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UNANSWERED QUESTIONS

IT is certainly no novelty to be told, as a *Nation* reviewer observed recently, "The trouble with our age for both parents and children is that we no longer have *any* strong convictions as to what is 'reasonable' for society." The diagnosis is accurate enough, and the consequences of a convictionless culture are all around us. Ours is not a time of high vision and sweeping hopes. Nor is there much revolutionary ardor. The revolutionary movements of the past have all reached a sort of status quo of their own, and while there is a great deal of what we call "ideological conflict" in the world, the brave conceptions of revolutionary idealism which once gave unity to struggling peoples no longer command unquestioning assent.

This is not to deny the continuing processes of revolution in areas still engaged in overthrowing colonialism and rejecting the tired imperialisms left over from the nineteenth century. The libertarianism of the eighteenth century and the industrialism of the nineteenth century have yet to be realized in many regions—notably in Africa and Asia—but as the so-called "backward nations" bring themselves up-to-date, they will encounter, as many already recognize, the same problems which confront the Western peoples who had their revolutions one and two centuries ago.

What to work for, then, is the great question. This very inquiry, unfortunately, has the flavor of a minority concern, and might even be snobbish. It is certainly true, however, that only a small minority of people interest themselves in the problems of "the world," and we know from history and experience that small minorities have been largely responsible for such progress as the world may claim. One of the major difficulties of such minorities is that they fall into the habit of speaking in behalf of "the world," as though the great masses whose attention is occupied almost entirely by immediate personal problems, such as economic survival, would follow them willingly. For the shapers of the Bolshevik revolution, this situation presented neither a moral nor a practical problem. As Max Eastman remarks in his portrait of Leon Trotsky:

> Trotsky was a shining example of that atrocious creature familiar to all readers of American editorials, the "Outside Agitator." That is to say, he was a man with an extreme social ideal and enough mechanical instinct to know that the only force capable of achieving such an ideal is the organized self-interest of the oppressed classes.

The communists acquired considerable skill in producing such organizations and felt no compunctions in manipulating the servants of the Party, and even whole classes, to obtain the power they sought. They were confident that they knew what to do, and that, once in power, they could justify all that they had done by turning their utopian dreams into social realities.

This is not the place, nor is it now our purpose, to argue the unfitness of communist means to utopian ends. Suffice it to say that, whatever the psycho-moral consequences of an initially benevolent Machiavellianism which organizes self-interest and whips it into a fury of partisan resentment, the radical thinkers of the world are themselves disillusioned by the outcome of the Soviet revolution, its dream deeply stained by the terrorism and both psychological and political tyranny of the Stalinist regime. The cold breath of uncertainty has damped the fires of revolutionary theory.

It is fair to say, therefore, that no over-arching political dream of the good life exists today. One might go further and suggest that disillusionment with politics is rooted in the suspicion that minorities cannot plan for

majorities, except in extremely limited terms, unless, as with a democracy, the plans are really devices to enable the majorities to regulate their own behavior, within the scope allowed by such constitutional safeguards as the minorities are able to design and get enacted into law. Meanwhile, the experience of the democracies themselves suggests the broad conclusion that even alert and enlightened minorities are unable to protect the majorities from their own folly beyond a certain point. Too much protection becomes a tyranny of the few, as well as a claim of infallibility which minorities are less and less inclined, nowadays, to make.

Our political experience, then, both "radical"—if we may call the communist experiment "radical"—and democratic, leads to a general discovery which might be phrased: *There is an absolute limit to political efficiency.* We have no clear definitions of the limiting factors, but we have some notion as to what they are. Political efficiency depends upon the practical intelligence of the responsible minority, and upon the responsiveness of the majority. It also depends upon the political philosophy of the minority, and the convictions of the leaders.

These conceptions are obviously vague, even to the point of losing meaning. Yet they are all we have to work with. Behind their uncertainty is the old question: What is man? What are the ends of man? And, finally, if we really knew the ends of man, what part, if any, should constraint play in directing human energy toward their realization?

It is possible, for example, that the ends of man must in all cases be freely achieved, and that any constraint therefore, blocks the way to their realization. It is possible further, that not all men will gain their true ends, or ever seek them, and the behavior of such men creates the problem of order. Again, it is possible, or rather almost certain that some men will mistake bad ends for good, and that they will deceive themselves and others in seeking to obtain them. Last, we are obliged to admit that the psycho logical constitution of many people, perhaps most, and the immediacy of their needs and desires are such that they will strive after the ends they have chosen without pausing for the sort of objective evaluation this discussion attempts.

