

# The Vanguard American

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## Judases of Democracy

HOLGER M. ANDERSEN, Viborg, S. D.

The story of the life of one Judas Iscariot, which, according to the scriptural record, is one of the saddest tales that has ever been written, stands out among the accounts that we have of men who were directly associated with the man, Jesus, not only as the saddest tale, but as the biography of history's most diabolical character. His entire life is judged by one incident; not because of the enormity of the sin itself, but because of its far reaching repercussions.

Leslie Weatherhead, eminent British Pastor-Psychologist, in a book entitled, "Personalities of the Passion", treats the case of Judas from the psychological point of view. He does not exonerate Judas, but he helps us to understand that Judas was not a predestined criminal whose every move in life was directed toward the betrayal of the Master.

Following the interpretation of Weatherhead, Judas was a good man. He was an ardent patriot and a fanatical nationalist who believed very strongly in the prophetic promise of a Messiah for Israel. He was convinced that this Jesus who went about with strange powers at his disposal was the promised Messiah, and so, he forsook all to follow the sorrowful man of Galilee. But when Jesus failed to bring about a political regime, and instead catered to the underdog or the common man, Judas lost his patience. With fanatical zeal he went about seeking to force the hand of Jesus and make him do things his way—the Jewish way. The result was: betrayal, arrest and crucifixion of his ideal—and suicide for Judas. He never dreamed that the Messiah would permit himself to be tried and executed.

Let us look briefly at the life of the Master, and at his betrayer. One of the reasons that Jesus has been called "the sorrowful man of Galilee" is, not that he did not have a following, but that those who did follow did not understand the nature of his mission. Even among his disciples we see that there was very little understanding. Many fol-

lowed but few understood. Surely there was any number who believed him to be the Messiah, but they lacked the necessary understanding which would bring about the Kingdom. Judas was no exception—he was a zealous follower. His difficulty was not that he did not recognize Jesus as the Messiah, but that he totally misunderstood the nature of the Kingdom, and did not share the vision of a Universal Savior.

Judas is not the only man in History who has betrayed a great cause by failing to understand its nature and implications. Nor is he the only man who, through a narrow, selfishly nationalistic and racial view of life, has been an impediment to the progressive establishment of a world order.

The attitude of Judas is one that is quite prevalent among us. It is a view and a belief that is fostered, partly because America has been labeled, or "set apart", in the words of Ralph W. Emerson, "the last effort of Divine Providence in behalf of the human race." This idea is misconstrued as was the place of Israel in the Providence of God, aided and abetted by the Judases of Democracy and their vicious propaganda is slowly but definitely making its inroads upon the thinking of Americans. We are being taught that we are superior to other peoples, that all Japanese are fanatical monkeys, that the German people is a sadistic lot of mass-murderers. We too are likely to lose sight of that greater vision, in favor of a hyper-nationalistic concept of democracy, thinking that by lowering all others, we are being elevated.

George W. Truitt once said: "America is afflicted with the bad citizenship of good men." I think this statement is profoundly true, and worthy of our most serious consideration in a day when the democratic ideal is being contested and tested on the proving grounds of the world's right to freedom and equality.

The basic principles of democracy, like the principles of Christianity, are not limited by geographic boundaries or political allegiance. It is not the equality of Americans, nor the equality of Christians that is referred to—it is the equality of ALL men. It is true that Christianity had to have its embryonic beginning within geographic boundaries and among a people who had political and racial allegiance, just as democracy had to have its beginning



within a like people. But no growth can be penned in by visible or invisible boundaries. A seed, dropped into a crevice in a cliff of sheer rock, can, through its natural growth and intent, split the rock asunder. Truth cannot be confined to crevices—it must by reason of its nature and strength exceed all limitations—even the human mind.

Yes, America is afflicted with the bad citizenship of good men, in more than one sense. There are millions upon millions of citizens who are good; who mean well, but who, through failure to understand thoroughly the nature and implications of democracy, are the ones who, unwittingly, will betray the ideal and cause it to be sacrificed on the altar of bigotry, prejudice and intolerance.

Many outstanding exponents of the democratic way of life have expressed the belief that America, as the political exemplification of equality, is the one remaining hope, the leaven which will permeate the mind of humanity. Thomas Mann, a native of Germany, now a naturalized citizen of the United States, says, "Democracy is nothing but the political name for the ideals which Christianity brought into the world as a religion." — Josiah Strong writes, "He who does most to make America thoroughly Christian, does most to Christianize the world and hasten the coming of the Kingdom." Rightly understood, the belief that American Democracy is the means by which the world will know and have brotherhood and equality, is a great challenge to us. Wrongly conceived, it can mean just what "misunderstanding" meant to Judas, to Christ—and to the world—crucifixion and suicide. The eyes of the world are focused upon America!

