

Angell Sums Up at 85—Urges Union of West



THE EDITOR OF FREEDOM & UNION has put to me these questions:

What main lessons do you draw from your half century of effort for peace and freedom? What methods in your view are most effective in translating thought into action in this field? What should-be done and what should not be done?

I will try to answer as simply and directly as possible, and to make any general lesson or conclusion I may suggest relevant to the new conditions and new problems which confront us in the nuclear age. The main lesson which I draw from the events of the last half century and my own efforts in relation to them is this:

Wars are in the last analysis the result of certain psychological forces, facts of human nature in politics, which men have always evaded, always hated to face. They constitute forces which can in large measure be disciplined by increasing social and political understanding as is proved by the cessation of war in fields where it once raged bitterly—between religious sects, for instance. What has been done for the religious groups can be done for the political. But the progress towards peace in the religious field was exceedingly slow, covering long centuries, and we cannot in the modern world afford to take centuries to harness passions which, uncontrolled, will certainly destroy us. The process of understanding could be accelerated if we faced starkly such facts as this:

When men act collectively as a group—nation, political party, trade union, church, or even as minorities within such groups—they become subject to a recognizable, though largely unrecognized psychopathology, a mental illness. This leads to what we can only call hallucination which blinds the victim to his most vital interests and makes him capable of ferocities which

he would never commit as an individual.

Because we do not believe this we do not deal with the phenomenon as we might.

Yet the facts of this century should have taught us. Consider: If, in some cellar you were to come upon a spectacled, benign-seeming professor of your acquaintance, busily engaged in pushing the bodies of, say, living children into the house furnace, you would immediately, and rightly, conclude that he had become dangerously insane and would take steps to have him locked up.

But, when some thousands of professors and millions of voters, belonging to the most educated, schooled, cultured, learned nation of the world engage in the professor's activity in wholesale and very efficient fashion with gas chambers, we insist that it is not madness, not a discernible disease which cries out for systematic treatment. Or we say it is anyhow a disease to which only Germans are subject, certain never to affect an Anglo-Saxon community. We argue this in complete disregard of the fact that the southern whites of the U.S. constitute a community made up almost entirely of Anglo-Saxons, usually, as individuals, charming, gracious, much given to Bible-reading and church-going, yet who have proved capable, when organ-

ized into lynching bees, of burning alive some helpless negro youngster guiltless of any proved crime.

The difference between the professor and the multitude is not the degree of madness, but the fact that it could seize the professor without crowd contagion. Which only makes the matter more disturbing. It is relatively easy to deal with the individual breakdown, but where crowd contagion renders millions as mad as our professor, you have a situation of a quite different order of difficulty.

The foregoing passages could be said almost to summarize the theme of the first book I wrote, published in 1903 and entitled: *Patriotism Under Three Flags:*

A Plea for Rationale Politics. It was a complete failure in a publishing sense selling only a few hundred copies despite two or three flattering reviews. In nearly every subsequent book I have attempted to embody the same theme and emphasize its importance. But it is precisely this aspect of the problem which seems to have been generally ignored alike by reviewers and ordinary readers. The writing of this first book was due to an episode in my life to which a brief reference will be excused. At 17 years of age I gave up attendance at the University of Geneva and emigrated to the U.S. to become for five years a manual worker—farm hand, miner, cow-boy. It was good education and gave me an insight into the minds of manual workers in a country which believed in education and saw to it that every boy and girl got at least the three R's. At the end of the five years I took a job as a newspaper reporter in San Francisco. While so engaged Cleveland's message to the British government on the matter of the Venezuelan border provoked a strange, sudden outburst of Anglophobia and war fever—in part due to the fortuitous circumstance that most of the papers of

large circulation happened to be under the control of Irish owners. Flaring headlines proclaimed that the time had come to bring to an end, once and for all, those "intolerable and shameful wrongs the U.S. was suffering at the hands of Britain." We were told repeatedly in the popular press that freedom demanded that "Britain's evil power be now destroyed."

I was able, as a reporter, to obtain access to Congressmen, Senators, clergymen, public figures of all kinds, who had indulged in declarations of that kind and made a point of asking: "What are these wrongs of which you speak? It is important that the public should know what they are." Not one of all those I interviewed could tell me a single wrong that the U.S. suffered at the hands of Britain. But the fact that no one knew what the "wrongs" were made not the slightest difference to the depth—and usually the complete sincerity—of the flaming passion to which nearly all of those public figures gave expression. I wrote at the time: "We are now witnessing the frightening spectacle of a whole nation moved in a life and death matter of public policy by sheer hallucination." I wondered whether this phenomenon was peculiar to America.

