

A prolific author, social thinker, and former member of Israel's Knesset, Eliezer Livneh is editor of the well-known intellectual Israeli weekly, *Be-terem*. Mr. Livneh is known as an outspoken critic who has risked and suffered expulsion from the governing *Mapai* party in Israel because of his frank non-conformism to party doctrine. The present essay, translated from the Hebrew by Gerald J. Blidstein, is a critique of secularism from within by one who has long been identified with socialism and secular Zionism. His conclusion marks a significant step in the thinking of one of Israel's leading intellectuals.

SECULAR CIVILIZATION AT AN IMPASSE

There are values, which are acknowledged by all of our generation, be they socialists or capitalists, nationalists or internationalists, Pan-Europeans or devotees of American society. It is to these certain values, held in common by the entire Western world, that we shall limit our analysis in the current essay. Were we to discuss an ideal attractive to but one part of society—socialism, for example—the non-socialist would maintain that the failure of this ideal is of no consequence to him. Let us discuss, therefore, that fate of ideals accepted by all Western Civilization.

I. A HIGH STANDARD OF LIVING

A high standard of living is a value agreed upon by all modern society, including that of Israel. It is considered worth expending a great deal of effort to achieve this goal—there is no effort, in fact, too great. Were this desire for a higher standard of living eliminated from the politics practiced by the majority of Western states, an important part of their policy would crumble. This goal is not merely a physical-materialistic one in the sense of a desire for luxury, for improved artifacts, vacations, pleasant housing, and so on, but has been considered, at least for the past 150-200 years, a noble ethical ideal. The human race will improve

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itself fundamentally by the elimination of want and heavy physical labor which saps the strength of man and leaves him no time for leisure and rest. Man will be nobler and easier to get along with, he will love his neighbor more, have better control over his passions, and be blessed with great creative powers. If his standard of living is raised, he will have more leisure time and more energy available for use in his after-work hours.

On this foundation was built the philosophy of the Progressive Civilization, the secular faith that we are progressing, through technological and social achievements, from bad to good, or at least from a greater evil to a lesser one. The desire for a high standard of living was, then, an ethical and spiritual longing as well. The intellectual struggles of modern society, the disagreements between socialists and liberals, between radical and conservative democrats—all were concerned with who could achieve the highest standard of living for the greatest number of people in the shortest possible time. The very assumption that the highest standard of living possible is a noble ideal worthy of great sacrifice, was never questioned.

But now we have reached a point where this ideal is suspect. In order to understand this, we must examine those states which have achieved a high standard of living, states in which hunger and economic hardship have disappeared, low grade housing eliminated, mass epidemics sharply reduced, and free education given to all.

Let us take two examples: the United States and Sweden. Both countries have realized the dreams of the progressive movements: the eight-hour work day, then the forty-hour week. The problem then became one of *leisure time*, not of overwork. It appears that the more leisure time and prosperity, beyond a certain level the more crime and the deeper the moral deterioration. In Israel, we are presently worried about juvenile crime in the "well-to-do families." In the progressive Western society, the sons of a laborer may be considered as belonging to a "well-to-do family." They do not work until the age of eighteen, their education is guaranteed by the state, and they need not worry about their aging parents who are provided for by Social Security. It was once held that crime is caused by hunger, and prostitution by hardship. We now see that this notion is groundless. Crime today is not the result of hardship. There is no economic hardship in the United States,

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yet juvenile crime in the "well-to-do families" is increasing. Sex crimes and drunkenness abound in Sweden and a rejection of morality is quite stylish in this progressive state. With a surplus of time, energy, and prosperity—crime multiplies!

The films of James Dean, describing American youth's "holidays" and "sports," are well known. The son of a privileged family has a car and other mechanical instruments. Sometimes boys acquire an old airplane engine, install it in a used car, and race at unbelievable speed over the highways—a game which occasionally ends in disaster and tragedy. But this does not restrain others from participating in this sport which, it seems, is quite pleasurable. The feeling of tenseness, we hear, "is wonderful". The modern "drinking party" of the young generation of intellectuals also fits this pattern. They do not get drunk, as the Russian peasant did, out of hardship and physical despair; they drink because of a profound *ennui*, a spiritual despair. One will not find here the boisterousness which characterized the drunkenness of past generations. Rather, each sits in his private corner, the phonograph providing provocative music, and the group imbibes in a nervous, indifferent, and insensible mood. One sees a pleasant man turn to an educated woman: "Perhaps you'll come with me?" She glances at him and yawns the answer: "It isn't worth the trouble."

