

**THE INTELLECTUALS AND
THE WAGE WORKERS: A
STUDY IN EDUCATIONAL
PSYCHOANALYSIS**

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The intellectuals and the wage workers: a study in educational psychoanalysis by Herbert Ellsworth Cory

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HERBERT ELLSWORTH CORY

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A STUDY IN EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOANALYSIS

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A Study in Educational Psychoanalysis

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HERBERT ELLSWORTH CORY



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To
CARLETON H. PARKER

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I.

EQUALITY

With the development of the Industrial Revolution, the growth of modern middle-class democracy, the consummation of the *laissez-faire* competitive states, the relations between artists, scientists, patron and public have become more and more equivocal. In England Doctor Samuel Johnson's famous letter to the Earl of Chesterfield sounded, over a hundred and fifty years ago, a kind of emancipation proclamation of the artist against the gentile servitude of patronage. Nevertheless patronage has continued. Artists, educators, and scientists are still too often mere flunkies. But whereas patronage under Renaissance aristocracy was sometimes rationally planned, patronage under middle class democracy is almost invariably capricious, utterly divorced from a healthy institutionalism. Very rarely does the captain of industry, with a modicum of discrimination, assume the artistic *noblesse oblige* of the lord of earlier days. For him at best esthetic values are the dessert of life or those afterthoughts some little attention to which will prove that he is thoroughly re-

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spectable. The discoveries of science he values only as they lead obviously and instantaneously to further industrial exploitation. So today artist, educator, and scientist stand half-parasite, half-pariah, and their voices are heard scarcely at all in the great tumult of class war and the growing murmurs of social reconstruction. Let us not pity them, however, for until they dare to realize that the dignity of research is intimately bound up with the joy in life, the workmanly pride, the moral autonomy for which society should allow release in the most oppressed "unskilled" laborer today, our artists, educators, and scientists have no insight whatever, no courage, no integrity.

The competitive *laissez-faire* state is obviously doomed. Everywhere collectivism, some of it sinister, some of it benignant, gains ground. Every day the plutocrat, like the aristocrat before him, loses more and more of his directly operating power. As we look about we cannot but see that geographical boundaries are becoming more and more blurred, that the peoples of enlightened countries are moving in battle array against the autocratic countries in favor of universal democracy—that is to say the privilege of democracy for those who want it—and in favor of self-conscious internationalism. But as the geographical sub-divisions become more and more confused the economic sub-divisions become more and more clear. For at

EQUALITY

the base of all lie the biological and economic needs. A materialistic life is not a life but a living death. Yet without bread we cannot contemplate spiritual things. Those economic units, in consequence—employers' associations, co-operative consumer's societies, farmers' leagues, industrial, occupational, and craft unions—grow ever more and more liberally and firmly defined, autonomous, eager, with a sense of a part to play. Will they accentuate the crudities of contemporary class-wars? Or will they come more and more to act in unison, in a spiritual efficiency, to make this the happiest world upon which mankind has yet gazed?

One after another artists, educators, and scientists are springing up who are brave enough to assert that they have suggestions to make both to these economic subdivisions and to the great states which enclose them and seek to arbitrate their differences. Therefore it is fitting that such artists, lovers of art, scientists, and teachers, those who aspire to bring the various crafts and professions closer to science and the fine arts—for the sake of art and science quite as much as for the sake of the crafts and professions—should unite even as these industrial groups have united, or, better yet, should fuse themselves in union with the various appropriate industrial groups to form associations not for personal *aggrandizement* but for a richer and more spontaneous and more rational personal *expression*.