

# HAMSA

GIFT  
MAY 8 1934

Published monthly by Dane and Malya Rudhyar  
Box 64, Brookline, Mass.

May 1934

Movements such as Fascism and Nazism come as the results of a kind of spiritual weariness. Likewise modern *religious* movements are caused by a deep lassitude in the individual self that is no longer willing to face the responsibility of individual selfhood and spiritual integrity. At a certain stage of racial development, cycle after cycle, a time comes — a very short time! — when a chance is given to an ever increasing number of human beings to escape the thralldom of racial, national and religious collective thinking, feeling, behaving, — and to be born as free-man and free-woman. Culture, as a product of earth and blood rhythm, may then be disintegrating, but a new and vaster, more permanent world opens: that of the Living Civilization, that of the ideal Democracy (which includes the principle of hierarchy of functions together with that of equality of being). This is the world of men and women who are willing to face responsibility as social individuals in an organic society.

So far, mankind has seen only the shadow of that world. Democracy, whether limited to an elite or brought to the many, has meant inefficiency, corruption, greed and more or less disguised feudalism. It has meant personal allegiance to robber-barons or gangs' leaders, or powerful political and financial bosses. Thus after a while, men who had tried in vain to assert constructively their independence of thought and behavior, to struggle against corruption without and cowardice within, give up their stand for justice and spiritual-intellectual honesty — or their dreams — and clamor for a "savior." As a result the baron becomes the king; then, king by divine right; the political agitator becomes dictator, the god-like Leader who cannot be wrong.

The burden of one's individual selfhood is the greatest of all. One is like a tree, rooted in a cliff and lashed by oceanic winds; like a coral ruff pounded by relentless tides. A few are radiant enough to become light-houses, where the fury of the collective soul is most intense. It is easier to swear unquestioned obedience to a dictator. It is the easiest to believe with emotional enthusiasm that he is divinely appointed to save the nation or the world. . . . And he may indeed "save," from chaos, disintegration, moral laxity and utter corruption and inefficiency — but as well from ever reaching the realm where every individual soul shines like a star, unique, silent, serene; seemingly alone, yet rooted in that other substantial solidity which is not earth, but *light*.

The "man of the hour" has to do his work. He closes the cycle of individual freedom, for the sake of fast disintegrating collectivities. Thus in order to stop the rush toward collective evil and social death, the gates to full individual

selfhood becomes practically closed. To be an individual is to have gained inner freedom and permanency. But to be free is to have no fear. And to have no fear means to go deeply, wholly, without any restrictions into experiences and relationships. It is above all not to be afraid of losing oneself — this fear of beginners on the path of individuation.

### **Initial Steps in Cultural Planning**

The practical problem of cultural planning can be approached from two different angles. On one hand, we find cultural institutions and agencies; on the other, we are confronted with a tremendous increase in leisure time (through non-employment or reduction of working-hours) and with human beings who have to find a way of using it. No solution can be complete which does not take both approaches into consideration. Reducing the matter to bare essentials we can formulate the central points of the twofold problem as follows:

#### *The institutional approach*

1) The cultural and educational life of America has been based so far almost exclusively on the individualistic initiative and patronage of the wealthy. Cultural individualism was possible and desirable when the nation was young and expansion was the keynote. It is becoming increasingly unsound in a social order which is featuring collective planning on a national scale, reducing large wealth and making artistic patronage by a few impossible. We are entering a new phase of cultural life in America. We must begin to plan for it *now*, before the financial support of those who have built its first manifestations breaks down completely.

2) National associations in the field of education and of general culture (artistic, theatrical, scientific, etc. . . .) are expressions of the old individualistic attitude, and have no power, if left alone, to change the situation. The States are not able to handle efficiently problems which transcend state-boundaries, now that motion pictures, radio, lecture and concert tours, traveling museum exhibits, etc. have made our cultural life a national unit. A Federal impulse, and Federal authority is essential if even the rudiments of cultural planning are to supersede the narrow individualism and competitiveness of many cultural groups and organizations.

3) Just at the time when the efficiency, maintenance and development of all cultural activities are being seriously impaired by a rapidly increasing lack of financial support, the growth of leisure time is compelling us to find ways and means not only to keep the organizations started by individual initiative functioning, but to develop new institutions fit to answer new collective needs — and to give work to people trained as cultural workers. Regional and sectional distribution of cultural agencies in states and cities is becoming more and more imperative. Valuable teachers, lecturers and music leaders are kept without work, or instructing but a handful, when great masses in congested districts need them acutely. What is required is efficient planning. This necessitates, first of all, a nationwide survey of cultural activities.