Recently, America has seen an increase in sadism. Just two years ago, New York was the scene of the frightening prosecution of four young men (Jews) who were truly "privileged." One was a zealous reader of Rilke's poetry (and what is more delicate than Rilke's poetry?), the second played the violin; the others too had cultural interests, and all were sons of prosperous, intellectual families. The boys would go to one of the larger parks where they would accost and torture an old man or woman or a helpless drunk. This was done with no intent of robbery or theft. Their victims were not their enemies. There was no contest or rivalry involved. It was an act of pure sadism. James Dean's last film emphasized the connection between senseless exposure to danger and pointless torture. Essentially the satisfaction is derived from enjoyment of torture.

We thus come to a very interesting point. If indeed the aim of society is to achieve a high standard of living, in a materialistic sense, for the purpose of pleasure and "a good time," then the most intense non-intellectual pleasures are those of the *pervert*.

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The enjoyment derived from the unnatural sex act, for example, is much greater than that resulting from the normal, healthy act. If the object is the heightening of materialistic pleasures, technological or physical, then the heroes of James Dean are a portrait of the future of Western Civilization. This is no literary conceit—it is a social trend. Of course, many have not yet achieved this high living standard. There are still anxieties, Social Security payments are too low, one must care for aged parents, children are born, studies must be financed. But where great “progress” has been achieved—the consequences are as we described.

Which country boasts the most widespread incidence of drunkenness and the largest number of crimes committed under influence of alcohol? According to earlier socialistic theory this peak should have been reached by a poor land, such as Spain or Poland. These countries, it is true, do not lack their share of drunkards, drunkards from despair and exasperation. But the country in which drunkenness has eaten its way into the very heart and soul of the land is Sweden—that most prominent example of a country with a high standard of living, adequate social security, universal education, and other utilitarian achievements.

A higher standard of living has thus brought with it an increase in crime and decadence, not the hoped-for increased dignity of man. This is not restricted to the aristocratic stratum of society which has known these phenomena throughout history. In our day the phenomena described are common among the masses and are spreading to millions of clerks who have no organizational responsibility resting on their shoulders. Who are the young people who are seized by the rock n’ roll fever in England, who frequent the movie houses, dance-halls and alleys of the city, and in their intoxicated mood sometimes attack people without reason? They are the sons of workers and clerks, not members of the higher classes; they issue from that class of humanity which, according to Karl Marx, was to redeem not only itself but all mankind.

What is the significance of rock n’ roll from the standpoint of the development of the dance in Western culture? The minuet appeared at the beginning of modern times, and was followed by the waltz and the mazurka. We have now produced rock n’ roll. *This* is the pattern of development. At first there reigned the delicate, restrained dance, the dance with the subdued rhythm. It was a cultural phenomenon which disciplined and educated.

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Rock n' roll, however, is a release of energy without restraint and refinement. Nikita Krushchev once remarked: "Rock n' roll represents an assault upon our present civilization by the cave man." He was not completely correct. The cave man's dance was part of a religious ceremony, and was not merely the result of an animalistic, bestial outburst. It comprehended the element of prayer. Now the cave man has returned, less the religious ceremony and less the prayer. For to whom can our contemporary pray? Can he search for a Being which transcends his personality, at a time when his personality and its unbridled pleasure are his highest value? Rock n' roll is not the expression of the primitive cave man; it is the reappearance of a cave man who has obliterated all traces of his spiritual experience.

