

"The N.A.M. in 1946-1947"

In 1946-1947, when I was writing my notes on the social responsibility of engineers, the history of electromagnetic theory, and related topics, I was following the contemporary political and economic events quite carefully. From a number of sources I observed that the N.A.M. (National Association of Manufacturers) was very active in a number of ways politically.

First through the local office of the Fellowship of Reconciliation which was physically located in the office of the Berkeley Friends Meeting, I found that the N.A.M. was spending over a million dollars a year to distribute propaganda to religious leaders. This was documented by the National Council of Churches and in the Christian Register (Unitarian). The intent appeared to be to get ministers of religion to refrain from criticizing the economic system.

Through people in Sacramento I learned that the California Association of Manufacturers in Cooperation with the N.A.M. were doing a thorough job of trying to find candidates to run against every legislator who looked after the interests of the people. The N.A.M. interests were successful in eliminating most legislators who truly represented the people's interests. Present day social scientists seem to have little faith in the judgement of the common people in a democracy. I feel that the people can be trusted when they have at least a small chance to get the facts, but when the oligarchs control the communications media, and spend millions of dollars behind the scenes without the common man realizing what is happening, I wouldn't expect the people to make good voting choices.

From one of my professors who was a consultant to Mr. Thomas J. Watson, Sr., of IBM, I learned in an economics seminar that the N.A.M. applied carefully prepared pressure on business leaders who didn't initially go along with the N.A.M. policies. This professor said (in 1947) that when Mr. Watson held back on contributing to the N.A.M. political fund, that the N.A.M. people succeeded in getting the vice-president of IBM's largest commercial customer to call on Mr. Watson and say that his company might switch to a competitor of IBM, if Mr. Watson didn't pay his share to the N.A.M. funds. So IBM was forced to contribute to the N.A.M. plan, even though it was against Mr. Watson's concept of what was ethical and proper for the best interest of our country.

During this period I wrote to the N.A.M., but I have lost my file for that period. However I have found one letter of reply to me from the N.A.M. which is included as an appendix to this note. I have also found one of the references from the Christian Register which I enclose in the appendix.

From my observations of this period (1946-1947) I conclude that the trend toward conformity predicted by Clark Kerr in Industrialism and Industrial Man (1950?) is only partly a byproduct of industrial organization--- a significant share of the responsibility for the drive toward conformity of the last twenty years rests with the clever strategists of the N.A.M. in the 1946-1947 era who weakened our democratic institutions through their successful campaigns against the more truly democratic legislators and congressmen.

Note: For further discussion of a theoretical versus the empirical analysis of political and economic trends see SEPR No. 56-B.

APPENDIX:

Item 1: letter of 12/27/46 from N.A.M.

Item 2: Article by Fred I. Cairns, "The N.A.M. and the Life of the Soul," The Christian Register (Boston), October 1947, vol. 126, No. 9, pp. 383-4/

File No. 15-B

Date: 1/26/67

Stage: Memo

Frederick B. Wood, Ph.D., Box 5095, San Jose, Calif. 95150



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF MANUFACTURERS

14 West 49th Street · New York 20 · New York

HOLCOMBE PARKES

Vice President in charge of Public Relations

December 27, 1946

Dear Mr. Wood:

We have your letter of December 11 and regret that in the Association material which has come to your attention, we have not taken into account certain factors which you believe to be vital in any consideration of the subjects covered - namely, "The interpretation and application of Hebrew-Christian ethics to problems of industrial organization" and "utilization of scientific methods in all phases of industrial practice, etc."

Without undertaking to engage in debate with you over the merits of the suggestions you were good enough to make, I must call your attention to the fact that the NAM material to which you refer was written primarily for folks who probably would be somewhat confused by elaboration of the ideas you have in mind. It may very well be that additional consideration should be given to these points in the determination of our policies and programs, but I doubt very much if the general public is, at this time, either able or willing to deal with such factors.

Sincerely yours,

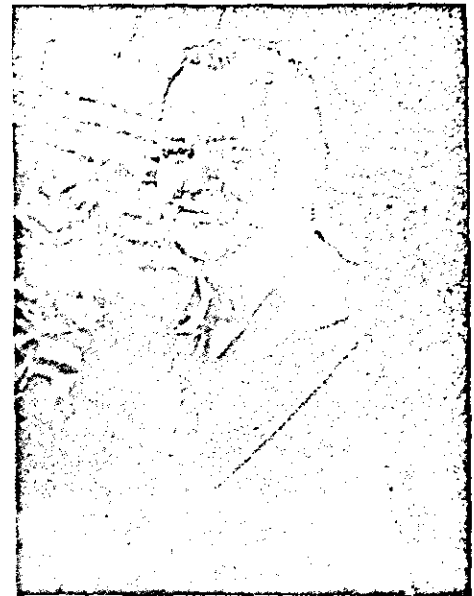
A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Holcombe Parkes'.