Shortly after that experience I found myself in Paris reporting the Dreyfus Affair, and therefore doing much reading of French popular newspapers, listening to French politicians. It came over me one day listening to some passionate anti-Dreyfus harangue in the Chamber: "This is familiar. I've heard it before . . . why, of course it is the American Congressman done into French."

Later in Britain the passion of xenophobia, jingoism and war fever which preceded the Boer war and marked its course was to provoke the same reflection. I thought I saw then at the turn of the century—and subsequent events have convinced me I saw correctly—that, in the three great liberal democracies of the West, policy was dominated by essentially the same type of dangerous collective emotion, blinding the multitudes to plain fact and their most vital interests.

Perhaps I would have done better to use the word "nationalism" instead of "patriotism" in the title of my book. But "nationalism" would hardly have applied to the passions of the Dreyfus

Affair. The emotions were less those of nationalism than of partisanship and faction, but no less dangerous.

Unless, the book argued, such psychological forces could be brought under the kind of discipline which had enabled us to make an end of the religious wars, to abolish torture as a method of ascertaining evidence in our courts of law, and to abandon the burning of witches, we were headed for a series of appalling disasters. (Eleven years after the publication of the book, that is to say in 1914, the disasters began.) A passage in this book published in 1903 is as follows:

"The events analysed here would seem to show that the forces of rationalism revealed during the nineteenth century have spent themselves in large measure and that more and more emotion is taking charge in public policy. . . . Many characteristics of modern life favor this tendency. Remembering what has already been said as to the factors which contribute to setting up the collective mind—the irresponsibility which comes of numbers, the power of suggestion and contagion, the relation of emotion to reflection—we are better able to appreciate the effect of such typical features of modern life as our popular press and the neurotic atmosphere of great cities. The popular press presents to enormous numbers simultaneously the same suggestion of (for instance) national insult, danger, or aggression, exciting by this means a national vanity to which it also panders. To simultaneity of suggestion add the effect of propinquity and movement, the light chatter of trains and buses, the close association of great numbers in factories. Again at agencies as powerful as these making for the formation of the mob-mind, the relatively feeble rationcinative element has no chance."

In the period since this book was written nearly 60 years ago—it was published in 1903—all the factors making for the irrationalism of public judgment have gained in power. (There was then no radio, no television, and only the beginnings of the cinema.) If I had ventured to forecast as the result of crowd psychology anything remotely approaching the scale of what has since happened under Hitler and Moscow, the prophecy would have been regarded as sheer, stark, lunacy. The Hitlerian episode has been rendered more terrifying than ever by the coming of the H-bomb and all it implies. We now know by the circumstances of his own end that, had he possessed it, Hitler would have used it in order to add to his own personal de-

struction that of his foreign enemies and of the German people he had come to hate.

We are apt to regard the emergence of a Lenin or a Stalin or a Hitler as a manifestation of mere military power, and draw a picture of millions suffering



helplessly by reason of the sheer physical force of the tyrant. And this is perhaps the greatest illusion of all. Obviously neither one man, nor even a ruling committee of a dozen or a score, have any physical force, within their own bodies that is, with which to "hold down" millions. The only force—armies, navies, police, bureaucracies—the tyrant can use is that supplied by his victims.

When Lenin arrived in that sealed railroad car in Russia in 1917 he had neither arms or army or police. Yet he destroyed a relatively liberal government and took its place. The only force he could employ was his power over men's minds. Similarly with Hitler. When he began operations with his fellow neurotics and ne'er-do-wells in the Munich beer hall he had nothing but the clothes he stood up in—except a genius for understanding and appealing to the baser instincts of a large number of discontented men and women.

If we miss this point that the physical force with which a Hitler or a Lenin or a Stalin operates can only come into being as the result, first of all, of the capture of men's minds, we miss just as disastrously our own share of responsibility, the responsibility of the West as a whole for what has happened. There is very little to choose in point of political wisdom between the policies of Britain, France and the U. S. Consider the record.

In his address to Congress on April 2,

warned would be the case unless certain strategic precautions were adopted.

Whether or not it is true to say that the defeat of Hitler need never have involved this victory for Stalin, if only the possibility of precisely that thing happening had been as clear to certain others as it was to Churchill, we shall never know. What we do know is that its very possibility was denied in quarters which alone could have prevented it, and it was denied because the plainest facts were obscured by emotions derived from old prepossessions, hostilities, folklore, which had lost all validity.