When viewed in this light, the atomic bomb takes on a different significance. I do not believe that mankind will be destroyed by atomic or hydrogen bombs; but neither do I believe that their use is in any way alien to the modern temper. The Nazis did not war for the glory of Germany alone, but for the stimulation which the war implied, as well. They tortured men and annihilated millions more for the satisfaction they received from causing pain and destruction than from any imperialistic consideration. Freud showed that man was endowed with a death-wish as well as an instinct for life, that man longs to destroy as well as create, to demolish and eradicate maliciously as well as to produce and to give life lovingly. It is not clear which of the two drives, when fulfilled, grants the greater pleasure. A strong possibility exists that the drive of hatred, ravage, and revenge is the more satisfying; otherwise, many things would be inexplicable. Though this problem, in its full tragic impact, was known since the dawn of civilization, it remained for our era to make the psychological discovery. The Greeks sought an outlet—a "sublimation"—in agonistics, in the organized aesthetic contest which included competition, recreation, and beauty. Modern materialistic civilization is liberating itself from the confines of this sublimation, and of this self-restraint.

Freud summarized his life's experience in the dictum: there is no satisfaction in civilization. It is true, there is no satisfaction in a secular civilization. Perhaps rational considerations will forbid the world's using atomic bombs. But intellect and reason are merely the abstract summary of experience, and perhaps the reason of those in

charge of the nuclear bombs will one day decide that a wonderfully intoxicating feeling of domination can be experienced through an atomic cataclysm—universal metastasis, a second Creation! Our present generation was tortured by the horrors of a World War. But a generation will soon come for whom these memories will not be a restraining force. The desire to destroy still exists; it merely needs to be enlisted and justified. The Earth appears to be but an anthill to young jet pilots who fly beyond the speed of sound. They feel that they control large bodies of land; cities can be demolished by the push of a button. This is an intoxicating feeling of power, a very satisfying and pleasurable sensation. If we but add that secular man lacks an inner, *basic*, self-restraint for this desire to dominate—this urge which explains movements disguised by such words as socialism and nationalism—then we can understand that a fear of the destruction of the world by hydrogen bombs is a realistic fear, a *logical* fear, in our civilization. If the world will ever be destroyed by nuclear bombs, the destroyers will surely derive a great deal of pleasure therefrom.

Cultures are toppled in two ways. First, the course known through the history of the West: the civilization is destroyed by external pressure, by peoples called "barbarians." They smashed Roman and Byzantine civilization. But the destruction was only partial; much remained. The barbarians were taught by the nations they conquered—they acquired Christianity from Rome and Greece, they learned refined ways of life, and absorbed something of Hellenic aestheticism. The roots remained and fructified. Destruction is complete only when it is accomplished from *within*, for then there is the power to ravage and destroy completely. This spectre is well-known to cultures whose memory embraces long periods of time, such as Hinduism and Buddhism. They know that there were magnificent civilizations which were completely demolished by their own might, and that nobody learns from their desolation. These civilizations were destroyed not by foreign barbarians but from within. Western civilization too possesses dim memories of this type, mostly of a mythological nature, such as the legend of Atlantis—a rich society, refined and developed, which was destroyed by its inner crumbling. Perhaps something of this sort is implied in the story of the Tower of Babel. The *utter* destruction of a civilization was never accomplished by barbarians; they can only destroy partially. Complete destruction

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is effected only with the closing of the ring within, when the civilization has created the technical means for its complete destruction and has eliminated the ethical and spiritual forces which preserve the society.

When technology becomes an end unto itself, it must destroy itself. There is no escape.

II. UNIVERSAL SECURITY

Let us take another accepted value as an example: social security. This is not identical with a high standard of living. We can have economic and social security without a high standard of living. Most socialists consider social security the nobler ideal of the two. It is considered not merely a social accomplishment, but an ethical value in secular society: each man must be protected from all peril, from cradle to grave. One must be protected from illness, anxieties about old age, fear of unemployment and costs of education, family cares, worries about vacation and hospitalization, and so on. One's wealth must be insured as well, and of course the same is true for agricultural produce. Everything must be insured against all danger, jeopardy, and unexpected developments. We assume that as we extend social security into more areas and limit the possibility of damage to the individual and to public bodies, we are progressing.

