

## THE ARYAN PATH

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## What Price Philanthropy?

WEALTH AND CULTURE. By *Eduard C. Lindeman*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co. 1936. \$3.

Reviewed by CHARLES A. BEARD

OVER a decade ago the late Herbert Croly suggested to Mr. Lindeman "that it might prove valuable to undertake an analysis of that aspect of American economy which prompts persons of wealth to vest their surplus in the form of foundations or trusts." For eight years Mr. Lindeman has carried on "a persistent inquiry" and has now published "an initial report." He states in his introduction: "My first surprise was to discover that those who managed foundations and trusts did not wish to have these instruments investigated." But he qualifies this generalization in his "acknowledgments" by referring to the coöperation of a small number of foundation officials "who regarded their position as a public function" and really made possible the conduct of his inquiry.

Mr. Lindeman classifies foundations into three types: (a) those created and financed by a single donor; (b) those created by the legal act of a single donor, and (c) those established by legal act of a group of donors. How many foundations exist in the United States? The exact number is unknown, but there are about 371 foundations, trusts, and community chests listed. Concerning 202 foundations Mr. Lindeman could secure no information. And he limits his study to 100 foundations and community trusts and their operations during the decade 1921-1930.

He opens with "cultural considerations." To material instruments of production and their use he applies the term "civilization." The manner of using the civilizing instruments and the ends for which they are employed he believes to be determined by a process which may be called "culture." When science and invention and application—civilization—outstrip the development of culture there is a cultural lag which results in tension and crisis. The crucial question then is one of values—the use and ends of the material processes of civilization. Our acquisitive individualism has produced great progress in the creation of wealth and at the same time brought about a great concentration of wealth in the hands of relatively few owners.

A large part of this "surplus" wealth has gone into foundations and Mr. Lindeman discusses in his second chapter the foundation as a "symbol" of surplus wealth. Then he inquires into the disbursements of the foundations under his review. Of the ten year outlay, 76.2% went for education and health, and 14.4% for social welfare. The rest consists of relatively minor items. In the outlays there are time "trends." Expenditures for education moved generally upward from 1925 to 1930. Health outlays moved downward after 1928. Social welfare outlays moved downward after 1928 and then upward. But the health trend is partly ex-

plained by the completion of some programs for medical education.

After surveying recent bequests, scrutinizing the literature dealing with foundations, and presenting a table of the foundations and trusts covered by his study, Mr. Lindeman draws certain conclusions under the head of "steps toward a cultural index." He divides the possible activities of foundations into two categories. One includes individual philanthropy, conventional relief, and conventional education and fact finding. This category represents activities tending to conserve the existing sense of cultural values and to minimize the evils of existing society. In the other category are embraced activities designed to bring into existence, or test new conceptions of, cultural value: the creative arts "always on the growing edge of things"; experimental learning with a view to future living; cultural and racial interaction; international action supplementing existing projects; application of scientific disciplines to human affairs; freedom and justice; social and economic planning involving a departure from laissez faire; and social legislation designed to enhance individual security through government sanctions. In sum and substance, this seems to be suggesting to foundations that they throw their weight on the side of creating a better society instead of fostering individual philanthropy, conventional relief, and conventional education.

Nowhere in his volume does Mr. Lindeman take the position that foundations represent a deliberate design on the part of the guardians of wealth to influence culture in one direction. He merely holds, on the basis of his evidence, that they represent "a consistently conservative element in our civilization" and operate more or less subtly in "protecting the value system in existence." As a whole this volume is a prime document for the history of American theory and practice and its outcome will doubtless be a more thoughtful, reasoned, and penetrating inquiry into the role of foundations in American civilization.

It may not be amiss to set down here a few of the considerations that will enter into that wider inquiry.

There is first the light of historical experience with great foundations. Mr. Lindeman suggests that "the notion itself seems to have first occurred to the Middle Romans," but he passes lightly over history. It seems safe to conclude from historical experience that the fate of American foundations is bound up with the fate of American society, and any forecast of their future includes a forecast of the whole social order in which they have flowered. History as actuality is merciless to man's works and only the strong can endure history.

In the second place, if foundations should deliberately endeavor to "save American society," they would encounter almost insuperable problems of grand statecraft and forecast, and would run full tilt into powerful interests of one kind or another. The way of the founda-

tion trustee is hard and his path is dark. If a foundation throws its weight on the side of public or collective interest, in an effort to overcome some of the maladjustments of acquisitive individualism, its trustees will be brought under the fire of private interests adversely affected.

This generalization may be illustrated by the case of Dr. John A. Kingsbury who was "released" by the trustees of the Milbank Memorial Fund after directing his attention and energies to public health and social medicine, as distinguished from the medical education of private practitioners. A glimpse behind the scenes in this foundation maneuver is provided by Dr. Kingsbury's opponents, who are certainly not biased in his favor. It is contained in the *Detroit Medical News*, of April 29, 1935, (p. 10), and needs only the amplification that at least one of the Milbank trustees is interested in the Borden Milk Company and that the Fund holds investments in this concern. The private interest view, expressed by practitioners, runs as follows:

The Milbank Memorial Fund has announced the termination of the services of John A. Kingsbury and others with this brief explanation: "Differences of opinion as to policies." The Fund clearly indicates a new understanding of the individual medical practitioner's social and economic problems. Mr. Kingsbury was the genius guiding the activities that seemed to have as their objective the socialization of medicine. Mr. Louis J. Auerbacher of New York City, President of the Dryco Company and Director of Medical Relations of The Borden Company, was most influential in accomplishing this result, and is to be congratulated for his service to the public and the profession.