As Churchill makes clear in his sixth volume of the war history, *Triumph and Tragedy*, he had to witness one opportunity after another of creating a barrier to post-war Soviet expansion disregarded or deliberately rejected. The American armies did not press on to seize Berlin and Prague. A large slice of East Germany actually occupied by American troops was handed over to Soviet occupation with results we were later to appreciate. The chance of advancing into Austria and the Danube Valley was discarded for the sake of a superfluous landing in southern France. Churchill watched all this, warning and pleading.

This aspect of the second war which delivered so much of the world into Communist hands is commonly ascribed to the fact that it was Roosevelt's declin-

For half a century, since he wrote his famous classic, *The Great Illusion*, Norman Angell consistently and indefatigably both

ing health which accounts for his failure to see the case which Churchill presented, and to favor instead, as against Churchill, the claims of Stalin. The failing health was a fact, but why should it have prompted that particular political line, rather than the contrary one of adopting a strategy which would have tended to check Soviet expansion? The question is answered by the President's son Elliott who accompanied his father to Teheran and who wrote of the experience in a book entitled *As He Saw It*. The President simply refused to believe that the post-war world would have anything to fear from Russian power, but a great deal to fear from British power. "For this I know," said the President a good many times, "Britain is imperialist and Russia is not."

For 2,000 years, at least, men have drawn up Grand Designs for world or international government. The form of constitution is important, as Clarence Streit has shown so brilliantly, and more important than it has ever been. For unless we can create a world authority sufficiently powerful and stable to control nuclear weapons (becoming increasingly available to all and sundry) we stand quite obviously in danger of sheer extermination, or, as the only available alternative, submission to Moscow—to dictatorship, as the world authority.

But what are the chances of a world

the displacement of reason by passion and emotion he has done—perhaps more consistently, indefatigably, patiently and over a longer period, than any man now living—

authority reconciling freedom for the individual with stability of government, when very few national societies possessing a common culture and "way of life" have been able to manage it owing to the disruptive effect of those psychological forces with which we have been dealing? A world government would have to work on the basis of 80 or 100 nationalisms, emphasizing widely differing cultures and ways of life. The case of the German failure has already been touched upon. But Germany does not stand alone. France has had a round dozen constitutions since the 18th century revolution and in the 20th century finds itself so riven by conflicting parties that it is often unable to agree for weeks together on any government at all. It is now struggling with its fifth republic since the revolution. The record of a score of Latin American republics during more than a century is notorious.

What we seem to overlook is that no constitution, however cleverly drawn, can be self-acting. Whether it works or not depends on the political understanding, the quality of the public judgment of those who live under it. The Weimar constitution was one of the best ever written. It did not prevent the coming of Hitler who tore it to pieces with the approval of great sections of the educated German people. Most of the constitutions of the Latin American republics are excellent, the work, usually, of highly educated professors of political science. And under most of them annual revolutions have been a habit. Britain has no constitution at all in the American or Latin sense; and has had no major internal disturbance for 300 years.

What can we do about it?

What has just been written indicates clearly enough that almost everywhere in the West education in the school sense does little to produce social and political understanding. But an influence certain to be fatal to any world government, is the acceptance everywhere throughout the West of political principles and ideals, embodied in emotion-laden slogans completely incompatible with the creation and maintenance of any international authority whatsoever. Over most of the world to-day, in the Middle East, in Africa, in Asia are explosive and clamant demands for "national sovereignty," and absolute independence.

"What a Single Man Can DO....."

advocated and exhibited the sanity, sense and reason which the world increasingly needed—and has continually been losing—throughout all that period. The cool and dispassionate analysis of the illusions, the emotional distortions and the tyranny of the deceptive slogans and phrases, which both express and strengthen their power for evil, has continued patiently through the youth and middle age of all who now, like him, are old. They are at once a nostalgic reminder of what we have lost since the century in which we were born—and of what we must recover if even worse is not now to come. What a single man can do to help in arresting

and the more persuasively because he himself not only recalls, but in his own person incarnates the attributes without which *homo sapiens* neither deserves his name nor can hope to survive. His 85th birthday is a suitable moment at which both to express our admiration—and indeed reverence—of the man and to contribute what we can to the spread of his gospel—never more needed than now as the gospel of our salvation. —LORD SALTER

(As Sir Arthur Salter, he was for long chief of the Economic and Financial Section of the League of Nations.)

