

mation. A mowing machine was devised in England before McCormick invented the reaper, but again it was throttled in its infancy. Ingenious people no doubt invented many a contrivance again and again across the ages, only to have them stillborn because of the difficulties of machining without the lathes and other machine tools we take for granted and more particularly because the neighbors simply would not allow the new labor-saving device to come into being.

There is little reason to believe that the frontier held the magic that a lot of people ascribe to it. Astounding progress has exploded in old settled lands such as the England of George III or West Germany after World War II. Frontier lands have remained primitive for generations. Nations with great natural resources have stagnated while tiny countries like Switzerland have forged ahead without much of anything to go on. The mysterious ingredient of industrial progress is simply the freedom to try and the assurance that creative effort will be rewarded. The stagnation of the Great Depression was the consequence of massive governmental interventions in the economic proc-

ess, not the passing of the frontier.

Certainly, the backwardness of many an underdeveloped nation today is related to the fact that the enterprising individual is stigmatized and ruined by his neighbors and the local officials. To have lived in some remote "native" village long enough to know how their social curbs on progress operate is to understand why the best laid plans of economic development schemes have a way of failing utterly. Without freedom to achieve and without a measure of security for life and property, aid is useless; and with freedom, it is unnecessary. Any enterprising investor is happy to put his money into a going concern and nothing succeeds like success. But the rigidities of a managed economy stifle initiative and scare off venture capital, keeping the depressed area stagnant and backward. Only a rich country can afford the economic interventions of socialism — and they can't afford it for long.

Freedom is not a luxury for a few wealthy nations, as many of our liberal pundits try to tell us, but a necessity for the poor and hungry as Erhard's Germany so eloquently demonstrated after her crushing defeat in World War II.



"The Great Society"

NOT SO LONG AGO one would have sworn that collectivist and interventionist thinking was losing its appeal. The economists were revolting against Lord Keynes, at least to the extent of becoming "neo-Keynesians" or "post-Keynesians." Students were becoming Young Americans for Freedom, or joining the Intercollegiate Society of Individualists. The conservative movement was gaining many new adherents.

Now, suddenly, everything seems to be reversed. The Left has come back with a rush. A socialist book, *The Other America — Poverty in the United States*, by Michael Harrington, becomes the Bible of those who are pushing an anti-poverty campaign that depends on self-defeating state action. The ancient League for Industrial Democracy, an outgrowth of the Intercollegiate Socialist Society, does not seem to be stirring, but the W.E.B. DuBois Clubs, which proclaim an unaffiliated Marxism, have started to snowball, particularly on the West Coast. The young who were looking to a revival of

conservatism yesterday have been followed by an even younger set who are going in for "personalist" commitment to nonlibertarian causes.

In the middle of it all President Lyndon B. Johnson has become enamoured of a phrase, "the Great Society." Whether he plucked the phrase out of his own memory, or whether it was fed to him by one of the task force papers which Professor Eric Goldman of Princeton has been in the course of assembling, is immaterial. The point is that the phrase comes from the title page of a pre-World War I book, *The Great Society*, by a Fabian socialist Englishman named Graham Wallas. Thus the movement started by Bernard Shaw, H. G. Wells, Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Webb, and the other members of the English Fabian Society in the eighties and nineties of the last century is still bearing fruit.

Since I have long been interested in the relations between ideologues and politicians, I took Graham Wallas's book off the