

Social Science—The Fourth Horseman

An approach to economic enlightenment that is distinctly out of the ordinary is presented in the following article by MARGARET HARKINS. The author's journalistic background includes such varied experiences as reporter on the Los Angeles Times, member of the editorial staff of Pictorial Review in New York, several years as a fashion editor in Paris and, most recently, member of THE FREEMAN editorial board.

*And I beheld, and lo a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand. And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny.**

★ NOW IN THIS YEAR of cataclysm, against the flaming light of bursting bombs and burning cities, the picture stands out stark and clear—now we know the true nature of the Horseman on the Black Horse, who rode out of the shining dawn of the Renaissance, straight across the highways of the centuries, and into the quiet little street that passes your house and mine. And to know, in this hour when the unknown presses suffocatingly close, is to be comforted. To view the Horseman from the secure vantage point of our own inner certitude, to see him as a manifest reality—not as a threatening bogey—is to conserve for good usage every atom of precious energy that might otherwise be dissipated in fear.

Today the pair of balances, the weighing scale symbolizing limitation, is not standing idle. In every language the word ration has taken on a meaning of new significance. The measures of wheat and of barley are few and it is in this resulting lack, this manifestation of poverty on an international scale, that we seek the cause and the answer. First, we pause to remember that the Black Horse, traveling at a furious rate to keep pace with the blitzkrieg tempo of these times, is only one of four. The Pale Horse, symbol of fear in the childhood of the race, and the Red Horse, the allegorical figure of man's bestial nature uncontrolled, have already passed this way. The Black Horse stands for the domination of mankind by the intellect, and the pair of balances indicate the resulting starvation of the spiritual nature, a famine in ethical values.

Here then, we realize, is the key to our problem. Since we live in a mental world in which every outer manifestation was once a thought in the mind of man, we

know that according to natural law every moral limitation must sooner or later be followed by material lack. The energy generated by an idea, be it a thought for good or a thought for evil, must inevitably produce a material result in keeping with its original nature. We cannot call back a thought, or halt it midway in its course. We can only cancel out its energy content by a contrary thought. Every thought has two component parts—a knowledge content, belonging to the realm of the intellect, and a feeling content, the product of man's emotional nature. The domination of the former would be apparent in solving a problem in mathematics, a process that would involve a minimum of feeling. On the other hand, this intellectual content is likely to be very small in thoughts on subjects beyond the reach of mathematical verities and test-tube control. Here the emotions rule; bias and prejudice may enter in; superstition and fear may hold sway. Ideas that speak out from the heart of man—thoughts about everyday problems concerning food, shelter, money, religion, and politics—these are close to the emotional nature, and hence close to an abyss of ignorance.

It is understandable that intellect, emerging from the feudal slavery of the Middle Ages, was enthroned by the men of the Renaissance. Re-discovered by those in bondage, its values were confused, over-estimated, distorted. Just as many American negro slaves found themselves unable to cope with the responsibilities of a new-found freedom, so these earlier serfs failed to realize that intellect, cut off from the guidance of higher intelligence, would bind them inescapably to a three-dimensional world, dooming to starvation the spirit of man that is nourished by values of perfection and that wanders free in the regions where dimension is infinity.

It was then that the Black Horse commenced his journey. By the nineteenth century all western civilization had heard the voice saying, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny. Intellect was in the saddle, and the thoughts of men were replete with a knowledge content, but the other component part, the feeling content, was dangerously small. To educate, which had once meant to *draw forth from within*, was perverted into an unnatural process of *absorbing from without*. The test-tube became the standard by which values were measured. The laboratory pointed the way to the harnessing of natural forces that they might do man's bidding, but men forgot that this control, once released from its mental home, would not stop of its own accord. Wandering, rudderless, without guidance and without direction, it was bound to produce undesirable forms of enslavement. The gulf between the invention of the steam engine and the dive-bomber is a narrow one when viewed from the scientific standpoint; from a moral point of view, illumined by today's understanding of man and his nature, we look

* Revelation 6:5-6.

back, aghast and horrified, at the results of our ignorance of yesterday.