If we admit all these possibilities, it becomes manifest that the ideal society is some sort of anarchism—"anarchism" being a term which implies the maximum freedom for every human being. And since it will be admitted that some men are wiser than others, the ideal social organization will resemble nothing so much as a school, in which all alternative beliefs and theories about ends are examined.

The obvious difficulty with anarchism is that it has no theory of the control of evil. It has no theory of evil itself, except that restriction of human freedom produces it. Not even the anarchists know the extent of truth in this explanation of evil, although many people suspect that there is more truth in it than the critics of anarchism are willing to acknowledge. The fact is that only people who are willing to *take a chance* with evil will ever find out what can be done through a community or social order which refuses to restrict human behavior, along anarchist lines.

Perhaps we are wrong. It might be said that the anarchist theory of evil is the same as the Socratic theory of good. Virtue, said Socrates, is knowledge. The implication is that no man will *knowingly* do evil—that it always results from ignorance.

Even the anarchists, however, might have trouble in deciding what is knowledge and what is not. But this does not spoil their theory. The trouble with most criticism of idealist programs is that it usually seems to assume that the program must be infallible, forgetting that *nothing* into which the human equation enters can be infallible. What is good about anarchism is its determination to be true to the value of human freedom, no matter what the consequences. As determinations

go, this is the most important one of all. And it is fair to suggest that cleaving to this principle, regardless of anything else, might not bring half the chaos and disorder which we know to have resulted from lesser and more divided allegiances.

But conceivably, a more searching analysis of evil than the anarchists are willing to provide is a possibility. We can, perhaps, know more about human nature than the currently available humanisms and liberal agnosticisms permit. It is certain that "freedom" is only shallowly defined in political terms, and it is likely that the elevation of political definitions to the source of the highest values is as gross a form of self-deception as that practiced in the days of widely accepted supernatural religion. The problem of freedom runs much deeper than either the religions or the politics of the past have allowed. Actually, we are disillusioned in our hopes for freedom at both the periphery and the center of our existence. The Bomb is responsible for disillusionment at the periphery, for who can read such periodicals as the *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists,* with its realistic evaluation of present-day military policies and competing nuclear armaments, and still expect that a peaceful, non-military society can be gained by political means? The depth analysis of the new psychology, on the other hand, brings serious disillusionment regarding "movements" and righteous "crusades." A passage from Norman Mailer's short novel, *The Man Who Studied Yoga (New Short Novels—2,* Ballantine), shows how the disenchantment with yesterday's political enthusiasms is affecting the coteries of intellectuals:

> Today Sam considers himself half a fool for having been a radical. There is no longer much consolation in the thought that the majority of men who succeed in a corrupt and acquisitive society are themselves obligatorily corrupt, and one's failure is therefore the price of one's idealism. Sam cannot recapture the pleasurable bitterness which resides in the notion that one has suffered for one's principles. Sergius is too hard on him for that.
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> They have done a lot of work on the subject. Sergius feels that Sam's concern with world affairs has always been spurious. For example, they have uncovered in analysis that Sam wrote his article about the worker in such a way as to make certain it would be refused. Sam, after all, hates editors; to have such a piece accepted would mean he is no better than they, that he is a mediocrity. So long as he fails he is not obliged to measure himself. Sam, therefore, is being unrealistic. He rejects the world with his intellect, and this enables him not to face the more direct realities of his present life.
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> Sam will argue with Sergius but it is very difficult. He will say, "Perhaps you sneer at radicals because it is more comfortable to ignore such ideas. Once you became interested it might introduce certain unpleasant changes in your life."
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> "Why," says Sergius, "do you feel it is so necessary to assume that I am a bourgeois interested only in my comfort?"
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> "How can I discuss these things," says Sam, "if you insist that my opinions are the expression of neurotic needs, and your opinions are merely dispassionate medical advice?"
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> "You are so anxious to defeat me in an argument," Sergius will reply. "Would you admit it is painful to relinquish the sense of importance which intellectual discussion provides you? "
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> I believe Sergius has his effect. Sam often has thoughts these days which would have been repellent to him years ago. For instance, at the moment, Sam is thinking it might be better to live the life of a worker, a simple life, to be completely absorbed with such necessities as food and money. Then one could believe that to be happy it was necessary only to have more money, more goods, less worries. It would be nice, Sam thinks wistfully, to believe that the source of one's unhappiness comes not from oneself, but from the fault of the boss, or the world, or bad luck.

