

## Conversions & Convictions

**A**BOUT six months ago, at a Midwest college, I met a young man who admitted he was about to become a Communist, and he wasn't at all reluctant to tell me the reason.

"I've been converted by Senator McKellar," he said. "Marx and Engels didn't convince me, but Senator McKellar did."

Hearing Senator McKellar described as a missionary for Communism was like learning that General Vaughan had just been elected President of the Girl Scouts. I raised an appropriate eyebrow.

"You see," my friend explained, with a twinkle in his eye, "I've always admired David E. Lilienthal. I've followed his work over the years, I've read the things he's written or said, and I developed a deep admiration for him. He wasn't afraid to talk about things that really matter in the world—about the hopes young people have, or about the things that need cleaning up. He represented the things that I believe in deeply, and when the distinguished Senator from Tennessee identified him as a Communist, I said to myself, that's the ticket for me. After all, Senators get where they are because of their wisdom, and are very careful of what they say. So when Senator McKellar told the world exactly what it is you call a fellow like Lilienthal, I became an immediate convert."

I couldn't help recalling this conversation when I picked up a copy of David Lilienthal's new book, "This I Do Believe,"\* which spells out in full David E. Lilienthal's political philoso-

phy. For as you read the book and observe the page-by-page development of Lilienthal's ideas, all of them deeply grounded in a profound understanding of and respect for the nature and meaning of free government, coupled with an equally deep condemnation of totalitarianism in general and Communism in particular—as you read all this, the allegations of Senator McKellar seem even more ludicrous than they did at the time they were made. But what is most significant and striking about these charges is not that they are demonstrably untrue, but that a United States Senator—and Senator McKellar's position, unfortunately, is by no means unique—should know so little about the principles that must go into the operation of the government he is duty bound to represent and protect. Errors of this type are not merely a matter of personal Senatorial privilege. They raise serious questions: What is the danger to representative government of such colossal misconceptions as those displayed by Senator McKellar on matters vitally related to American welfare and security? How can we cope with the very real threat of Communism—internal and external both—without sharp and precise knowledge as to what Communism is and how it operates?

While my friend the college student was spoofing about his "conversion," he made a good point. One good way to build membership for the Communist Party in this country is to tack this label of Bolshevism on every decent cause or idea. The effect may be just the opposite from that intended. Far from damning Communism, this approach succeeds only in making it that much more attractive. Besides, there is a bleakness and an emptiness in the position of the McKellars that does little to advance the democratic faith. For their approach is all negative: precisely what is democracy as they see it? If it means more than a chance to vent their spleen they have yet to demonstrate it.

There is genuine concern in America about the apparent vulnerability of so many young people to Communism, but there is apparently little understanding of the process by which Communism does its recruiting, and even less understanding of how to cope with Communism and combat it. The biggest mistake we make is to assume that the young people who become Communists are revolutionary fiends who are filled with hate for everything American. And in dealing with these young people as political lepers we seal them off from the rest

of society, slamming shut the escape hatches by which they can flee the Party once they discover that Communism is built on a lie.

**WE** WILL never be able to stop Communism dead in its tracks, so far as young people are concerned, until we recognize that its initial appeal is deeply moral. The natural idealism in young people is appealed to and exploited. The qualities of sympathy and compassion developed and extolled in church, school, and homes are the very values which take the form of Communism's entering wedge. There is no point in blinking this fact or pretending that it cannot be true. These young kids of ours who swallow the bait are no rampaging subversives or ideological monsters; they are, most of them, warm and responsive and compassionate human beings who plight their intellectual truth out of honest motivations.

Once they get into the Party, the long process of indoctrination begins—always in the name of humanism. The discipline and the dogma little by little crowd out the original ideal, even though that ideal is used to justify every act that thwarts or destroys human decency and dignity. Finally, they become not so much members of a political party as agents, in effect, of a foreign government. Their allegiance is as iron-bound as their methods, which by this time are those of the absolutist and zealot who admits no possibility of error in either means or ends.

Democracy is not without effective resources for dealing with the false initial appeal of Communism or with its full-blown dogma and tactics, as

## Atomic Age Fables



### XXI: The Tedium of the Amoeba

"MY OFFSPRING begin to bore me," said an amoeba to a frog.

"I must admit that they are very similar," the frog responded.

"The tedium is tremendous," the amoeba answered, "but think of the state that my poor ancestors must be in!"

—J. S.

\*THIS I DO BELIEVE. By David E. Lilienthal. New York: Harper & Bros. 298 pp. \$2.50.

Mr. Lilienthal makes clear in this book. In fact, this volume ought somehow to be made available to all of American youth, the proper time depending upon the ideological age of consent in each case. (I say "made available" instead of "required reading" because compulsion and comprehension don't mix.)