But that we can look back, that we can analyze, is in itself sufficient. No matter how many cities are bombed and blasted, how many living human bodies are blown to bits, how many hours and days we must toil, feverishly, to build our weapons of destruction, man can still reason, and that one faculty will yet make of him an angel. A war is not a barrier to reasoning, but a challenge. It is a social problem which awaits a social solution. There is nothing hopeless, or confused, or chaotic in our social system, any more than there is blind chaos among the forces that control the planetary system. The social system evolves according to natural laws; man thinks, and the intellectual energy thus released is eventually manifested in a visible form. If this result is not to his liking he can do very little to change it through direct attack. He must go back to the cause, the thought, and formulate his desires anew. Even primitive man did not *hope* that the sun would rise; he *knew* it would rise. Understanding, gained not from book-learning but from instinctive intelligence, was the measure of his faith. At this period of racial development the actual knowledge content of his thought was negligible, but the feeling content was tremendous—powerful enough to carry him from savagery to civilization in a few short centuries. Here, clearly, we can see that the intellect which today can conceive and build a Boulder Dam is only a small segment of man's higher intelligence which whispers to him secrets more vital and dynamic than all the forces he can harness.

It is with this understanding of thought content and its potency in mind that we can prepare to deal effectively with our present social upheaval. And the task is clearly ours. We are the privileged ones, chosen by destiny. Those who have gone before us have tested out three distinct types of civilizations and found them wanting. The early one pushed back the borders of fear that brought the savage out of his cave and into a pastoral way of life; in the second, actual knowledge of the universe was so limited that man's thirst to know was slaked at the springs of emotion—what he could not accomplish he delegated to his all-powerful gods; in the third the reaction set in—the emotional nature, overstimulated, uncontrolled, gave way to the lonely reign of the intellect. Under this domination men became *practical*. They developed bigger and better commercial enterprises; they built bigger and better skyscrapers; and in their economic system they incorporated more and greater poverty. We see that now. We *know*. And to *know* is to set in motion the intellectual energy that will rescue us from an undesired fate.

There has long been a mistaken notion abroad in the

land that man is not capable of evaluating an existing problem because of its immediacy. It has been said that by being close to a problem, such as a war, we cannot get a proper perspective, and that only history can give us the long view. This may have been partly true in a world where historical events were recorded slowly, sometimes long after a battle had been won or lost. But now, with the daily newspaper and radio presenting history to us as it is being made, we must remain flexible enough to keep our perspective adjusted and constantly in focus. Our fundamental ethical values remain fixed, unchanged, just as the natural laws on which they are founded remain static; interpreted into action they become dynamic, charged with energy for good or for evil. How often we have heard it said that a certain individual is "set in his ways." Even when the disadvantages of his attitude have long been apparent he seems held in bondage by his own burden of stubbornness, an impossible encumbrance in modern society. This refusal to *know* is the thought force behind the suicidal impulse of defeatism. Man can, if he so desires, kill himself suddenly and with violence; the subconscious, which normally shrinks from pain, will offer fewer protests, however, if he accomplishes his purpose slowly, by degrees.

That the subtle poison of defeatism has seeped into the social structure to an alarming degree is evident if we examine a few fragments of current news, history in the raw. We shall not seek out special instances, but try rather to determine the general trend by cutting through a cross section of the daily newspaper.

The first case that comes to hand is a quoted interview with Dr. Louis Finkelstein, president of the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York, on the occasion of the third conference on Science, Philosophy and Religion. "In the war crisis, as in the pre-war crisis, the defenders of democracy are impeded by the lack of a

"... Social reform is not to be secured by noise and shouting; by complaints and denunciation; by the formation of parties, or the making of revolutions; but by the awakening of thought and the progress of ideas. Until there be correct thought, there cannot be right action; and when there is correct thought, right action WILL follow."