"Aha!" one may say—"I always thought those 'radicals' had something the matter with them!" But this oversimplification is denied us. As Viktor Frankl says in *The Doctor and the Soul,* "We have no right to conclude from the psychic illness of a person who has produced a particular world-view that his philosophy is of no value as an intellectual structure." In other words, an individual's concern with world affairs may be "spurious," but it may also be genuine. You never know, and we have greater need of suspecting

ourselves of moral or humanitarian pretenses than others, over whose psychological integrity we have no control.

Norman Mailer's story is not a pleasant one, and his characters seem to us to resemble grubs exposed under a rotting log more than they do human beings, yet the passage quoted has a clinical significance: *We can never go back to the naïve enthusiasms of the past.* Our very disillusionment with ourselves, with our utopian politics, and the world as we have made it compels a new self-consciousness. All the old truths remain true, but with a kind of second-degree truth, and to bring them back to first-degree reality we have to discover some transforming truths about ourselves—truths which once again will supply the conviction that leads to absolute commitment.

We know from history that such truths are usually called "religious." Socrates and Gandhi had them. But so did Thomas Paine and Abraham Lincoln. It might be that these truths, whatever they are, remain only echoes of traditional wisdomism until fired into life by a private component of truth within the individual. If we could believe this, and believe it thoroughly, we might develop a new idealism that would transform not only ourselves, but our theories of education, our politics, and eventually the world.

REVIEW
"THE LAW OF REASONABLE WAR"

HERMAN WOUK of *Caine Mutiny* and *Marjorie Morningstar* fame, now seems to be straddling some sort of philosopher's fence in regard to war. At least, in a *Collier's* short story for February 17, entitled "The Lomokome Papers," he relieves himself of some hitherto hidden doubts that the present is the best of all possible worlds. Your reviewer, who has noted without admiration Mr. Wouk's clever enthronement of conventional ethical standards in the two books mentioned, is now wondering whether this writer has started on a long and difficult road which will ultimately turn the traveler into an unorthodox thinker, or whether "The Lomokome Papers" merely expresses "acceptance of the inevitable."

"The Lomokome Papers" are an instrument in a piece of science-fiction writing, focussed on the first successful attempt to land a human being on the moon. The "Papers" comprise a journal, or log, kept by a stranded pilot who, before his demise, came to learn a good deal about a subterranean lunar civilization. The U.S. Navy, upon recovering the log, which had been placed near the damaged space ship, didn't know what to make of its extraordinary revelations, finally concluding that they represented merely the hallucinations of a man subjected to weird atmospheric conditions. But Mr. Wouk's reader is not supposed to agree with the Navy.

When "Lieutenant Butler" was apprehended by some of the moon's subterranean inhabitants and taken to their vast caverns, he soon discovered that the moon people had for a long time been facing a situation very much like that confronting America and Russia at the present time. Having invented hydrogen explosives somewhere around the seventh century, the two rival powers had almost, but not quite, succeeded in annihilating each other on numerous occasions. But the explosives were getting still worse, and doom would have been inevitable save for the advent of a Great Sage:

> Lomokome and Lomadine, with the whole moon to divide between them, began accusing each other of being cannibals like the extinct Lozains, and quarreling over a thousand small boundary questions. That, at least, is my interpretation. The Lomokome school text asserts that Lomadine made a "series of impossible and aggressive demands and began infiltrating in disputed territories, using the same cannibalistic tactics as the Lozains."
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> The schoolbook grudgingly admits, however, that "it is not quite fair to describe the Lomadinians as cannibals in the same sense that the Lozains were. Although their beliefs and their form of government show striking similarities to the culture of the cannibals, they probably do not actually eat human flesh." I gather that this reasonable view is due almost entirely to the influence of Ctuzelawis, and that before his time both sides actually believed, or claimed to believe, that their enemies were true Lozains in practice.
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> A number of wars ensued between the two nations called the Universal Wars. These grew more frightful in each generation. Those *hasans* that corresponded to our early Christian Era were a time of great scientific advancement on the moon. Both sides evolved the uranium bomb in the same war, in our year 347 A.D. It was soon rendered obsolete by more powerful nuclear explosives.
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> During the Fourth War, Lomokome came out with a nitrogen cloud, fissionable by remote means. That was what you might call the daddy of them all. To give you an idea: one nitrogen cloud could just about obliterate the State of Massachusetts. The effect of such a weapon was increased by the fact that it was released in the huge caverns that constitute the moon's habitable area, rather than in free space where it could easily dissipate. It's interesting that Lomokome used *thirty-seven* nitrogen clouds against Lomadine before the surrender. It seems unbelievable. But in centuries of warfare with nuclear explosives, these moon people developed techniques for defense and survival. . . .
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> The Book of Ctuzelawis emerged shortly after the Fourth Universal War, as a result of the terrible discovery about silicon, mentioned in the book repeatedly. Ctuzelawis is the great philosopher and prophet of the moon people. He unquestionably saved them from annihilation with his Law of Reasonable War. . . .