Now, there is not a respectable authority on international affairs writing in the world to-day, who does not recognize the fact that any society, national or international, made up of sovereign and independent units is a contradiction in terms; not one, outside the advocates of anarchy, who does not make it clear that if an international government is ever to exist and the international anarchy brought to an end, then national sovereignty must be qualified and independence limited. Yet whenever the demands for absolute sovereignty, freedom, self determination are raised, they are warmly supported by liberals in the West as representing the highest political ideal. That Moscow should make the slogans about national independence part of its propaganda is understandable: Moscow's purpose is to undermine Western unity by the use of those slogans so that ultimately any world government which comes into being shall be on the Moscow model.

Liberals seem to have watched this bamboozlement with very little visible attempt to debunk it, and may indeed have a share of responsibility for the distortions by which totalitarianism profits, by so oversimplifying the liberal case as to falsify it.

The slogans of liberalism have been left so much without clear meaning that they have come to belong rather to the category of martial music, which without exact meaning, can deeply stir emotion; or, like a rousing marching song, can prompt men to go on without even wanting to know what their destination may be. These are the characteristic emotions of nationalism, as also perhaps of revolution, the world over.

It is part of the moral tragedy with which we are dealing that words like 'democracy', 'freedom', 'rights', 'Justice', which have so often inspired heroism and have led men to give their lives for the things which make life worth while, can also become a trap, the means of destroying the very things men desire to uphold. These words, and the indiscriminating emotions they excite, have become magic incantations, verbal idols demanding human sacrifice by massacre.

The truth is that the demand of a community to have absolute sovereignty, self-determination, independence of all other communities, is not a noble and worthy political aim, but an antisocial and immoral claim; which, if

generally attained, would make impossible any free and humane society, because it would deprive that society of any means of defending its members against lawless violence. The freedoms that matter can be defended and preserved only if those who desire them are prepared to surrender minor freedoms on behalf of that defence.

Of course, we would all, individuals as well as nations, like to be sovereign, independent; our own judge in dispute with others, able to put those who have the insufferable impudence to disagree with us in their proper place. It is part of that primitive urge to anarchy existing deep down in all of us. But we should not get more freedom by indulging that urge; any more than we would on the motor road with freedom to defy the traffic code. The principle is as applicable to the society of states as for that of individuals, even though the states be Great Powers.

At this point a word of warning. Among the confusions apt to mark the discussion of international affairs is the confusion between the indispensable and the sufficient, between what is necessary and what is enough. Clearly where great masses are subject to deep collective angers, a lynching psychology, the obviously indispensable preliminary condition of collective wisdom is to deal with that fact, which these lines have attempted to do. But people who are neither angry nor subject to lynching fevers can also make grave mistakes.

Among the necessary tasks gravely neglected at this juncture is a serious, purposeful examination of the means* by which the Federal principle could

* *Supporters of a resolution calling for exploration of Atlantic Union plan to re-introduce it in the coming session of Congress. —Editors.*

be applied to the problem of Western unity. For without that principle it is quite unlikely that the democratic West can achieve a unity at all equal in power and cohesion to that achieved by the Communist world by means of totalitarian dictatorship.

If the Federal principle is to achieve the unification of the West (which it might), the illumination which Clarence Streit has given to that principle needs to be extended to regions still in darkness in that respect. For Streit has shown that Federalism can give constitutional form to the basic truth of a free society that the state is made for man, not man for the state; or, as Streit has put it, sovereignty belongs to the citizen, not the state.

That truth needs, more than ever before, a constant re-assertion; re-assertion perhaps in constitutional form. Britain in her particular insular circumstances may manage best with unwritten constitutions. But even British Dominions, notably Australia, found that if a disastrous sovereignty of the states (states which could not even agree on a common railroad gauge) was to be ended, only a written constitution could do it. Certain nations of the West now seeking unity might well take note.

It is hardly extravagant to say that democracy and our Western civilization will always be in danger until we liberals face the fact we tend to ignore, namely, that 'the People' are not exempt from the Christian doctrine of original sin, from the 'natural' tendency of men to obey anti-social, sadistic impulses, unless restrained by a culture which makes them sufficiently aware of the nature of the emotion to which they yield. It is time we learned how to strengthen the culture that might do just that thing.

" an Example of the Good Life"

You do well, if I may say so, to commemorate the 85th birthday of Norman Angell and I wish I could say something adequate to my admiration for the quality of his life. In a world in which even good men make unworthy compromises or too soon become weary of well doing, Norman Angell has been a shining example of following the gleam of his insight with serene disregard for distortion of his ideas or misinterpretation of his motives. He has pursued reason in his doctrinaire spirit and with full awareness of man's frailties and passions. Few men in my lifetime have detached themselves from the maddening crowd with such humility and such pertinacity. In short, he has been an example of the good life.

—FELIX FRANKFURTER
Associate Justice, U.S. Supreme Court