Mr. Frederick B. Wood
2209 Vine Street
Berkeley 9, California



CHAMBER OF THE AMERICAN ENTERPRISE SYSTEM SINCE 1888

Fred I. Cairns, author of *God Can Wait* and a co-author of *Voices of Liberalism: I*, has served as minister of the First Parish in Needham, Mass. for three years. He has received degrees from Austin College, Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary, and the University of Texas, and he has studied at the University of Edinburgh. He is a member of the A. U. A. Board of Directors, representing the Unitarian Ministerial Union.



Fred I. Cairns

The N. A. M. and the Life of the Soul

by FRED I. CAIRNS

AUTHOR'S NOTE: References to the National Association of Manufacturers in this article were inspired by a single copy of *Understanding*. The August issue came to me unsolicited; it aroused my indignation and prompted this piece. Since the writing I have examined as many other copies as could be obtained, but nowhere did I find anything to justify a less impassioned denunciation of the effort of the N.A.M. to promote "cooperation between clergymen and businessmen," for every issue clearly intends, not to promote understanding, but to impress upon the mind of the clergy one side, and only one side of the economic argument. Religion is heard only where it promotes the kind of "understanding" desired by the N.A.M., which is strikingly like the "pure religion" of the "Committee of Fourteen" within Unitarianism.

It should be noted that the N.A.M. wishes to "help" groups other than the clergy. *Program Notes* is offered to "Chairmen of Women's Organizations." The July-August issue begins, "Dear Program Planner: The beautiful madness of midsummer is here—when we can all merrily leave off being patient and industrious ants and hop away in all directions with grasshopper zing. The blood leaps, the stars shine and we long to emulate the antelope's majestic whing through space. For vacation time offers us the world to savor at our leisure. So be off with you and renew the soul with the frivolous." If American women fall for this in these troubled times, and give their energies to programs based on the insipid and even vicious materials that are included, then we may as well forget all about the "brave new world," for it is the "life of the soul" that counts, whether we renew it with frivolity or with supernatural mysticism.

ONCE WE DARED to hope that "religion" would influence American industry and business, but a recent release from the National Association of Manufacturers shows how futile that hope is unless liberals lift their voices with more courage and greater apprehension of the subtleties that are everywhere employed on the side of reaction. *Understanding*, "a publication devoted to cooperation between clergymen and business," is mailed by the N. A. M. without charge, and apparently without request, to ministers in the hope that they, not business, will be influenced. The August issue of this sheet, Vol. II, No. 6, contains a careful selection of comments of the confessional type from ministers and rural newspaper editors; all are meant to prove that God is on the side of "private" enterprise. Other articles by less pious advocates of the system tell us how practical it is, for example, to reduce the income tax rate of those in the \$2,000 and under group to a maximum tax of 12 per cent, with an added 2 per cent for each additional \$2,000 up to \$10,000; a final maximum of 50 per cent tax on incomes of over \$100,000 completes the formula. The N. A. M. is sure God would like that.

It would seem enough that net profits have soared so high since the elimination of price controls, and that the cost of living has risen so sharply; but evidently it is not enough, for the N. A. M., using some of the advantages of this increased profit, is determined to buy the churches. It will, naturally, pay the lowest possible price—which is pious fraud and cheap flattery. And the genius

of the "bargain" is that nowhere does the sheet scold liberals; rather it ignores them and quotes clergymen of various strains of orthodoxy to show that "real" religion can have no truck with socialism or communism or anything else except the "divine freedom" of enterprise. There is no mistaking the attitude of *Understanding*; the clerics whose innocent little jibes appear in its pages are

of two sorts, those who are merely stupid and those who know quite well who spreads the butter on their daily bread.

Understanding ought to be read most carefully by those Unitarians who tell us to denounce our leadership because it has "shown more concern for social service, political and legislative propaganda than for the spiritual side of religion." Unitarianism is liberal, whether or not all Unitarians are liberal. And liberalism is more than a mere denial of orthodox theology; it is more, even, than a denial of reaction. It is a positive effort to overcome reaction wherever it is found, and in all its forms—in the social attitudes of men, the economic systems of nations and the political techniques of those who would use even democracy to perpetuate special privilege and discriminations in opportunity. It is certain that the N. A. M. would ask no more of us than that we confine our vision and our preaching to "pure religion." If we, the liberal vanguard of America, can be persuaded to gaze wistfully at the sky, the N. A. M. will be happy to divide the pie in its own inimitable way. We who embrace the liberal faith must face the subtle importance of such sheets as *Understanding*.

Are we to suppose that a newspaper

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If we are so immature as to demand that religion confine its attention to the "life of the soul" then we are surely naive enough to believe that the N.A.M. is fulfilling a "spiritual mission" when it sends Understanding to American clergymen.

editor in Floydada, Texas, has something significant to say to American democracy when he declares piously that "too many use the Sabbath for pleasure. Have ignored the Biblical command to 'keep it holy'?" It is perfectly clear that he cannot reconcile happiness and holiness! I once served a church within a few miles of Floydada; I have had experiences with pious rural editors. Once I took my sermon story into the news office and watched the editor as he glanced over it and noticed a reference to the fifth chapter of Genesis. At this point he rolled his eyes as though he were in the presence of holiness itself and told me how extremely fond he was, and had always been, of that very same "fifth chapter of Genesis." He assured me that it was his top favorite. He left no doubt in my mind that he was a pious cheat, for it was obvious that he hadn't the slightest idea what was in Genesis V. (If you miss the point, please read the chapter through.)