Young people like affirmation; this book throbs with it. Young people like compassion; this book glows with it. Young people hate defeatism; this book demolishes it. Here, then, is democracy's answer to the absolutism of the extreme left and right both. As Mr. Lilienthal said in his celebrated and much-reprinted reply to Senator McKellar when asked for his convictions before a Joint Congressional Committee hearing:

Any form of government, . . . and any other institutions which make men means rather than ends, which exalt the state or any other institutions above the importance of men, which place arbitrary power over men as a fundamental tenet of government, are contrary to that conception [of democracy] . . .

The fundamental tenet of Communism is that the state is an end in itself, and that therefore the powers which the state exercises over the individual are without any ethical standard to limit them. . . .

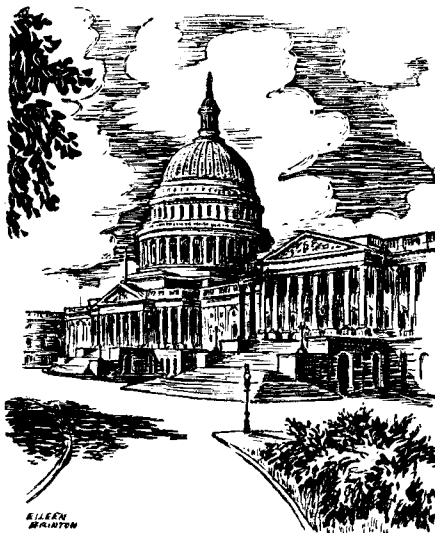
It is very easy to talk about being against Communism. It is equally important to believe those things which provide a satisfying and effective alternative. Democracy is that satisfying affirmative alternative. . . .

I deeply believe in the capacity of democracy to surmount any trials that may lie ahead, provided only that we practise it in our daily lives. . . .

"This I Do Believe" should do much to straighten out some of the public misconceptions about its author. He has been characterized as an apostle of Bigness in government, yet the heart of his democratic philosophy is concerned with the individual and with the fuller development of the small community, stressing that any increased Federal responsibility should be channeled through increased local control.

He has been characterized as a critic of American industrial might, but makes no bones about his pride "that we are by all odds the strongest industrial nation in the world. I have no apologies to make to anyone that we do things in a big way. The song of America, however, is not only one of steel and oil and automobiles; not only one of material things. We have a solidarity and a unity of spirit and purpose that we can brag about. . . . We have great visions today. We are going to have more of them."

He has been characterized as some-



one who is sullen and resentful over the many attempts to blacken his name and drive him from public service, yet there isn't a sour note in this book, despite the wide-open opportunity to strike back at his critics. Instead, there is a long chapter on the satisfactions of public service. "What I urge is a fluid kind of citizen-service, in which men and women move from private life into public service for a period of years, and then back to private life. The proposal also has in it an element of common fairness, for the grim and wearing tasks that so often are the lot of the responsible public servant should not be exacted of one man for an indefinite period, but should be deliberately rotated."

All this is not to say that the book is entirely beyond criticism. It can be argued that not enough attention has been given to the basic conditions that make a democracy possible. It can be argued that there is insufficient discussion on the vital connection between the state of a nation and the state of the world—especially as the absence of any workable design for the world may weaken the design, however inherently sound, of an individual government. It can be argued, too, that while Mr. Lilienthal correctly defines the danger of excessive fears over American security, he doesn't adequately define a program which can effectively allay those fears.

But it is entirely in character with the book, and this is to its credit, that it encourages arguments with itself. David E. Lilienthal doesn't profess to be the exclusive possessor of all the keys to the democratic kingdom. All he asks is that we realize we can't get in by breaking down the door. A key is available for anyone who really wants to get in; the only thing to remember is that the lock snaps if the key is turned too far either to the left or to the right.

—N. C.

## Bookmarks

IS THERE any subject in the world concerning which there is only one book? Dr. Carl J. Weber, of Colby College, makes that claim, with apparent justification, for "A Thousand and One Fore-Edge Paintings," which the college press recently issued. Diligent search, he says, unearthed "a few articles in magazines, some brief statements in a book now and then, a passing allusion in a study of bibliography here or a work on bookbinding there, but no book about fore-edge paintings and their makers." So Dr. Weber wrote one. A fore-edge painting is just that—a water-color on the edges of the leaves which is invisible until one "fans" them. Anyone who ever went to school has made them (usually not with water-colors). Colby has a copy of a textbook "Hamlet" which, when fanned, discloses the name "E A Robinson"—a Harvard student of the early 1890's who read Shakespeare to his own and the world's profit.

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The test of the adequacy of a cook-book's index is this: It must list

Cream, sour, left-over, uses for  
Eggs, whites, left over, uses for

\* \* \*

In the summer of 1897, just before Hall Caine's "The Christian" appeared, Arthur Conan Doyle was so exercised over the advance build-up (in which the novelist appeared to have cooperated) that he wrote a letter to the *Daily Chronicle* about it. In his recent life of Doyle, which we enjoyed, John Dickson Carr quotes from this communication and appends his own comment:

Such views, of course, are not in vogue today. We have changed all that. A young writer nowadays, if told it might advance his new book, would paint his nose blue and walk into the Ivy Restaurant with a placard of the book round his neck. He is not in a profession; he is in a racket.