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clearly enunciated, easily understood philosophy of the democratic way of life," Dr. Finkelstein says. "Our failure to create such a philosophy enabled totalitarianism to arise and to gain power; our continued failure invites disaster to our arms. The founders of the conference realized from the beginning that the successive disasters which have befallen our generation—the outbreak of the first World War, the economic collapse of the 1930's, the rise of totalitarianism and its increasing power, and finally its military challenge to the civilized world—are not independent of one another. . . . They are obviously symptoms of a basic affliction of the whole of society. The duty of scholars and men of letters is to diagnose this affliction, and if possible to discover the means of remedy."

Next is a quotation from the syndicated column en-

titled "Our Children" by Angelo Patri. "The young people of today are ready to take over the responsibilities of maturity and find they cannot do so. They cannot find jobs; they cannot look to the future with any feeling of sureness, in any field. They have appealed to industry without avail; they have appealed to government with little success; they have held meetings and published their findings, and still there is no relief in sight. They don't want makeshift jobs; they don't want subsidies; they don't want charity. They want a chance to work as their fathers did. . . . No answer for them comes out of the confusion of voices raised in their behalf. . . . I do not know what ought to be done. I feel about as confused as the young people are. Something is wrong, and should be made right. We should proceed now to clear the road for the coming generation and do what needs doing, in preparation for the economic and social conditions that will come in the wake of this World War. There is no prophet who can foretell the exact needs, but there are responsible men and women who might be setting the framework for constructive administration of these problems that concern youth. Let's hear from them."

In another syndicated column, "These Days" by George E. Sokolsky, we find this plea for guidance. "I am sure that one of our major difficulties—and when I say 'our' I mean the whole of mankind—is that we have lost guidance. We are moving rapidly but without compass. The end of the nineteenth century threw God over as a guide and accepted Science, but Science offered only facts but no guidance, knowledge but not wisdom, details of the minutiae of the electron but no philosophy of life. And in the twentieth century we accepted the great teachings of economics and sociology and our prophet was Karl Marx—and where are we? We are confused and perplexed. We are like madmen, hating each other. Every miserable prejudice and pettiness of the most primitive savage has become a way of life adopted by millions of people and praised as an ethical procedure. We shall soon be erecting totem poles in honor of the greatest haters and building idols of clay to mark our descent from civilization. Two thousand years of slow, painful effort to lessen the bestiality of man, to civilize him and soften his nature has been wiped away by the resurgence of brutal materialism."

Here then are three representative fragments of history, picked from the daily news. A few years ago the thoughts of these three men would have mattered less; today they reach out to all corners of the world with the speed of wings in flight. Is this the time to await the long view of history in order to obtain a better perspective? Our perspective is quite clear enough to show us that these three gentlemen are in serious difficulties. They are floundering in the quicksand of uncertainty. They have lost their way and they cry out in their loneliness, their fear. They shout and their voices are heard by millions of "little men." For if these three are lost, reasons the little man, what chance, what hope, remains.

It is interesting to note that the perplexities in the minds of these three men produce the old, familiar pat-

tern. In this one fact we find solace. For human nature, bound up with inexorable natural laws, will not play tricks. It is only natural that these men, perceiving that they have lost their way, will try to find the right path. The only danger lies in the possibility of their method of seeking becoming an eternal quest. That they are already beguiled by this siren lure is apparent in their admission that they are all seeking something which they define as a philosophy of life. In this respect they are not unlike the bored and bemuddled lady who was queried as to her philosophy; she replied dully that she did not have one—that she had only a master of arts degree. That such confusion exists in the minds of educated men and women, causing them to believe that they are devoid of a philosophy of life, clearly reveals that education has not yet been restored to its original process of "drawing forth from within." Dr. Finkelstein deplores our failure to create a philosophy which would offset totalitarianism and its effects. Mr. Sokolsky cites the point that we do not have a philosophy, and then accuses us of accepting the teachings of Karl Marx. Mr. Patri, groping through the gloom of resignation, promises us that there is no prophet who can foretell our exact needs.