One cannot imagine a greater challenge to any people than to be regarded by the rest of the world as the embodiment of principles of salvation. Nothing is more obvious to us, than the failure to accept that challenge. Looking at our domestic problems; looking to all within our national life and international relation that is contrary to the fulfillment of the ideal—we see much evidence of the sin for which Judas has been called the most horrible and diabolical criminal in history! And, it can happen here! We have not understood the full implications of that which we proudly proclaim to be our tradition and our destiny. It is as impossible for us to fulfill the challenge set before us by our forefathers and by the hopes of the oppressed through military conquest and national selfishness, as it was for Jesus to bring about the Kingdom of God through Jewish Nationalism!

The life of Judas is indeed one of the saddest stories that has ever been recorded,—and the story of Americans may too become one of the tragedies of blindness. Not because they weren't good people, and not because they didn't believe in democracy, but because they, like Judas, were prone to limit their ideal to a narrow nationalistic and racial application. Judas found a hope for salvation, but he wished to preserve it for his own people. He wanted to use it as a means of elevating one people at the expense of another, rather than for mutual benefit. The result, as always, was crucifixion of the ideal and suicide for the betrayer.

It is not just the eyes of the hopefuls throughout the world that are focused upon America. It is the eyes, too, of the vultures and the looters, waiting hawkishly for the first signs of death. Many skeletons of individuals and

groups of individuals have already been picked white by the bonepickers. In some the maggots and the germinating bacteria of selfish interest have begun their nasty business of breaking down—and the vultures have begun their ominous spiral over the places where democracy appears to be in death throes . . . waiting, hovering until the nauseating stench of internal decay rises above the earth as an invitation to the feast. We may momentarily, in feeble pretense, stave off the dreaded onslaught by an outward show of flag-waving and military music, but it will fool neither the vultures nor the hopefuls, for the unmistakable presence of death cannot be camouflaged.

In spite of its Judases, the pulse of democracy is not yet stilled. It beats out with metronomic precision the cadence of freedom and equality. It calls upon the peoples of all nations and races, not just to wait, marking time, but—to march; to feel once more a unity of purpose other than desperation; to feel the intrinsic worth and integrity of human souls, and to catch a glimpse of the greatness of mankind's destiny.

The soul of America shall awaken, not to the music of military bands, but to the throb of the greatness of its people and its contribution . . . knowing that, to be FOR something that is greater than itself is to be true to itself, and that to BE something, of and by itself, is to betray the ideal—crucifixion for it, and—suicide for us.

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## "As the Twig Is Bent . . .

Cpl. OTTO LARSEN, Lowry Field, Colo.

Some day the smoke of battle will clear.

Men will make speeches of dedication. New codes of conduct will be proposed. Resolutions will be passed. Civic centers will glisten with newly erected memorials. And some will say, "Look how far we've progressed!"

Others, perhaps as hopeful, will caution against confusing motion with progress. And Chesterton will be quoted, "There is one thing that never makes any progress, and that is the idea of progress."

There we stand out of the darkness of war. And there is song; all kinds of music. The sturdy, heartening music of the new born future being spanked as it gasps for the first breath of life. It ought to make a symphony—"The Symphony of Peace." Surely there are strings to sing its sorrows, brasses brave enough to trumpet its hope and power, wood-winds stern enough to speak the people's voices. Surely it has form and meaning.

The returning citizen-soldier, called G. I. Joe, hears the symphony. It rushes like a flood down the corridors of an unfeared mind. He has been walking, these war years, through the suburbs of freedom. He has heard the jazz of frustration and despair.

Look closely at the young men who right out of school flew combat missions; the home-town clerks who dealt with mountains of supplies; the farmers who swapped their tractors for tanks.

Hear the testimony of the men who return with shattered bodies . . .

And who wouldn't expect some change in the blood-



smeared men of the line? Mars' name is mud to them. That is their symbol of war. Not trumpets and banners, but the failure of nature's plumbing system, and mud.

To work one hour of combat, infantry style, is to know how fear can punish the nervous system of humans. — It is to know what it is like to creep down a street of empty houses wondering if they're really as empty as they look . . . . Hearing window shades flap and doors creak and expecting the crack of a Karikiner or the burp of a Jerry MG,—the last sound on earth . . . .

It is to know how much guts it takes to move forward a yard, a foot or an inch.

