the entire race, my reaction to them has been the same as Mencken's. The worst construction that could be put upon these words is that they are expressed with the same candor and courage that Mencken has always shown in treating of the Babbitts, the Ku Kluxers, the Rotarians, the Y. M. C. A. secretaries, and other of his familiar Gentile targets.

The Jewish commentators upon this passage also seemed to have forgotten the text that precedes it and

the text that follows. Let me supply some missing lines. Immediately before the offensive excerpt come these sentiments:

But in one respect, at least, Christianity is vastly superior to every other religion in being today, and, indeed, to all that we have any record of in the past: it is full of a lush and lovely poetry. The Bible is unquestionably the most beautiful book in the world. Allow everything you please for the barbaric history in the Old Testament and the decadent Little Beth theology in the New, and there remains a series of poems so overwhelmingly voluptuous and disarming that no other literature, old or new, can offer a match for it. Nearly all of it comes from the Jews, and their making of it constitutes one of the most astounding phenomena in human history.

Yet these same Jews, from time immemorial, have been the chief dreamers of the human race, and beyond all comparison its greatest poets. It was Jews who wrote the magnificent poems called the Psalms, the Song of Solomon, and the Books of Job and Ruth; it was Jews who set platitudes to deathless music in Proverbs; and it was Jews who gave us the Beatitudes, the Sermon on the Mount, the incomparable ballad of the Christ Child, and the twelfth chapter of Romans. I incline to believe that the scene recounted in John viii: 3-11, is the most poignant drama ever written in the world, as the Song of Solomon is unquestionably the most moving love song, and the Twenty-third Psalm the greatest of hymns. All these transcendent riches Christianity inherits from a little tribe of sedentary Bedouins, so obscure and unimportant that secular history scarcely knows them. No heritage of modern man is richer and none has more of a brilliant mark upon human thought, not even the legacy of the Greeks.

What would you have—everything? What Mencken himself thinks of the recent attacks from the Jewish camp may be gleaned from an answer that he gave to me and to another Jewish journalist. Here follows a copy of Mencken's statement:

That I am anti-Semitic in general is a notion that is made absurd, of course, by my writings over many years, and by my constant and everyday association with Jews, both in business and socially. But that I am anti-Semitic in particular is quite true. I know no more loathsome person than the sort of Jew who is a professional defender of his people. If he is rich he is a blatant and intolerable ass, and if he is poor he is slimy and revolting. It seems to me that the Jews produce far more than their fair share of such quacks. The United States resounds with their howlings, and they are responsible for whatever anti-Semitism exists. No other race can match them, not even the Irish. My hope is that the decent Jews of the country will one day organize to put them down, as decent Christians have tried to put down Ku Kluxery. Their raucous efforts to annoy and intimidate their betters is disgraceful and disgusting. As for me, I care nothing about their howlings and have no desire for their approval. Whenever I have anything to say about Jews I shall say it, whether it be favorable or the reverse, and those who do not like it may depart unanimously for hell. All aboard!

Treatise on the Gods is a treat. I intend to come back to it.

One seldom finds a nagging moralistic tone in connection with a clear view of any subject. We don't say that such a combination is impossible; but it is unlikely and infrequent. The spirit of moralistic nagging is bound to confuse thought; and, for that matter, it will spoil—it will taint with unreasonableness—an idea or a group of ideas which are in the main reasonable enough. For at heart the nagging moralist is an intolerant fellow; and intolerance conflicts with intelligence.

We should have toleration for all ideas. That includes even the most foolish ideas, which we should tolerate even while pointing out their foolishness. What we find in practice is that there is a wide toleration of foolish ideas—oh, a positive affection for such ideas—and an attitude, equally popular, of suspicion and hostility toward intelligence. It is a pathetic irony to have to say it—but what society needs is at least a feeling of toleration toward wisdom.

It is flattery to use the expression "common sense" as having the meaning of "good sense." The common opinions about religion, about patriotism, about politics, about social questions, about art and literature, about intellectual or philosophical questions do not represent good sense. These common opinions are in many respects in advance of what they were a hundred years ago; but they have yet a long way to go.

Preachers have poor confidence in what they affirm as "God's laws." They have always demanded that these so-called "laws of God" be supported by human laws. They want to legislate men into conduct, if not belief, agreeing with their (the preachers') dogmas.