We have achieved very interesting results in this field. Those countries which enlarged and increased their social security programs became entangled in economic problems. If everything is insured, why should one exert oneself, why strain the nerves and take the initiative, especially if salary differences are practically non-existent? Why be independent? Is it not better to be a salaried employee with no responsibility for plant and production quotas? This slackening of effort is evident even among the masses of industrialized England. Perhaps there are voluntary social-insurance schemes which can curtail this relaxation in production, especially if they are accompanied by some economic differentiation. In the United States, where the majority of insurance is not state provided, and where there is a striking economic differentiation, there is great initiative. A practical contradiction has been revealed between social security and economic equality. Both ideals, when achieved,

do not dovetail. If we want to maintain extensive security in a *dynamic* industrial society, then the differentiation must be great.

However, the impact of all-embracing security on the individual is even more important. We thought that if a man was provided with security, he would be elevated, decent, courageous and possessed of initiative in all areas of work and life. Once man is freed of worry for his physical existence, we believed, he will make daring inventions and achieve great intellectual development and ethical sensitivity. All this was painted in bright colors in the utopian novels of the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century. Today, we are beginning to suspect that this phrase "from cradle to grave" is quite infantile. If the average man is protected from everything, why should he attempt to improve himself? He is well off. But if he is "well off," does that mean that he himself will be "good"?

An affair such as the Dreyfus case was possible only in the nineteenth century. A *single man* was dealt with unjustly. It was not necessarily the affront to the Jewish people that aroused public opinion. There were many anti-Semites among the French who demanded a redress of the wrong done. Col. Piquart, who was imprisoned because of his efforts on behalf of Dreyfus and was practically declared a traitor to his country, was an anti-Semite. Clemenceau, too, was no great lover of Jews. But millions of Frenchmen sensed that a great crime was committed, that justice was not done, that one man had been wronged. They would not tolerate the perpetration of an injustice within France, even against a *single man*.

There are some among us who boast that our State of Israel is a beacon for other nations, and that it symbolizes the consummation of the prophetic dream, the Messianic vision. But are many of our people aroused at acts of injustice, iniquity, and crime? And if someone does protest, he is considered frustrated, eccentric, and unsociable. This is not a phenomenon peculiar to Israel. We exist on the charity of others, and any beggars' community can be neither overly righteous nor outspokenly virtuous. However, the public conscience is drowsy in even the most firmly established democracies. Is there absolutely no connection between this phenomenon and the all-embracing security furnished by the State? If the State provides everything, why protest against it? And if the ruling clique is brazenly unjust, "What do I care?" and

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“What do you care?” The most important thing is to know how to “get along,” and it is *possible* “to get along” if one is at peace with the authorities.

A while ago, I conversed with two outstanding young men about Djilas. They praised the man and his ideas. Before we parted, I asked, “What does our young generation of intellectuals truly think of Djilas?” After a moment, the answer came: “The fellows think: ‘the ass, why is he in prison? Because he could not refrain from saying what he thought.’” In other words, if a person expresses his opinion at the cost of sacrificing his convenience, he is a dunce. Of course, most original thinkers, in art and science and religion as well as in politics, would be better off by not expressing themselves freely. But the root of human progress lies *always* in doubting and questioning, and in the readiness of the doubters and innovators to forfeit comfort and to risk both personal and social security. Without this *readiness to forfeit security* nothing great can be achieved. Only God created the world with absolute security; we must create amid uncertainty, uncertainty even as to whether we are improving the situation at all. If personal security is really most important, then Djilas is an “ass.” Could he not manage to get along with Tito? Of course he could have! He was his assistant and co-worker for twenty years; he “just” had to forego some of his opinions.