Fighting at the front, toiling in the supply line, or just training in some camp in the United States, calling for youth's adaptability. Men lived without privacy. They were shifted abruptly, often over great distances. They saw how big our country is, and how short geography-book miles were getting to be. They learned how to get along with people; there were lifters and leaners as there are in any community. They found too, that men die, suffer, work and laugh in much the same way.

The great hope is that a storm clears the atmosphere.

The tortured people of Greece, the pain-dulled and hungry of Italy, the burdened Chinese, the sad men of India, the struggling peasant of South America have all burned impressions into the much-traveled Yank.

He is grateful in a new sense for his homeland. The American soil—good land, sweet and yielding—corn land, wheat land, apple, stock and cotton land, has given without stint, as if it had sensed the needs of war and, now he wanted to get close to it.

Getting home—that was one war aim that all agreed upon.

New fighting men held basic convictions about what they were fighting for. They knew what they were fighting against. Most of the time that was compelling enough. But soldiers did not live by K-rations alone . . . .

The four freedoms meant many things to many men. To the average doggie in the ranks, when he thought about the future, freedom began with a job. Economic security was his problem in planning. To wage a successful battle against poverty was to win the right to talk about liberty, equality, and even permanent peace.

To G. I. Joe the fact was more important than the form. His spirit was ripe for decision and commitment. The roll call of tragedy and terror carried a like message for all mankind. It came from the tears of millions of homeless, trudging blind as Saul across the face of Europe. It was in the ghastly discourse of murder, — murder of prisoners from Corregidor and Bataan, blanched bones and babies' bodies in the Katyn Forest; gas and ovens and human dust at Lublin and Lidice; murder of the quiet villagers of Oradour herded into their place of worship and burned like rags, like soul-less trash not worth sweeping up. Murder!—and the cadence of revenge!

So again we see that the crisis which produced this war of crimes is a crisis from which we will not issue by arms alone.

Here we stand facing the unprecedented loosing of violence and all the means which draw strength from the degradation of the human being. We cannot turn away. The hunger for decision gnaws at our vitals. An answer will be found.

In the hearts of many is the hope that the church may provide the answer. Many have been prone to pick up from the battlefronts, examples to prove a religious revival. Actually, in the main, they only prove that men are scared and terribly aware of death. This is not a conclusion of contempt. It is only a caution against thinking that every soldier who carries the Bible will come hurrying home to find his place in the church. The church will have audience if they are ready to serve needs; if they are ready to live religion and not argue theology . . . .

Men of all faiths, who have stood together through the baptism of fire, will be wary of competitive claims that the Mystery will never rise except to one certain bait.

The soldier will be looking for companionship with folk with whom he can talk in words of common experience. They want a chance to serve a cause. That may sound like hooey, and most men would claim it was just that, yet the sense of being for something besides themselves has bitten deep. The challenge must be real, not any timid pretense. And the accent must be on LIVING.

Men need to feel the size of the human adventure. To learn the dignity of man's effort to be decent. To know the more intimate implication of their faith. To understand the relationship of that faith to personal behavior and to the realization of mankind as one.

## ... So the Tree Is Inclined"

From the Viborg "Vi-Ville."

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## THE NEXT STEP

HOLGER J. KOCH

As far back as we have been able to trace the activities and habits of man, he has been overwhelmingly preoccupied with the satisfaction of his most elemental needs; his food, his shelter, his marriage and family life. The necessity for satisfying these wants have led to the discovery, improvement and ultimate perfection of all the marvelous tools and instruments with which he has subdued the earth and its elements to the point of creating about himself a region of physical security affording him a measure of comfort and stability of social organization which should make his existence well nigh ideal, except for the fact that this very desire for security leads him into a constant conflict with his fellow-men for the control of the sources of wealth and for the most advantageous position to exploit them. The reason is, of course, that he is never entirely satisfied with what at the time happens to be his "Standard of Living." Although his access to the good things of life may be entirely adequate to sustain his physical well-being, man's urge for progress incites him to the elaboration and refinement of the means of satisfying his elemental needs until their very artificiality threatens to consume him in turn.

It would be reasonable to assume that having satisfied his elemental and purely physical needs man should go on to the discovery and enjoyment of the greater things of which his nature is capable: the things of the spirit, of intellect and emotions; the beauty of art in all its forms, and the joy of creating it; the even greater



satisfaction of sharing them with others. The pleasure of thought; of letting the mind wander through unexplored regions; of discovering unexpected unity in seeming confusion, finding a point of view, a philosophy. Or to try his wings in the realm of the metaphysical, the mystic world of religion and find to what heights of ecstasy his soul is made to soar.