It is a significant custom among preachers to use the word "pagan" as a condemnatory term for both pleasure and culture: the two things which are the glory of human progress.

Have It My Own Way

By John W. Gunn

THE LANGUAGE OF PRAYER

It has always been the popular idea that faith and humility and the devout sentiments of the heart are the real language of prayer. This is still the orthodox idea. On its face, the idea is reasonable enough (waiving for the nonce the question of the reasonableness of prayer itself) and it might be accepted as absolutely true and a settled point in theology if there were a primary certainty about God's temperament and wishes. Let me put it this way: the spirit of prayer is what ought to count with God, if God is a big-hearted, broad-minded fellow. But this is just one of the things we don't know.

There is nothing improbable (waiving the improbability of the idea of God) in the notion that God is a stylist in his attitude toward prayer. He may have a subtle, a versatile, an exacting literary taste. He may, for that matter, have other standards of selectiveness which are not grounded in pure, superior justice. The prayers of handsome votaries may have a better chance with him than the supplications of the most devoted ugly persons. Powerful persons may be listened to a good deal more obligingly than the humble. Wealth may lend much prestige to prayer—doesn't a king, and why not the heavenly king, note more favorably his rich and therefore (as these things go) his respectable courtiers?

One point at a time—let us assume, then, that God's slant on prayer is critical in a literary way. A Los Angeles preacher, Dr. Carl S. Patton, seems to hold this opinion about God. Addressing recently a meeting of preachers, Dr. Patton declared:

If some of you preachers would have your stenographers take down a few of your extemporaneous prayers, and then take a good look at those invocations in cold type, you probably would be ashamed of your poor English and seek to learn how to address the Lord in a more dignified manner. . . . Men need to be taught how to pray. I knew one young preacher who repeated the word "bless" three times in one sentence in his prayer.

This man has the spirit of the typical God student, the genuine theologian, the classic and traditional religionist. There is no clear authority in the Bible nor in the doctrines of any church for the idea that God is simple, just, noble, and easily pleased with sincere, devout intentions. The weight of such evidence as theologians and all specialists in the study of God have submitted to us is that God is jealous, fussy, temperamental, and exacting. It is quite in character that he should be sensitive and even hypercritical about the language of prayer. It may well be that he has attained to this much refinement since the days of his crude and gaudy barbarism as recorded in the Old Testament.

Dr. Patton barely touches the question. He lacks imagination. His own literary tastes, I suspect, are rather dull and constricted. He suggests only a "dignified manner" in prayer and the avoidance of awkwardly close word repetitions. He suggests a subject with which he is incapable of dealing. For if we grant that God is touchy about language, we should realize at once that the problem of devotional and supplicatory style is far from being as simple as Dr. Patton evidently believes. It follows, indeed, in a logical fashion as anything follows about God which begins nowhere and leads nowhere, that God would not be satisfied with dignity alone or always. He would crave a torrent of titanic words on occasion; and this vigor, I am assuming, should be expressed in good English: I do not have in mind the styleless haranguing of evangelism.

God would also have a taste for nice metaphors, for clever similes, for turns of phrase that are smart and fetching. Really dramatic prayers would furnish an agreeable excitement at times; as it is, God must suffer from the excess of melodrama that is poured into his infinite but not invulnerable ears. He is probably tired of tawdry and slushy sentimentalism and, as he would welcome serious drama in prayers, doubtless he would relish a bit of genuine artistic contrast, heart interest, psychology, pathos, after bathos—anything that would mark a change for the better. Improved language and, in a wider sense, improved art in prayers would be (on Dr. Patton's hypothesis) the natural yearning or even the stern demand of celestial taste. A good choice of words would not be enough; there should be a skillful handling of emotions, viewpoints, conflicts, character suggestions, and ideas of a kind; the faithful should endeavor to approach within a dim, discerning distance of the art, the cleverness, the persuasive appeal which is found in skeptical essays and realistic tales.

To finish this merely tentative catalog, God would be glad to have a little humor in prayers—the deliberate humor of art, not the driveling humor of asininity; he would be pleased by satire now and then, by strokes of shrewd irony, by devices of delicate and even irreverent wit;

he would appreciate ridicule as a stimulating novelty; and the argumentative style, done in the grand and thought-impressing manner, would be necessary once in a way to maintain the reputation of prayer as a literary form at the Court of the Most High Critic.