5) This survey can only succeed if undertaken through a new Federal agency correlating and claiming the cooperation of the various national or state associations which cover the cultural field. It should be a constructive survey; not merely an accumulation of loose data. It should find out not only what exists, but what could exist at the present and within the scope of projected social developments. On the basis of it, a cultural map of the United States could be established indicating both static and dynamic agencies—that is, on one hand schools and clubs and theatres, etc., as such, on the other, those cultural factors which can tour within a certain periphery (orchestras, lecturers, concert-artists, museum exhibits, shows, etc.) Thus, for instance, could be organized eventually an efficient distribution of orchestral music to all sections of the country, each orchestra covering a certain number of potential hearers in a defined area. Most cultural institutions are in such a difficult financial condition that they could soon be made to cooperate. Educational films, shows, exhibits could be made available if one had nation-wide means to release them to those eager for them.

#### *The human approach*

1) The human approach has been so far limited exclusively to unemployment relief and aid to the needy through welfare organizations. This approach is fallacious for it induces in those who are helped a psychological attitude which is negative, and it levels down to the lowest standard of living the unemployed, many of whom are entitled by the fact of their "creative level" to a higher standard. Bare physical needs are not the only ones, as man rises in intelligence. There is a hierarchy of needs corresponding to one of mind and sensibility. The one and only purpose of a "living civilization" is to make men creative, individually or in groups. The "living wage" is the wage which allows each individual to be creative of values — whether it be to give birth to and educate a child, or make a field fruitful through labor, or produce works of art, or make scientific discoveries. In a truly organic society the scale of creative levels is recognized, as it is in any organic form of life. Between the finest brain-cells or endocrine glands' cells and the bony or adipose cells there is a fundamental difference of creative level. Should every cell of the body receive the same amount of blood human life and thought would be impossible. The same is true of human society.

2) A definite distinction should be made between *maintenance work* and *creative or recreative activities*. The term "leisure" should not be used, for it has the negative implication of "having nothing to do." Leisure should not be thought of in terms of time left over from the day's activity. We must picture a day divided into two parts, human time divided into two types of activity, equally positive, each requiring a particular consideration in terms of the psychological and social reality underlying it. From maintenance work results the preservation of the individual and of society; from creative activities, the constant energization and re-creation of civilization as a really living factor. As long as our civilization is based on machine-labor, man will have to learn to function at two separate levels; that of machine-control, that of creative activity. Each level involves an entirely autonomous type of psychological attitude and function. No good can ever come from *mixing them up*. On the contrary, they must be sharply differentiated, for the sake of psychological health.

3) Leisure is not fundamentally an individualistic problem. It is first of all a social one. Man is not born an individual, psychologically. He *may* become one. Usually he does not, but instead remains at the collective stage. All component cells of the social organism cannot be made individuals; nor can they face leisure as individuals. Thus if leisure is to be essentially a time of creative activity, there must be a *collective urge to such activity*. We must develop therefore collective ideals and impulses through collective education; yet at the same time provide agencies by means of which the man or woman ready to pass out of the collective into the individualistic stage of psychological development, will be not only enabled but stimulated to do so.

As a result of the preceding, we should visualize three types of cultural agencies:

A. Institutions for the training of individuals and leaders, where the development of originality and creative incentives will be stimulated.

B. Agencies for the building up of a collective consciousness that would become creative; for the development of collective education through visual, imaginative, dramatic means.

C. A vast number of small neighborhood groups devoted to study (psychological, social, artistic), to creative experimentation, to self-development of their individual members through group-relationship and the working out of group-problems. These groups would be the natural links between the collective and the individual levels of functioning; through them man-in-the-collective would progressively prove himself a creative individual, an individual able to handle the responsibility of leadership.

#### *A Federal Bureau of Cultural Relations*

To organize such a Bureau would be the first step toward Cultural Planning. It should not only begin the cultural survey above-mentioned, but take steps to correlate all existing cultural and educational agencies. It should above all help to formulate the creative needs of groups and classes, to present a vision of human society as an organic whole of creative groups and individuals. In such matters there can be no thought of coercion; for such a coercion always fails to reach its goal, as history has superabundantly proven and is proving today. It should be the mission of America to build a cultural whole without recourse to the strain of mass-emotions of an excluding nature. America should build an *including* not an *excluding* civilization. This requires a clear realization of a scale of "creative levels," of the two poles represented by individual and collectivity, of the laws which rule the growth and behavior of all biological organisms. Nothing "vital" grows fast. The Bureau of Cultural Relations, or whatever might work toward the same goal, should be the seed of the future growth of American civilization. Let us hold together a clear and vibrant thought-image of it. The new era demands it — whether it is to come now, or a generation or a century hence.

D. R.