In the past, two spiritual-historical sources of Western Culture, the prophetic “I am weary with forebearing” and the Hellenic competitive quest for ever higher heights, influenced the direction of that culture. What these two traditions held in common—a most valuable common denominator—was that the ruling authorities should never be established too securely, that differences of opinion and changes of government were indispensable. As long as this mental climate prevailed, there was some guarantee of protest against injustice and iniquity, against discrimination and degeneration. But this world is shrivelling up and contracting, and “Social Security” and all it implies has become our chief criterion. And if security is our main concern, why listen to the non-conformist? A young man who reads Djilas’ book takes the same interest in it as he does in a sensational novel by Mlle Sagan: neither obliges him to anything.¹

1. Sagan’s novels are no accident. A noted reviewer commented about them: “What do her novels and other modern novels have in common? *Ennui*. Society

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It is worth inquiring which ideals of the great socialist movements were realized and which not. By so doing we might reveal the direction in which our achievements lead us if they are limited to the social sphere alone. The socialist movement is at its twilight. It once achieved great things; but while it is true that many a man of 50 or 60 will still be an enthusiastic socialist, it is uncommon for a young man of 20 or 30 to be inspired by socialism. In its heyday, socialism was a *spiritual* movement as well; its roots were humanistic and, in a sense, even religious. Therefore, it aroused loyalty, dedication, and enthusiasm. Its ideas were in the category of ideals. But which of them have been realized? Nationalization, the concentration of the means of production in the hands of the state or para-governmental agencies, has been accomplished to a certain degree. Socialism, however, was inspired by a *vision* (for which nationalization served as but a means): the laborer will become an artisan; there will be no disparity between the supervisor-entrepreneur and the wage-receiving producer; work will not be merely salaried, but creative. This was the vision which motivated the fathers of socialism. They did not consider nationalization or the concentration of the means of production in the hands of bureaucrats as an ideal. They did believe that through the "elimination of the capitalistic ownership of the means of production" they would realize a new concept of work, a new concept of man, and a new relation between man and his fellow men.

Has any of this been realized? I do not speak of Russia, since by now it is widely recognized that what is being done in Russia is not socialism. Let us take other examples; England, for instance. Does the worker in a nationalized industry there wish to be responsible for the industry? Does he now derive greater satisfaction from his labor? No, there has been no change in his basic attitude. Let *others* run the industry, he wishes to be done with his eight hours and does not intend expending his "extra" energy at the plant. Nor are his thoughts here, but at the movies, the T.V. set, the dog-races, the soccer game, and so on. While some socialist ideals were achieved, they were not those which aimed at the improvement of man. True, the sometimes-liberal bourgeois class which possessed a diffused wealth has been displaced by a new bureaucratic-oligarchic is boring, vacations are boring, love is boring. And this way of life is called 'the good life.'"

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class which possesses concentrated wealth. But what have the workers gained from all this? And what has mankind gained? And who is now enthused by nationalization? In our youth we saw it as a step to the redemption of humanity. We hoped to turn the confused, evil *homo sapiens* into a pleasant creature. This was the *soul* of socialism. Had we been asked, forty years ago, "How can socialism be achieved?", we would have responded immediately, "Through nationalization of the means of production." I do not know how we should respond today. Perhaps with a deep sigh.

Social security from cradle to grave, which eliminates risk and initiative, and "public" ownership of the means of production, has neither improved man nor insured society's safety. The "Internationale" sings, "This will be the last battle in the World War." The last battle?! Mankind was never in such fear of war and annihilation as it is now, in the era of the progress of socialism and the realization of the welfare state.

We sometime say that social reform and revolution are the belated result of a religious tradition or revelation. The truth of this statement is doubtful. When Judaism pronounced "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," it was not referring to a high income tax; the taxpayer hates the tax, and the beneficiary feels that he has received nothing. Where is the feeling of happiness or thanks, not to mention love? The Bible contemplated *spiritual* enjoyment, the union of *souls*: that *you* should love your neighbor, not that the state should become an agency for the distribution of "love." And can, indeed, a state become a instrument for the improvement of man? Can man be improved by *any* agency? Secular civilization saw the melioration of Man in organizational and materialistic terms. Everything else was considered a secondary development which would issue spontaneously from the soil of a planned economy. But what grew of itself? Do we love our neighbor any more? Is there more friendship, more forgiveness, more loyalty, more understanding of the soul of our neighbor?