Doyle's attitude was sincere, and he practised what he preached. When he happened to see a pre-publication note with which the *Strand Magazine* proposed to introduce a new serial of his, he threatened to withdraw the serial unless the *Strand* withdrew the note. And when, in 1903, he received an advance copy of the one-volume edition of "The Great Boer War" and found that the frontispiece was a likeness of himself, he insisted that it be removed. The publishers substituted a portrait of Lord Roberts.

—J. T. W.

# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## Hiroshima "Moral Adoptions"

SIR: Your very moving report of what is happening in Hiroshima ["Hiroshima—Four Years Later," *SRL* Sept. 17] offers a practical suggestion which my husband and I grasp eagerly. Please let us know in detail, if you have worked out definite plans, what can be done about "morally adopting" an orphan in Mrs. Yamashita's school. . . .

ELIZABETH MORGAN LAPPIN.  
Bridgewater, Conn.

SIR: It seems like a wonderful plan to us and we hope you have a big response to your suggestion. Any American family of the most moderate means could manage to squeeze out that small sum each month. Most of us waste more than that on trivia! We pledge ourselves to be financially responsible for some small orphan as long as humanly possible—only some extreme ill luck as death or loss of employment will ever make us default on this arrangement.

We would like to supplement this allotment with occasional boxes of clothes or toys. This would be a pleasure for us, and I can think of no better way to teach our own four-year-old daughter a sense of responsibility for others in the world. If it is at all possible we would like to have a little girl in our charge. It would be easy to sew for her and to know what she would like, since I have my own child to judge by.

We are in our early thirties and would like a young child so that we could feel we were contributing to someone's care for a long period in her life. Perhaps you would like some personal history to assure you that we are able to complete our part of the bargain. My husband is a ceramic engineer. He has been employed for ten years, with four years out for Army service. We own our home and are not in debt. We support our daughter, one dog, and two cats, so feel quite sure we can undertake another child.

MRS. JOHN H. SNODDY.  
Los Angeles, Calif.

SIR: I wonder whether there would be any objections to college students, with enough allowance to manage it, undertaking to pay the cost of maintaining an orphan for a year (or more). I realize that the actual idea of adoption would be impossible, but I know that I, and many of my friends, have as great an interest as many adults in helping the people of Hiroshima. The very fact that the child's living expenses would come out of our spending money would make it seem to us more as though we were really accomplishing something.

MARYAL STONE.  
Swarthmore, Pa.

SIR: . . . We have discussed the obligations involved and we are ready to offer our home, when possible, and our aid to bring some measure of family life and love to one of these



"They're the unbreakable records you bought him."

youngsters. We are of moderate means and have two children of our own, but feel we can afford the sum of \$2.25 each month to help some child. . . .

R. E. DOWNING.  
Chicago, Ill.

SIR: I am a widow with three quite delightful orphans of my own. Please start me out with two Hiroshima orphans. A check for this month is enclosed and others will be forthcoming. . . .

BETTINA B. CARTER.  
Pittsburgh, Pa.

SIR: The North Side Christian Church's Senior CYF (Christian Youth Fellowship) group would like to learn of the possibilities of adopting a Japanese child. . . .

RUDOLPH BERRYMAN.  
Omaha, Neb.

SIR: As I have no financial security myself, I cannot adopt a child and promise to make regular payments. I therefore send the enclosed check for \$10 as a small bit of help. . . .

MABEL DAVIDSON.  
Lynchburg, Va.

SIR: I have always wanted to help children, especially those who have been orphaned, as I know how much my own mother means to me. At present I am not legally able to adopt a child, but that will be remedied in a few months. I would appreciate further information. . . .

PHOEBE FOX.  
Mt. Vernon, N. Y.

SIR: I have a vague hope that doing without whatever luxury my allowance gives me and sending it to a

child who was hurt on that awful day will give me some rest from the feeling I've had ever since. . . . It destroys your great illusion when you must acknowledge that your country will allow the military to take complete control . . . to the extent of casting aside all decent scruples and committing mass murder in the name of military necessity.

GENEVIEVE TILLER GARLAND.  
Beaver Dams, N. Y.

SIR: . . . Enclosed is my first check for the support of one of Hiroshima's orphans. Perhaps it is not in good taste, under the circumstances, to pay for this orphan's support on an account basis. But my other commitments, including a pledge to raise money to bring several students here from Japan to study under scholarships, prevents me from paying a lump sum to you at this time. . . .

MALCOLM F. REED.  
Westfield, N. J.

SIR: . . . I should be pleased to be responsible for a child, provided, of course, my being a "spinster" doesn't exclude me from helping in this manner. . . .

MILDRED OUSLANDER.  
New York, N. Y.

SIR: . . . I would like to do something for the children of the Yamashita Orphanage. I have always thought that children are the worst sufferers of a war and I would imagine that the children of Hiroshima have suffered more than children in other countries. . . .

MARJORIE HOAG.  
Greenville, Mich.

SIR: . . . You say that \$27 a year will feed, educate, and care for a