If God is a literary critic at all—and Dr. Patton implies, albeit narrowly as befits the clerical mind, that he is—then it is reasonable to assume (inasmuch as we are dealing with unreasonable assumptions altogether) that he would have tastes as varied as suggested in this modest outline.

Atheist Poetry

SELECTED BY CHARLES SMITH

HOW GOD ANSWERS PRAYER Matt. 21:22: "And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive."—Jesus Christ.

"O God, have mercy!" a mother cried, As she humbly knelt at the cradle side,

"O God, have mercy, and hear my prayer. And take my babe in Thy tender care.

The Angel of Death is in the room, And is calling loud for my babe to come.

Thou, Thou alone hast power to save! O God, have mercy! 'tis all I crave."

A tiny grave, 'neath a willow's shade, Tellethe the answer the Merciful made.

A father and mother knelt them down Together, before the Eternal One, And with trusting hearts implored that Heaven

Would guard the flower its grace had given— Would keep their blossoming daughter pure,

And guard her eye from the Tempter's lure, And from every stain would keep her free

As the lilies that bloom in eternity. A self-slain lost one, seduced, betrayed, Was the only answer Heaven made.

A beautiful maiden knelt to pray For the life of a loved one far away, Away in the fields where life and death

Hang poised in the scales that tip with a breath. "O Father of Mercies, protect the heart

Of him I love from the foe's man's dart; When the death-bolts rain on the charging field,

Be Thou his strength and guide and shield." A mangled corpse and a soldier's grave

Was the answer the Father of Mercies gave. The night was dark on the ocean's breast,

And the waves rolled high in wild unrest, Where a stately bark was dashing on

Toward a breaker's crest, with the rudder gone. Around the capstan, in wild despair,

The crew had gathered, and joined in prayer To Him who only had power to save,

To deliver them from a watery grave. A crash and a gulping wave alone

Were the answers of the Omnipotent One. —Charles Stephenson.

The philosopher who professes to see a mind in nature is, after all, only giving his own mind—his own interpretations of things and their meaning and purpose—to nature. It is an illusion which a good thinker, a good observer, would not be guilty of; and that sort of philosophy, which is the opposite of realism, is no longer regarded with respect by the men who are really studying the evidences of nature. The scientist observes, not a mind in nature, but the behavior of things. He doesn't imagine that trees and rocks and clouds and oceans and continents are following what in our human language and scale of values we know as purpose.

A Christian is supposed to be very broad-minded when he says that a man can be "saved" whether he believes in the foolish doctrines of Presbyterianism or in the slightly different foolish doctrines of Methodism. The "broadness" of such an opinion is not very striking; it is, after all, only an instance of fellow-feeling in the love of bunk. A Methodist has more of this feeling for another Methodist; but he feels more cordial toward a Presbyterian than toward an atheist; indeed, he abhors the atheist—and so his "broad-mindedness" ceases before it fairly begins.

One reason why religion so easily passes for civilized among many uncritical believers is that they do not know the history of religion. If they were fully aware of the origin of their beliefs, they would find it a bit harder to defend these beliefs as a sacred, peculiar kind of truth. But the average Christian, for example, is not likely to ascertain the real origin of his beliefs; he has been taught a false history, as well as a false system of beliefs, and an open-minded investigation of his own is the last thing he would think of.

"Science in Search of Reality"

Under this heading the Kansas City Star prints a long editorial which, boiled down, says that life is still a good deal of a mystery and that science hasn't completed its work and called it a day. We were not exactly knocked breathless by that information. Did the editorial writer of the Star suddenly wake up to its realization? He announced it with the air of one bringing news.

There is a catch in the Star editorial—or so it seems to us. Subtly the idea is implied that science isn't so wise as some of us had thought it was—and as we still think it is, for we have never held the foolish, unscientific attitude toward science which is stated in the Star. That attitude is given in the following paragraph:

Not so many years ago it was widely believed—and the idea still is current, but increasingly less so with some well-known scientists—that the great minds of science and research had got down to genuine business and settled the whole question of the universe, its origin, development, and present nature. An alluring order, in which natural law dominated first and last, was dangled before the eyes of the amazed onlooker who was

told that the issue was clear and all had been explained. So for the mechanists and their view. Real scientists and thinkers never held such a finality of belief. It is axiomatic, among intelligent people, that science is always searching for more truth and for added views of reality.