The great socialist movements of the nineteenth century were, it is true, nourished by spiritual and religious sources. But these sources were distorted when men began to consider socialism an end in itself. The gold turned into glittering ashes in their energetic hands. If the goal is a planned state and nationalism—then the point of departure has been changed. But must the state, the planning, or the nationalization be the goal? These are idols.

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is "happy" the more one manages to get in—does this not mirror an inner desolation?

The silent, even-tempered stoic, the man who reduces his needs because an inner richness lies in self-sufficiency and because liberation from superfluities implies self-discipline—is he not superior to the product of modern progress?

IV. IS THERE HOPE FOR FREEDOM AND DEMOCRACY?

These three values—a high standard of living, social security, and multiplicity of desires—are the criteria of the majority of our Western society. To work less, to escape responsibility, to avoid clashes with authority, to develop perverted desires—these are the ideals. Was it for this that previous generations sacrificed their blood? I am not necessarily thinking of our martyred forefathers. I refer to the men of the West, Giordano Bruno and others like him, the stormers of the Bastille, the Russian intellectuals who "returned to the people", the first socialists, who devoted their whole lives to the amelioration of mankind. Would they be gratified by the result of their labors, by the fruit of their devotion? And what will all this lead to? Where is the egress from the conceptual and operational framework of the progressive secular civilization?

There is one more value by which we all swear—some honestly, others hypocritically—and that is, democracy. The Communists, too, claim that they are its adherents, except that they prefer a "people's" democracy; even in those periods when they openly advocated dictatorship, they explained that it was to be a short period of transition. Democracy, then is a value acknowledged by all. But is democracy assured under modern conditions? Let us disregard the Soviet world. The question is, is democracy certain in the free world? Democracy assumes mental alertness and changes in authority; if the same government retains control for too long, the people will be enslaved. There is no adequate defense against well-entrenched rulers. This is the basis of freedom since time immemorial. But can democracy continue to exist in a society in which the majority of its members *do not wish* to make any sacrifice at all and *are not ready* to suffer any inconvenience, neither on behalf of truth nor on behalf of moral and social improvement, even when great danger is sensed? If the great majority "does not

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care," who will move for changes in government, an undertaking which demands some exertion? And the more firmly entrenched the government, the greater the exertion needed to unseat it. If the King says, "Après moi, le deluge," it is no tragedy—the flood will come and destroy his dynasty. But if this is the philosophy of the masses, how can democracy and freedom continue to exist? The rulers rule with an iron hand, guarantee the physical needs of the masses, and promise "social security." Who will attempt to unseat them? Who will supervise the change in government? Of course, the ballot box and "freedom" remains. But of what value is freedom established by law, if there is no freedom in the heart of man? Slips of paper, posters: this is mere show. Democracy is not acquired by a single purchase, it is not a road which but needs be paved and can then be neglected (though even a road must be repaired constantly, especially if it is travelled by overly heavy vehicles). The survival of democracy is dependent on the psychological and mental state of the citizens. If men are not prepared to participate in moral and intellectual insurrections against injustice and vice, if they can "live with it," then democracy will be destroyed from within.

Western democracy has been rejuvenated due to the danger from without, the Soviet threat. But what will occur when the external threat vanishes, when the tension disappears? Western society will remain with its indifferent masses, with demands for longer vacations and more security and a higher standard of living—who cares who will foot the bill? Can democracy survive in *such* a society?

In order to demonstrate the lack of a way out for rational thought let me cite the accepted definition of successful civic endeavor given by Jeremy Bentham, who probably took it from earlier thinkers: the social and moral criterion is "the greatest happiness of the greatest number." But *what* is happiness? Happiness is a totally subjective thing, it is what you and I *think* is happiness. For the masses of our time, happiness means a large collection of gadgets, an assortment of amusements, long vacations and frequent changes of scenery, a life of sports and sex. This is happiness. If this is the content of happiness, is this indeed our goal? Is this our moral standard? would perhaps a bit less happiness be of benefit? Colonel Piquard suffered and renounced much when he went to prison, and he did not do this for a close friend, but for Dreyfus,