The stupidity, or deliberate dishonesty, or both, of my friend who loved Genesis V so well is exceeded only by that of the man from Floydada who writes that holiness and pleasure are incompatible. It is possible, however, that even his condition is not so bad as ours if we imagine that such advice as *Understanding* gives is meant to increase the power of religion. If we are so immature as to demand that religion confine its attention to the "life of the soul," then we are surely naive enough to believe that the N. A. M. is fulfilling a "spiritual mission" when it sends *Understanding* to American clergymen.

Understanding extends its pages to ministers who "understand." A California clergyman was given an entire column which was headed, "Source of Freedom is Divine, Declares California Cleric." But the emphasis was upon the divine nature of "free" enterprise and "free" initiative, and all the usual "freedom" that the N. A. M. so urgently and piously demands. The attitude of *Understanding* is not disguised; simple Americans, religious or otherwise, may have all the "freedom" they want—freedom to be poor, ignorant, hungry or prejudiced—provided big business can have what it wants of the kind it wants.

What would any "freedom" be worth without the blessing of the Church? And not unmindful of the importance

of its blessing, *Understanding* includes a choice bit by "His Eminence, Francis Cardinal Spellman," who drives home the theme that the "remedy for a 'sick nation' . . . is work." But instead of paying tribute to those who actually do the work the Cardinal "assured his audience that it was not his desire to sit in an 'ivory tower' and watch if this country's economy is to be weakened or destroyed by catastrophic influences, but rather to take his place in the front ranks and 'fight to counteract defeatism as well as all false economic theories that challenge our true destiny.'" Is this a concern for the "life of the soul?" The Cardinal may have said other things in his talk at a "recent luncheon of the New York Building Congress," but *Understanding* understood that it was sufficient to show that religion is everywhere (?) opposed to all forms of collectivism and authoritarianism, except, of course, its own.

If any doubt remains about the intention of *Understanding* it will be dispelled when one reads the little piece titled, "Selfishness, Not Wealth, is Cause of Trouble." This ingenious morsel begins, "The profit motive idea, as exemplified in free enterprise, runs through the whole Christian philosophy of service and rewards, declared the Reverend . . . in a program of the Calvary Radio Ministry recently." After which the Reverend proceeded to use, of all things, the parable of the Rich Fool to illustrate his point that such thinking as comes from the N. A. M. is both pious and praiseworthy. The Reverend's contribution to the cause is concluded with the quotation, "Gospel does not sponsor any of the crackpot social and economic theories so prevalent today." If the editor of *Understanding* had been more familiar with scripture I am sure he would have added as an editorial comment, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant."

To all of this there is a response. *Understanding* reveals the response by quoting a minister from Antwerp, N. Y., who writes, "Some very good articles. I shall use some of them for sermons." Here is the crux of the matter; USE SOME OF THEM FOR SERMONS. Few will accuse you of social, political or economic indulgence or of using religion in the interest of "communistic ideology, materialistic, naturalistic or humanistic philosophy," if you will use "some of them for sermons." Even if you do not choose to use "some of them" you can still cooperate mightily if you will only confine your comment to the "life of the soul." Tell the people that God loves them; tell them that "everything will turn out all right"; tell them that religion is a great force for moral good,

but don't go into detail; tell them that religion ought to limit itself to the means of man's spiritual salvation, which is a purely mystical experience unrelated to the problems of the people. Just don't tell them anything at all about business or bad government or social inadequacies and atrocities; let the N. A. M. take care of itself, and don't stir up the people with foolish notions of the possibility that some other method than the N. A. M.'s might work better. If they are poor people, they still have God. What more does a poor man need?

Unitarians, beware! This is sheer nonsense, and a mockery of all that man envisions. There is much to be done if this world is to be made a decent and peaceful habitation for mankind. Religion *must* seek both to determine what can best be done and how best to do it in all the areas of human struggle.

Milton's Column

"Who ever knew Truth put to the worse in a free and open controversy?"

—Milton

EDWARD W. OHRENSTEIN, former Dean of Starr King School, Berkeley; in pamphlet, "The Social Responsibility of the Unitarian Christian": "Where does Unitarian Christianity stand on the great social issues that are rending the very fabric of our society? Apart from the struggle? Or in it? The answer is, definitely: 'in it.' You will find Unitarians lending their aid, out of conviction, to all the great causes that seek to re-make our battered world. Our history has been one of consistent concern for ethical implementation of Christianity. William Ellery Channing's greatness lies not so much in his intellectual formulation of Unitarianism (although he was the spiritual father of our denomination) as in his eloquent insistence upon moral purposes as the essential element of pure religion. Channing believed in 'enlightened piety' which Jesus taught and which makes the

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