"Science in search of reality"—why, of course, science is a searching rather than a dogmatic method of intellectual life. And the mystery that remains in life—science will continue searching for that, too. As we further understand this mystery, it will be due to the rational, solid efforts of science. Religion will not explain. Religion will not even search—for orthodox religion maintains that the search was over long ago and the best that the "modernists" in religion can do is to assert that "God" is just over the hill beyond the latest searching outpost.

The thing can be summed up in this way: What we know is science. The rest is assumption, guesswork or beautiful theory.

No man should feel shame at the fact of human evolution from lower forms of life—unless he has a guilty feeling that he resembles too closely his pre-human ancestors.

Smashing Shams with a Smile

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A STORY OF IMPETUOUS LIVES

KILLS one day and preaches the next, and goes on preaching, justifying himself, condemning sinners: such is the leading character in "Violence." Young men and maidens love, not wisely (some of them) but urgently. Passions flame, both frightfully and beautifully. Fear, individual and social, claims its price. Riot breaks through the veneer of respectability. Ven-geance requires and easily, terribly, finds a victim. Through it all is a startling inconsistency of ideas and emotions. Startling, that is, when shown in this thoughtful, tightly knit, gripping novel concentrated as a drama and a problem. Startling, that is, to the civilized, reflective mind. The significance is obscured to the immediate actors, however, by their accustomed creed of violence! Such a story and such a scene is brought clearly to view in "Violence," a novel of today's south, by Mr. and Mrs. Haldeman-Julius. It is the first full-length, serious study of the violent side of Southern life. Today's South, as a whole, appears with realistic fidelity in the pages of this compelling story. Yet violence is not all—though it is the key, the dominating motive, the central force that drives the tale on the tide of irresistible action. Read this book! It will amaze you—thrill you—fascinate you—win you!

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The Strange Death of President Harding

Gaston B. Means was nominally a Department of Justice investigator under the Harding administration. His secret and far more important role was that of fixer, spy and go-between for the incredibly corrupt and powerful gang—the Ohio gang, of which Attorney General Daugherty was the "master mind"—that used the United States government as a gigantic machine of graft. Careful as a detective, Means always kept a record of his activities, day by day. It is from this amazing record that he has written this sensational, dramatic, many-sided story of The Strange Death of President Harding.

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Means also throws new light—and what searching light upon hidden, high-tensioned drama—upon the love affair between President Harding and Nan Britton. One of his jobs was to trace the Nan Britton intrigue for Mrs. Harding. He describes the passionate scenes in the White House.

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The Ridiculous Tyranny of Movie Censorship

Americans have only a vague idea of the processes, official and unofficial, which combine into that strange, extravagant, idiotic result known as movie censorship. They do not understand with what reasonableness and what utter lack of reasonableness the movies—and now the talkies—produced in Hollywood are cut and trimmed and hedged by a few sour-faced puritans, male and female, clothed in an authority that is a *reductio ad absurdum* of government. This censorship is an absurdity and it is also an insult to the American people. A handful of cranks and political hacks are given the power to say what scenes, what dramatic situations, what sentiments and ideas, what language in detail shall be offered for the entertainment of 120,000,000 Americans.

Six states have movie censorship laws, the enforcement of which is in the hands of men and women who, by the showing of their own decisions, have no standards of taste nor intelligence. The movies and talkies are slashed ridiculously by the censors in these states. The effect of censorship is felt, however, in all the other states; for the producers and directors in Hollywood do a great deal of censoring in advance, hoping to make their pictures censor-proof. They wish to turn out pictures that will be as little objectionable as may be to the foolish persons sitting in judgment in the six states—Kansas, Maryland, Virginia, Ohio, Pennsylvania and New York—which have definite censorship laws and boards. A subtle and unintelligent but very real fear extends throughout Hollywood. The threat of censorship stands in the way of good, intelligent production in the movies; and the scissors of censorship crudely cut such artistic pictures as are produced.

There appears to be a good deal of secrecy about the operations of the movie censors in the six states named. Little has been known about their actual cuttings; about their principles of selection; if any; about their qualifications—which are nil; about their attitude toward art and life—and what an attitude! But two curious observers of the movie industry, Morris Ernst (a lawyer) and Pare Lorentz (a movie critic), decided that a revelation of the inner workings of censorship would be timely. It would not, they realized, cause a popular revolution; the masses are probably well satisfied with the inanity of the movie-talkies; they are given all the trash they want, and it is in the main only the serious, artistic, realistic pictures that are slashed by the censors. But intelligent persons, Ernst and Lorentz thought, would wish to know something definite about the stupid manhandling of this medium which is so powerful for good or ill, in art or in propaganda, in its reflection of life and in its direction of life.

