

## REFUGEES: Idealistic and Utilitarian

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After we have scrutinized the outward behavior of the new citizen we can approach him now and ask: what are you thinking about? How do you feel? How do you like being a citizen of a new country? These questions open the areas of his inner life; they will disclose whether the spiritual and cultural values of the new world have also been absorbed and whether they have enriched his soul. More specifically: Has his mental and emotional life also been assimilated into the new order?

It is not easy for a newcomer to understand the phenomenology and mentality of a new society. It takes much time, keen observation, careful study to come to an appreciation of those practices and processes which differ vastly from the values and responses to which he has been accustomed in the old world. Yet, the new citizen feels, almost instinctively and spontaneously, that the new country which admitted him to reside within its borders is wonderful. He can now spend his days in freedom and safety. This realization elicits creative ideas and actions which are simple and good, inspired by the extraordinary events of his shattered life. He proves himself thereby a desirable and useful member of the new society.

The assimilated refugee functions as a person who is motivated by either an idealistic or utilitarian orientation.

What characterizes the idealistic outlook? How does it find expression in daily behaviour? How does the idealist among the assimilated refugees act? What is the nature of his ideal?

Dynamic love for all those spiritual ideals and values of which he has been deprived and which he regained in the new world is the life blood of his existence. It controls his every thought, the feeling and fibre of his will; he derives nourishment and strength from it. These factors determine his personality. With complete devotion he endeavors to realize those noble ideals in the new country. He becomes a protagonist of true civilization, a champion of genuine humanitarianism, a defender of liberty which is for him the indispensable prerequisite of human existence.

He alone of all men knows by personal experience what liberty really means. He knows its supreme value because he has lived under tyranny. He has personally witnessed the arrest, torture and execution of people for the sole reason that they held different political or social views or worshipped God in another faith; they were made to suffer because they had said or done something which in their conscience they felt to be right and true. He himself had been the victim of the denial of human rights and the suppression of freedom. It is therefore understandable that he lives ardently and gratefully for those ideals which foster true humanity. The ideal of liberty is particularly meaningful to him and he devotes himself passionately to its promotion. He dedicates his life to the cause of freedom.

His missionary efforts begin within his own family circle. He tries to instill the zeal for freedom in his own children; to inspire them with an ardent love of freedom is a sacred task for him. He recognizes no other educational ideal besides education for liberty and the defense of liberty wherever it is suppressed. His children must know that only where life is free is it worth living. Man everywhere must be given the opportunity to think and speak, work and pray in liberty. His children dare never forget that in their father's homeland countless people live in bondage and under terror, anxiously awaiting their liberation. His children must remember day and night that life without freedom becomes diabolical torture. The love of liberty must enter the very blood stream of his children and permeate their whole being. That becomes the supreme educational aim of the idealistic refugee. He lives day and night for that ideal. He uses every opportunity to talk about it, to the neighbor over

the fence, to the casual acquaintance on the street, to his fellow workers in shop or office. It is his mission which he never forgets. Whenever the conversation turns to questions of politics, religion, human social orders he raises his voice on behalf of freedom. His children sense it and shall never be able to forget it because their father is so deeply and sincerely concerned about it.

This driving passion for freedom has come about as the result of his personal experiences and his first hand acquaintance with the ideology of totalitarianism. For the native citizen the word freedom rarely means much more than a political or social concept with a positive content. It does not pulsate with life because he has never lived under a dictatorship. He cannot imagine what it means to be unfree, i.e., harrassed, subject to sudden arrest and condemnation to a slow death. The assimilated refugee knows the supreme cruelty of bondage, he has tasted the cup of sadistic terror and learned that freedom is the vital food of the soul, as essential for life as the daily bread. Without it man succumbs slowly and agonizingly. Only the displaced person can appreciate the full blessings of liberty which he is once more privileged to enjoy. Freedom has for him the fragrance of Paradise.

Out of this realization arises the love which characterizes his thoughts and actions. His existence is like an outcry in which the dynamic will for freedom reverberates. His eyes burn like a fire intent to consume the evil of slavery throughout the world.

The reader will now understand why some refugees are so overwhelmed by emotion that they, with tears streaming down their cheeks, fall down and kiss the ground in front of the Statue of Liberty. It is the expression of a profound sense of gratitude, an outward indication of the overwhelming ecstasy of a great love. That is how a human being feels who has at last reached safety.

The idealist among the assimilated refugees is the best qualified teacher of freedom; it has become the most profound verity for him and he vouches for it before the world. In his person alone he awakens and challenges others, reminds them of the fundamental truths of human existence and the need to seek and cherish them anew every day. He is that new citizen who often unconsciously teaches the old citizen. The conviction that liberty under law is a supreme good to be valued and defended unto death, if need be, is the sum and substance of his simple philosophy born out of his own painful experience. It is also the best gift he can proffer the new country in gratitude for the kind reception that has been accorded him.

The utilitarian among the assimilated refugees moves in an entirely different spiritual world. He forms an attachment for the new country, not because his soul is filled with the high hopes of a newly won freedom but because he can now enjoy physical comforts and personal satisfactions. Material comfort constitutes his primary interest. His happiness does not spring from the fact that he can express freely how he feels about matters of political and religious activities, or change his domicile and place of employment as he desires. He pays little attention to these rights because he considers them obvious in a democratic society. He cannot feel particularly enthusiastic about them and discover the source of human happiness in the existence of these rights. What really interests him and satisfies him is the ability to earn enough money to furnish a nice home, eat well, wear attractive clothes, drive a new car and, best of all, put some money in the bank. It does not necessarily mean that he is possessed with the idea of money. An occasional refugee is a miser just as people of other backgrounds are. The materially minded refugee does not desire money for its own sake but for what it can do for him. It can provide for him that comfortable sense of prosperity, of success which sustains and supports his ego-consciousness. He derives strength from the fact that he and his family are no longer in want for the necessities of life. His gratification over his savings and newly bought property is greater than that of a person who has never experienced poverty and want. That is the real reason why material possessions are so important to him and mean so much for his sense of wellbeing. They are meant to replace the losses which he had suffered. He can again enjoy in the new home what had been taken from him in the old home, comforts which he had missed so greatly during his long exile. All the opportunities which the new country affords are utilized in an effort to regain and enjoy the amenities of his former existence. By and large he is successful. A proud smile comes over his face when people remark that he has accomplished as much in a few years as others who have lived here all their lives. At the same time, consciously or unconsciously he recognizes his debt to the native citizens. Without their hospitality he would have succumbed in some remote corner of the earth.

When he recalls how difficult it was to achieve success, when he realizes that he now enjoys comforts greater than he ever knew at home, when he thinks of those who still suffer misery and want in the dictator states he must conclude: I have been very fortunate. I must appreciate the new country, I must be loyal to it and help to protect it against harm. Here I am really once more at home: I have a warm room, I can eat nourishing food, I have money to live respectably and with dignity.

Both the idealist and the utilitarian have adjusted themselves to the new standard of living. As their own abilities and tastes direct them, they have embraced the ideals and living habits of the new country. They have become conformists: they have become like Americans or Canadians or Australians as their case may be.