whom he considered a member of the Jewish plutocracy. If so, is perhaps a bit of unhappiness best? Or does perhaps true "happiness" lie in imbecility, in the elimination of the tragedy of choice? Who in our time wants to choose? Who will ask "to be or not to be?" Happiness seems to lie in *not* asking, in *not* thinking. I am not thinking only of the average man. Even the scientist, expert in mathematical processes and capable of assimilating long chains of cause and effect, is indifferent to problems of the spirit. This spiritual primitiveness of scientists explains phenomena such as the case of Dr. Klaus Fuchs, the English atomic scientist, who enthusiastically turned Communist agent. There are few indeed of our generation who can say, with the German poet Konrad Meyer, "I am not an educated book, I am a human being with contradictions." Contradictions are unwanted either in the heart or in society. However, the man who ignores these contradictions delivers himself either to obtuseness stupidity or to confusion. Man's spiritual stature depends upon his ability to face contradiction and peril and the experience of ignorance. He who ignores contradictions turns into an animal, well equipped with automobiles television, trips, and vacations.

Until now we have dealt with the first part of Bentham's statement, "the greatest happiness"; let us now turn to the latter half, "of the greatest number." This would seem to be the foundation of the democratic *weltanschauung*. But what are the results of granting conveniences to "the greatest number" indiscriminately, through the wide use of scientific advances and social security? An unexpected result has recently become universally apparent. Here is the Israeli version. It seems that, "paradoxical as it may appear, the enormous progress in the medical sciences endangers the future, biologically speaking, of humanity"¹. This paradox exists only in terms of nineteenth and early twentieth century thought. Actually, it is only logical that "due to the progress in the medical sciences many weak individuals reach child-bearing age and produce feeble offspring."² The socialist newspaper quotes the Nobel Prize winner, Prof. Mahler, to the effect that "assuming continued scientific progress on present lines the human race will degenerate and become extinct within a few hundred years."

It is now clear that scientific development in conjunction with a

1. *La-merchab*, February 12, 1958.

2. *ibid.*

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welfare state operating according to the non-selective formula of "to the greatest numbers" will bring not the anticipated progress, but the destruction of humanity! Is it not evident that the hitherto accepted values have led to an impasse, that we are in desperate need of a *revolution* of the spirit, in order to find a way out of the maze of concepts and achievements which these values have implied?¹

V. THE FATE OF THE FUTURE IN THE LIGHT OF THE PAST

We have examined the accepted ideal of "The greatest happiness for the greatest number." What remains of that moral foundation of secular civilization? In part, it has turned into its opposite. Of course, that which now exists can survive for a certain length of time; the human race is made of flesh and blood, and possesses a certain amount of inertia. There are regenerative powers within the present framework, too, due to the spiritual balance and aesthetic refinement of past generations. A certain amount of time must elapse before the downfall of the present civilization out of indifference, degeneration, brutality, and perversion—it will come though no one knows when.

We must now come to grips with the question: Is there any way

1. Incidentally, a very interesting article appeared a while ago, by the physicist Sir Charles Darwin (grandson of the celebrated Darwin) in an English scientific journal. Darwin calculated that if mankind continued to multiply at the present rate, as a result of progress in medicine, technological advances, and the welfare state, there would be no "standing room" left on earth within 150-200 years. The situation in the year 2000 will be desperate enough: there will be a food shortage, crowded living conditions will cause nervous exhaustion, international relations will deteriorate, and other unsolved, if not insoluble, problems will arise. What is to be done, then? The famous scientist answers that it would be advisable to take drastic measures and limit the international birthrate, including that of backward nations. But there is not much hope of this. And if one nation should enforce this restriction while its neighbor did not, it would be endangering its security. He concludes, "If the next few decades saw a *number* of atomic-hydrogen wars, part of the problem would be temporarily solved; atomic warfare would destroy the foundations of modern industrial civilization." The nineteenth century was ignorant of this problem, just as it was ignorant of our other fateful dilemmas. The major socialist problems of the past century have been solved for the most part. And when they were solved, it appeared that they were less important than we thought they were. Our anxieties are of a different order, and are not really related to the old antagonisms of socialism to capitalism.