These two men examined the records of censorship—and what a record it is! They have set down in a style that is now smiling and now serious (which inevitably would have to display both kinds of reac-

In Kansas—What Could You Expect?

We begin at home. Kansas holds itself proudly before the nation as the very pattern of a Christian, moral, bone-dry, make-your-neighbor-as-yourself state. Politicians and reformers cultivate this reputation for Kansas. There are decent, intelligent, tasteful men and women who would be very much ashamed of this Kansas record if it were not that they are above such narrow, local patriotism and feel themselves rather as citizens of the cultured world. You will expect to learn that these civilized Kansans are in a minority. This can be said of any state—true, but the moral fever, the passion for reform, the idiocy of censorship is particularly strong in this middle western commonwealth of corn liquor and the fear of God. The state is—or, at any rate, its leading and articulate representatives are—inspired with special zeal in behalf of morality. They are watchful to protect innocence, which, as they practically interpret it, is the same as ignorance. "Sex" is a dreadful term in Kansas, and so are all the connotations and even the plain, fundamental dramas and sentiments of sex feared as a worse than heathen plague. Religion is respected in Kansas; and not only that, but it is assumed that religion should be protected from disrespectful commentary. Prohibition is an object of legalistic and theoretical idolatry in Kansas, although a considerable portion of the state's corn crop finds its way into liquid channels of ribald and not hidden cheer.

Sex and liquor are the principal taboos in Kansas. It is in these elements that the movie-talkies are meticulously purified. Fittingly, the head of the Kansas censor board is an old maid and (we whisper it with averted eyes) a product of Girard, Kans. Yes, Miss Emma Viets hails from the church aisles of dear, innocent, old Girard. Did we say "innocent"? That was a slip. Girard is not celebrated for innocence. A long, exhaustive search would detect very little innocence in the town. We are speaking of innocence regarding what are sometimes referred to, with significant side glances, as the Facts of Life. But Girard—and Kansas—and especially Miss Emma Viets is innocent of many understandings of art. The town, the state, and the head censor are all serenely and pathetically innocent of a civilized

culture. And, as Ernst and Lorentz show, Miss Viets is innocent of a sense of humor.

One of the pictures which Miss Viets scissored was *Sorrell and Son*. With a charming unconsciousness of her unintelligent pretensions, she even alleged artistic as well as moral reasons for the work of her mentally unguided shears. Naturally, she boasts the notion that her job is very important. Terrible things might be spread before the virgin eyes of Kansas boys and maidens and men and women if Miss Viets were not vigilantly in the premises. Our two guides to censorship quote her as follows:

It is incredible how much that is questionable can be insinuated into an otherwise innocent and interesting picture. Needless to say, for in most places it destroys the continuity of the story and has no bearing on the plot.

Sometimes something intangible will give a twist to a picture, that brings it close to the borderline of rejection. Such things as the ending of the beautiful picture, *Sorrell and Son*, for instance, I advised cutting out the ending where the son administers the overdose of poison to his father. From a humanitarian point of view it may have been all right. But it was ethically wrong. Physicians felt uncomfortable about it. [She gave no instance of a physician objecting.] It opened up new vistas of thought and speculation. The film was long anyway and needed cutting. It now ends where the father sinks down at the garden gate among his roses, his work of fathering finished. It is more artistic, deeper in pathos, less shocking to many minds.

It is our job to help the moving picture fulfill its avowed purpose—to amuse the public in a clean wholesome way.

Miss Viets speaks of "our job." She has help (a couple of equally "moral" and "artistic" females)—but she doesn't need it. She is a perfect scream of censorship all in her own staid, Kansas-bred, Girard-limited person. Ponder one of her objections to *Sorrell and Son*: "It opens up new vistas of thought and speculation." Even so! Think how disconcerting anything of that sort must be to a person of Miss Viets' sort who has had the sort of background and training and moral straining that Miss Viets has had! New vistas, indeed! Thought and speculation, indeed! None of that, thank you, for Miss Viets or for art-and-thought-innocent Girard citizens or for the home-bred Kansan in his native lair. If any further explanation is required, Miss Viets offers it in a childlike afterthought: "The picture was too long anyway and needed cutting." How has this genius gone unrecognized in a big way? Writers, directors, actors, artists in all fields of endeavor might learn a great deal from Miss Viets. She knows pictures, does she! Once she actually ran a picture show in Girard.