It would not only be reasonable, it is also necessary if man is to advance at all. His elemental desires may lead him to the refinement and embellishment of the means of their satisfaction, but they can never lead him beyond his own ego. He will be caught in the vicious circle of satisfying his constantly growing demands. It is a treadmill of endless effort leading nowhere and leaving the individual as dissatisfied at the pinnacle of the evolutionary period called a "Civilization" as its beginning, the only difference being that the hope of ultimate happiness was lost in the process. Any philosophy or movement concentrating its efforts on raising the "Standard of Living" will find itself doomed to the fate of Sisyphus, the greedy king of Greek mythology, who was condemned in Hades to roll a huge stone to the top of a hill only to have it slip from his grasp just as the goal was in sight, requiring him to start again from the bottom.

There is in man that insatiable urge to advance from what is good to that which is better; but until he learns to distinguish between his ELEMENTAL and his FUNDAMENTAL needs he is doomed to constant disappointment. We must come to the realization once and for all, that however much we may embellish our elemental needs of food, shelter and marriage with all the trimmings afforded by science and technical skill, we are still not thereby raising ourselves by the thickness of a hair above the animal which knows no desire except to satisfy its appetites. We are still consecrated to the task that spells the undoing of man and all his works and all his hopes: the building up of the Ego. That damnable will to survive, if need be alone, which is at the bottom of all our griefs as individuals and nations, and no amount of resolutions, charters and treaties, is going to avert private and public wars in the future any more than they have in the past.

It is man's elemental need to acquire freedom from want, freedom from suffering and freedom from fear; a need he shares with all living creatures; a freedom which could be his without great difficulty as far as the natural laws permit; but it is his fundamental need to rise above this preoccupation with his corporeal well-being. Only in moments when he forgets himself does he emerge as the unique, the superior creature, disproving any claim of the animal world to essential kinship with him. Only when he discards the protective shell of his egotism are the unsuspected but latent forces of his nature revealed. He rises then in his full stature and stands forth upon the historical arena as the man of destiny whose word is law because it is free and true. This has been demonstrated repeatedly in the history of mankind. The well-armed, single-minded egotist in high places or low is part and parcel of the animal kingdom, he lives and dies by the law of the jungle, and the jungle remains. It is the man who has freed himself from the elemental fears and wants who changes history. And not just the history of nations, but the fortunes of groups, families and individuals. It is the terrible and

seemingly insurmountable egotism of man which snarls all his relationships and rends the fabric of his society.

For no social or political system can function with any great degree of success as long as man is willing to destroy the fabric of his associations in order to gratify his personal desires. Our democracy worked fairly well while the country was sparsely populated and there was elbow room between neighbors; but the increasing congestion sets up a friction between conflicting interests, philosophies and races which is already now putting a severe strain on the practice of self-government. For while the democratic form of government is a far cry from voluntary communism, it still presupposes the willingness of the majority to be guided by the interests of the common welfare; and we find unfortunately now that the strength of any political or economic group is gaged by its "bargaining power" rather than by its sincere devotion to the welfare of the people.

For that reason the very opening of the San Francisco Conference struck cold fear in the hearts of those who hoped that the terrible suffering of the past six years could, in a small measure, be recompensed by a new approach to international problems, namely the willingness to sacrifice advantages and privileges rather than human blood and happiness. But the conference was not a day old before at least one world power let it be known in no uncertain terms that there would be no idealistic nonsense about the new order. Everything would be done according to the time-honored method of the shell game, the disappearing card and the hoss-trade.

Perhaps it was foolish to expect anything else. No nation is yet able to give moral support to a foreign policy of helpfulness and good will. But we shall be fighting wars to end war until we have it. The idea is taking root in the American people and some day it may be strong enough to determine our behavior toward other men, nations and races. After that it won't be so bad. The state of the free, cooperative society is still a thing of the future. We may have freedom without communism as in our country, or communism without freedom as in Russia; but not until the essential, elemental egotism of human nature has been broken down shall we be able to combine the two. So all the great and good things in human associations will have to wait.

However, if, in the meantime, we must choose between the two, let us by all means have freedom; for only by self-discipline and the acceptance of individual responsibility is it possible for men to attain the moral stature necessary for a truly cooperative and non-violent society. Peace by coercion is like a counterfeit coin: the features are right, but the heart, the instincts are still leaden. To outlaw war is a futile gesture until we have outgrown our animal need for self-preservation, until the first and greatest commandment of the law in human relationships has become to STAY RIGHT, rather than the jungle's to STAY ALIVE.

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"Stronger than all the armies in the world is an idea whose time has come." — Victor Hugo.