What is totalitarianism but a philosophy? what is Marxism but a philosophy? and what is democracy but a philosophy? They are all flourishing side by side at the present time. The first two will have to die in order that the other may live, and live more abundantly. What is confusing about that? Of course there is no prophet who will foretell our exact needs. Man knows his needs now just as clearly as he knew them when he evolved from the animal kingdom. It is true that he has "sought our many inventions;" he has had to learn that some of these would not work; he has also learned that others will work.

Mr. Sokolsky points out that we are "moving without compass," because the nineteenth century threw over God as a guide and accepted science, while the twentieth century threw over science for the economics of Marx. This has a germ of truth in it but only a germ. It is true that we have passed through the era of scientific development and have emerged into the era of economic development. But would that indicate that we are moving without compass? A century and a half ago, Patrick Edward Dove, among others, pointed out in his "Theory of Human Progression" that the development of exact science would be followed by the development of the social sciences—political economy, ethics, religion—in accordance with the natural laws of evolution. Man had to build and use the products of exact science before he understood the need for social science. Civilization depends upon cooperation of man with man; it has its roots in the early days of free trade and exchange. It is hardly conceivable that a group of pioneers on Manhattan Island would have planned and built a fine locomotive that would carry them across the continent when their journey was bound to end in a forest wilderness not unlike the one they had just left. But when men, thousands of them, populated the west, built fine cities,

and produced an abundance of goods, the locomotive became not only feasible but necessary—cooperation and trade lay at the end of the route. It was when cooperation forced upon man's attention the necessity for further alterations in the growing social structure that social science was born. It became apparent that social arrangements for the benefit of all would be required; that individuals should determine the natural principles that should regulate their actions toward each other.

Does this normal development, geared to natural laws, indicate that the whole of mankind has lost guidance, as Mr. Sokolsky fears? If we are moving without compass what sort of instrument was used by the prophetic writers of Revelation when they charted the journey of the Black Horse, and of the White Horse, the last of the four, who has already appeared on the horizon? What is the White Horse if not social science?—a science devoted to the understanding of man and his problems, the greatest of which concerns the full emergence of his moral and ethical nature?

Mr. Patri writes that there are "responsible men and women who might be setting the framework for constructive administration of these problems. . . ." Responsible men and women are building this desired framework, and have been doing so, right before Mr. Patri's clouded vision, for many years. If Mr. Patri could quiet the frightened beating of his own heart he too could hear the voice of poverty crying out its warning, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny. He too could understand the real simplicity of the problem that grips his spirit in agony. For if the world is manifesting international poverty, it is apparent that the channels of cooperation are not clear and free. When responsible men and women discovered this they did not stand and cry aloud that they had lost their way; that they hoped *somebody* would do *something*. They simply started cooperating, one with another; they exchanged knowledge; they traded freely in ideas; they pooled the historical facts of good and of evil and they judged them with a balanced thought content—not with too much emotionalism, not with too much lonely intellect. Out of this cooperation came social science. Today they do not pause and wonder if they have a philosophy of life. They have taken freedom itself as their philosophy. They have dared to leave the security of the pack; instead of listening, always listening, to the voice of a tribal leader, they have had the courage to heed the message from their own hearts. They do not continue up and down the highways and byways of the world searching, searching, ever in pursuit of a

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quest—Truth. They know that truth lies all about us, awaiting our acceptance, our understanding; waiting to be applied to society's problems. They *know*, just as Robert Browning *knew*, when he wrote:

Truth is within ourselves; it takes no rise from
outward things, what e'er you may believe:
There is an inmost center in us all,
Where truth abides in fullness; and around,
Wall upon wall, the gross flesh hems it in,
This perfect clear perception—which is truth:
A baffling and perverting carnal mesh
Binds it, and makes all error; and to know
Rather consist in opening out a way
Whence the imprisoned splendour may escape,
Than in effecting entry for a light
Supposed to be without.