Miss Viets and her sharp-eyed colleagues—or Miss Viets all by her maiden self, as the case may be—have also spotted and scissored various allusions to sex and liquor. They purified the picture, *Manhattan Cocktail*, by this gentle order: "A reduction of struggle between lovers, leaving but one scene on couch." One might think they would want an even longer struggle, thus proving that virtue (in Kansas anyway) is hard to overcome.

With regard to *Our Dancing Daughters*, the Kansas censors decreed: "Cut out scenes of Ben kissing Diana, and following scene showing them on ground in reclining position. Also eliminate close view of dancers on yacht and title: 'Why are you working? Haven't you any pretty daughters—doll 'em up, a rich man wants his money's worth.'" Kissing and reclining on the ground are, you will note, looked upon as immoral by implication if not *ipso facto* in Kansas. Isn't it a nice mind—the censor mind? The rest of the cut was dictated by the same obscure, illogical Kansas puritanism.

From *Dry Martini* the following cuts were directed: "Eliminate title: 'With the coming of the Great American Thirst in 1919, a second expeditionary force set sail for Paris.'" "Eliminate title: 'Joseph, I'm about to become a father.'" [The man's grown daughter is coming to visit him.] "Eliminate title: 'Prepare the guest room for my daughter as soon as it is vacant.'" [A woman has been staying in the guest room.] "Eliminate title: 'And this gentleman is not, I trust, a son who has escaped my memory.'" "Eliminate close view of hairpin."

Dwell upon these reflections of the Kansas mind, as exhibited by its leading lady censor. They will gag you. They will appal you. And think, think, think of the climax. A hairpin, no less, divides the good and the evil in Kansas.

The fallacy of Christian missions—and, oh, it is a fallacy rich in comic suggestion—is that it is profitable to the mind that one superstition should be exchanged for another.

To say that sincerity is always a virtue is to say that fanaticism is never a vice. For the fanatic is always sincere.

The man who seeks power over his fellows is proved, by that very desire, to be unworthy of such power.

Letters From Our Readers

The American Freeman is not to be held responsible for any of the opinions expressed in the editorial letters. The letters will be printed with no comment save an occasional note of correction or clarification.

Shying at Real Issues in Los Angeles School Paper

Editor of The American Freeman: A month or so ago two girl students of the Manual Arts High School, Los Angeles, wrote to me, asking if they might have an interview to be written up for their school paper. They came to my home, and I chatted with them for about half an hour, and they afterwards sent me a half-column or so which they had written, and which had been published in the weekly. This article dealt with the appearance of my home, and with my own personal appearance and manner, and with my early days as a writer of jokes and dime novels. Accompanying the published article was another letter from one of the girls explaining to me that they had desired to write something about my books and my views on socialism, but had been forbidden to do so by their teacher.

This struck me as rather an unlightened way to run a high school; but very characteristic of Los Angeles. I told the student, asking her to tell me just what happened, and I quote from her letter: "In order to find out just why the Manual Arts High School Weekly would not print any material concerning socialism or communism, I showed your letter to Mr. [redacted] a physical teacher. He exploded, as he always does, and called me an anarchist and a bolshevik. A few days later, however, he wrote out his reasons for not allowing any of your statements to be printed in the weekly. They were: 'No anarchistic, communistic, socialistic, or Republican propaganda permitted in the weekly. No sectarian religious propaganda permitted. I have, in the past, been called upon many times to talk on socialism in economics and sociology classes, the only places where such subjects should be discussed.' Mr. Maynard added that nothing concerning socialism or communism should be printed in any high school publication in this city. Mr. Turner agreed with him on that statement, although of course she didn't agree with the policy of it. The school board, headed by the ultra-conservative Mr. [redacted], simply will not allow it."

Such is the student's statement. All over the United States people are wrestling with the problem of the utility of our education: the fact that students are not interested in anything but football and flirtations. Here, in the general case, the condition very clearly stated. The school board will not permit the student to be interested in anything interesting. Could there be any idea or attitude more stupid than the labeling all discussion of political and social questions as "propaganda," and barring it from a high school paper?