A third difficulty of foundations grows out of the crisis in western thought, which is real, though little recognized and acknowledged. This crisis lies in the discovery that science, facts, and the scientific method do not, and in the nature of things, cannot provide inescapable and irrefutable policies. No scientific finding of fact dictates any policy of action respecting the facts. The possibilities of carrying out policies, and ways and means of executing them, may be more or less successfully disclosed by science. But policies themselves are moral decisions—the assertions of moral values (one way or another)—and the roots of moral decisions lie deep in the human spirit. When the scope of policies is large, they are highly hazardous, and whoever makes them incurs risks of defeat, scorn, and destruction. The scientific assurance that marked American education, research, economics, and social inquiry thirty years ago has been dissolved. Foundations can no longer rely upon it to provide undebatable issues to be financed. Like all men having heavy responsibilities trustees are cautious, if not timid, and the courage of grand policy does not spring from caution. Only irresponsible individuals can afford to take the risk of formulating great policies—the risk of defeat and degradation, as well as of victory. Hence it seems reasonable to assume that the objectives of most foundations will remain chiefly conventional—socially dangerous as the conventional passes—but safe for the moment.

*He heard  
the hunter's  
horn*



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# The PHOENIX NEST

CONTEMPORARY POETRY: BY WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT

**I**N the last issue of this department I did not have space to complete my remarks upon the books of poetry from private presses. I shall do so now. I wish to make a note of the fact that Hawthorn House of Windham, Connecticut, sponsors *Brandon Gill's* "Death in April," a book which consists chiefly of sonnets that somehow slide off the mind.

More vivid is the little brochure of *Katharine Kennedy's* verse in "Poems," from the Terminal Press of Washington, D. C. More exotically modern than all, and incidentally involving better book-making and better writing, is a regular roc's egg from the Cassowary Press of New York City, "Sea Pieces and Other Poems" by *Forrest Anderson*. The capitals are my own. There are no capital letters connected with the book at all! By this time I've read a good deal of that sort of thing and it doesn't impress me tremendously. Of course there's a poem in it "for hart crane."

So you see how busy the small presses have been! The above is only to mention

a few of the books of poems that emerge steadily from this semi-private source. There are several thin volumes from Basil Blackwell in Oxford, also, but none seems really worth singling out for mention.

By this time you will probably be rather annoyed at me for not having mentioned a few books I think are really good. Still, I cannot recommend the new *Nathalia Crane* volume, "Swear by the Night" (Random House), as one of her best. And though "The Hermaphrodite" by *Samuel Loveman* (Caxton Printers, Caldwell, Idaho) is introduced with a flourish by *Benjamin De Casseres*, (even *Sir Edmund Gosse* has called the title poem vivid and accomplished, and this poet has received plenty of encomia elsewhere,) I consider Mr. Loveman merely a pleasing poet and no more. By contrast, get *Robert Fitzgerald's* poems in Arrow Editions. I shall devote more space to him later. He is a newcomer worthy of close attention. The Black Cat Press of Chicago (Addresses: 4940 Winthrop Avenue, Chicago, and 581 Snediker Ave., Brooklyn,

N. Y.), which published *Frank Marshall Davis's* "Black Man's Verse," now gives us a book of poems by my old English friend, *A. Hugh Fisher*, the famous etcher, called "Jemshyd in Exile," and also *Boris Todrin's* "The Room by the River," the latter a young writer in whose work the late *Edwin Arlington Robinson* was deeply and sincerely interested. I'll have more to say of Todrin too. Meanwhile, remember the publications of the Black Cat Press! They have someone there of unusual discriminatory powers.

A good book of free ballads, a book you will enjoy for its stories and its swinging rhythm, is *Derrick Norman Lehmer's* "Fighbury Dick, and other poems" (The Macmillan Company). Strangely enough Dr. Lehmer is a member of the Department of Mathematics in the University of California, and these ballads are but an avocation. Nevertheless, he has produced a book I have much enjoyed.

*Grace Buchanan Sherwood* has published her own poems, "Winter Bird Song," at 113 Sixth Street, Garden City, Long Island, and it is just about what you would expect. *Jamie Sexton Holme*, author of "I Have Been a Pilgrim" (New York: Henry Harrison) turns out to be Mrs. Peter H. Holme of Denver, Colorado, who was recently given an honorary M.A. by the University of Colorado, and who has inspired a long letter to me from a Denver correspondent. Mrs. Holme has certain merits, though they do not seem excessive. Another Henry Harrison publication, rather better than his average, is *Florence Ripley Mastin's* "Cables of Cobweb."

I have been criticized for devoting space to so many most minor poets. And yet it seems to me the only fair way that I can operate. As it is, I discard a certain percentage of the books that come in as not worthy of any mention at all. And I'd rather be over-conscientious with books that appear to be nullities and yet may hide a gem, than be so scornful that I'd be bound to overlook anything that wasn't put out by a leading publisher. That may sound smug, but I honestly try to play fair by all the orphan books that drift in. They can find asylum on my shelves, even if they don't always find mention!

But, Good Lord, I do get tired of the "Hearts and Flowers" motif of many housewifely poets who were cut out to be housewives and not poets and cherish extremely vague ecstasies in their souls. I honestly think—and hope to heaven they don't take my advice!—that if they went off and committed one good ripsnorting scarlet sin it would do more to tone up their systems than the tons of treacle through which they mew about their souls. That certainly is a garbled line, but you may get the sense of it!

It isn't that I'm unsympathetic—but enough is enough. To offset the dieaway school we have some good younger women poets. *Muriel Rukeyser* and *Shirley Barker* are the real thing, and here I may mention a woman writer older than these, a woman versatile in poetry, the novel, books for children, and the art of illustration—a woman who illustrates the vigor that remains in the old tradition of literature in the new world. Her name is *Rachel Field*.

The general public knows Miss Field

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