We Are As Much Suppressed As You Are

Editor of The American Freeman: I have learned something which might be of interest to you. I don't know if it already is, but I am not selling you, because of any desire to benefit anyone, nor of any desire to be moralistic, which is the last thing I ever want to be, nor of any desire to put down books or matters which are called pornography.

What I have learned is that some company or someone is using your name (and company name) for books of pornography which they publish. I do not know what the name of this company is nor what their address is in your city or town. I have learned so far, is what I have been told by a young lad who sits next me in a classroom.

How it all happened: I came into the classroom (the school, by the way, is the Hyde Park high school) with one of your Big Blue Books, *The Wisdom of Life*. I laid it down on the desk and the young lad next to me picked it up. He inquired if it was the E. Haldeman-Julius Company's book. I replied, "Yes." He then told me that they put out a lot of "dirty books."

He did not mean anything, for I have shown my friends of mine your Little Blue Books on sex and all of them thought they were dirty books. One said if his parents caught him with such a book they would thrash the daylight out of him. I was curious and asked him what was the title of the book to which he replied with the title of the *Lost Dirigible*. I had never heard of a Big Blue Book by this name, so I asked him what the story was about and he told me that it was a story he replied was about some men and women going away on a dirigible, and the women killed all the men but one. Then the women found a sailor out in a rowboat, lost. They rescued him and killed the other man, before they rescued him. Their story goes on to relate the devilish things the sailor did among the women. The author, he said, was nobody, for there is no name attached to the story.

This book did not publish a work. So I questioned him further to learn some more details, which are the following: 1. The cover of the book is red. 2. It is about as wide as one of your Big Blue books, but only about two-thirds as long or perhaps more. 3. It has no preface or introduction and begins on the first page. At the end of the book is nothing but these words: "The End."

I told him that your company don't put out such books and asked him if he hadn't made a mistake. He picked up my Big Blue Book and said that he hadn't. "That's the company's name," he said, and this book also was published in Girard, Kansas. The way in which he recognized the name of your company and the town proved to me that he was speaking in sincerity.

that politics were honest and private interests had the welfare of the people at heart. What would be the result? Would not land values increase out of all proportion? Immigrants would flock from all parts of the world to live in such an ideal state. The workmen would receive better wages but this increase would be swallowed up by the automatic increase of rent, so that their standard of living would be the same as that of the land owners, appropriating all of the "unearned increment" without rendering any material service to humanity.

Henry George, in his *Progress and Poverty* and other works, long ago conclusively resolved the question, pointing out why poverty keeps abreast of progress, together with the obvious remedy therefor.

In his *Land Question* he says: "But it is needless to compare sufferings and measure miseries. Land is necessary to all production, no matter what its kind or form; and the standard of living, the workshop, the storehouse of labor; it is to the human being the only means by which he can obtain the material universe or utilize its powers. Without land, man cannot exist. To whom the ownership of land is given, to him is given the virtual ownership of the men who must live upon it. When the necessity is absolute, then does he necessarily become a socialist, and just as soon as this point is reached—that is, as soon as competition increases the demand for land—just in that degree does the power of taking a larger and larger share of the earnings of labor increase."

The only solution is this: instead of many private landlords absorbing the rent "for nothing," the government should exact the economic rent to be used for all governmental purposes, including at the same time all other taxes, duties, etc. The justice of the system lies in this: that those possessing land, thereby depriving others of the use of that land, would be forced to pay to the community for the privilege of doing so. If the same policy were applied to other monopolies, could not justice exist under such a reign of justice. Men having access to the land would not be compelled to beg their fellow man for a job. But even all men would be free—no fear of unemployment, no fear of social and industrial evils.—John C. Rose, Pittsburgh, Pa.

Editor's Note: We did not state that "corrupt politics and private interests" are in a simple, moral, individual way to blame for unemployment or other evils of the economic system.

Editor of The American Freeman: "The Amazing Scandal of the Great Power Age and Jobless Millions" is good dope. But do you honestly believe that Hoover or the government can remedy this evil? I don't believe that business can believe that business will because it will eventually be forced to do so in order to keep property going. I believe that it must do so in order to keep buying power among the people. I don't read that production (full time) is anywhere from twenty to fifty percent greater than consumption, even with exports. We are to believe that the great majority of the people have little or no buying power. I don't believe that reasonable buying power, and that a great part of this number have less than half reasonable buying power. Reasonable buying power is based on wages of around a hundred dollars a month for the individual. I don't remember what the government states is necessary as a living wage, but it is more than that. Business realizes that buying power is not properly distributed and that jobs are not properly distributed. It appears that there are plenty enough jobs to go round if all persons wish work—whether they need it or not—and thus we have unemployment among a large number who need work and employment among a large number who do not need it because of having a private source of income.

Supposing that business, in order to enhance general buying power, should decide that those persons who would need jobs give them up to those who do not? Do you think that business would do it? If you do, you don't know business. Nothing must stand in the way of keeping up business. People do not count as individuals, friends or relatives when the dollars are in danger. I take that job from Smith and give it to Jones. Smith doesn't need it. He's got income enough to live on in comfort. That's what you'll hear in the near future. Can you imagine Hoover or Congress putting forth any such decree? You can't. But to any certainty you can expect it from business.

In fact, it is already taking place right here in this city. Married women who have husbands able to support who get a job and are told the reason why. A married friend of mine started out the other day to satisfy herself on this account. Her husband earns \$200 a month and they have a child. They support his mother in law. She got a job. Employers gave her the laugh when she admitted she was married and had sufficient income with her working to live in comfort. "Go home and do something," they said. "You're a wife and a mother. There are too many girls and needy women hunting jobs. That is what one employer told her."

Another employer told me that there were too many girls holding jobs who had no need to work because of being of having an income. They wanted to fit themselves for a career outside the home. Machine-made women. Are they anything but a product of our machine order of civilization? Women with highly trained hands too nice to put to anything but an office machine. Highly cared-for bodies, delicate wisps of clothing. Are these machine-made females fit to carry the race? Narrow-hipped, flat-chested, started by the slavery of fashion. Are they fit to be mothers of the next generation? I don't know, but I don't believe they are and I don't think they will be.

College women won't breed. Good thing. We will need a few good specimens of the race for leaders. The common herd will do the breeding—at least they are doing it. If the higher education is spoiling good mother material, we'd better take steps. We had a few good mother and father material from the institutions of higher learning and only allow those who have brains and not much body.

But we wouldn't be so worried over the male. It does not balk at children, the female does! If the female could play female! Perhaps she wouldn't get so terribly "intellectual!"

and want to sacrifice motherhood for a career. But if business decides that the female must breed in order to furnish consumers for the future, it will see that she does. Because business is the god, it is the most powerful of ever known or conceived by the brain of man. Furthermore, it has just become conscious of its real power. It fears neither man nor devil. Would we be surprised if business told us whether we could work or not, according to our needs of work? Or that we should breed and raise a family or not, according to the needs of consumption for the furtherance of industry? You, of course, wouldn't be surprised. We draft men into the army because of need. We can draft eligible females of the species in the breeding pen if it becomes necessary to further civilization and prevent the Yellow Peril from overcoming us. In fact, we wouldn't have to think them simply offer them prizes, bonuses or wages for raising kids instead of chickens or following a career. Someone ought to write a book on this.—C. F. Distelhurst, Omaha, Neb.

Editor's Note: Obviously, Hoover or the government could do much toward remedying the unemployment situation. The government could do the things mentioned in our article: inform itself carefully of the unemployment situation, establish public employment bureaus, and inaugurate a system of public works. Admittedly, these are only partial and palliative measures. We must develop a more scientific and humane basis for our social-industrial life. Meanwhile, we don't expect Hoover or the government to startle us with any great constructive action.

In Praise of Mortality

From too much love of living, From hope and fear set free, We thank with brief thanksgiving Whatever gods may be That no life lives for ever; That dead men rise up never; That even the wisest river Winds somewhere safe to sea.

Then stars nor sun shall waken, Nor any change of light; Nor sound of waters shaken Nor any sound or sight; Nor wintry leaves nor vernal, Nor days nor things diurnal; Only the sleep eternal In an eternal night.

—Swinburne in *The Garden of Proserpine*.

Not harshly, but merely as an idle commentary, do we say that a good resolution is often an excuse for putting off a good action.

Humor enables a man to love the harmonious outlines of truth and laugh at the incongruous appearance of error.

The free thinker has the rare virtue that he doesn't wish to impose upon, to command, to enslave others.

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