If I were to put it in earth-terms, I would call it an "ideological conflict between Hydrogenism and Suggestionism." But no such words are used here. The Lomokomians refer to their mode of thinking as Orange; the Lomadinians are known as Blues. In this country it's a fighting insult to suggest that a remark has a Blue taint or that someone is Blue at heart. The exact opposite seems to be true in Lomadine. Orange is their favorite cuss word.

I don't profess to understand all the angles of these two systems. Both are based on philosophical reasonings, or assertions, that seem pretty foggy to me. The Lomadine setup is especially hard to grasp because all my knowledge of it has been filtered through the extreme prejudice and hatred of the Lomokome scrolls.

This extraordinary individual, Ctuzelawis, after living in solitude on the moon's surface for a number of years, invented a system whereby wars could be fought without complete destruction. This system, which eventually became the political bible of both Great Powers, was smuggled into the domains by way of manuscript; finally the leaders took heed, and agreed to conduct all future wars on the basis proposed.

The first premise of "the law of reasonable war" is that war is necessary—not because it *should* be, but simply because of the present psychological constitution of the moon people. The "Book" explains this quite rationally:

As the animals must sharpen their teeth on bone, wood or stone, so we must sharpen our powers, our ideas and our resources on someone we hate. It is true in the lives of each of us, and it is true in the lives of the nations.

If we have no enemies, we must invent them.

Consider the enmity by which our world is riven.

We say that it is impossible for the Hydrogen system and the Suggestion system to exist side by side in peace. On both sides we exhaust ourselves calling each other slaves and cannibals.

In our hearts we know that this is mostly lies, but we go on uttering the lies. Why would we do this, if it were not for the desire to have an enemy? . . .

If we were naturally inclined to peace, the two systems might work away side by side until the sun grew cold. But we are not inclined to peace.

An enemy makes of us what religion is supposed to make of us, but never does.

Perhaps in a remote age, religion will penetrate our hearts to replace enmity. Would that it might be tomorrow! Then there would be no need for the Law of Reasonable War. But with the doom of silicon upon us, we cannot fool ourselves. Religion in our lives is words and books. Our true faith is still in enmity. Enmity between men, enmity between nations, is the power of all our days.

Therefore we need war.

A time of war is exceptionally zestful, joyous and productive. There is nothing like the intoxication of self-sacrifice, hard work and loyalty brought on by a declaration of war. There is no other way, considering what we are, not what we might wish to be, to bring about such mighty scientific advances, such piling up of goods, such searching of our minds, such hardening of our bodies, such general excitement, wellbeing and prosperity. True, these delights bring sorrow close upon them. But it is clear that the delight outweighs the sorrow. For we never hesitate to declare war again when the time comes.

The Law of Reasonable War preserves all these joys and eliminates much of the sorrow.

What the Sage saw was that men could not go on "enjoying" wars unless they learned to control them. Besides, people of intelligence were constantly confronted by the enormous waste of traditional conflict, for, "if the end of war is to smash bodies, we must agree that in its present form it is not efficient. A huge expense for destruction on one side is always countered by vastly costly means of defense on the other. These almost cancel each other. Only the tiny margin of difference between them does useful work. A man can be killed at almost no cost, ordinarily. But in war the average cost of killing one man is more than the cost of building homes for ten thousand men. The Law of Reasonable War completely eliminates this waste. This alone should recommend it to men's minds, aside from its much greater virtues." In the "Thirteenth Book" the prophet really gets down to business:

War is a contest. The side with the greater total effort wins.

The only measure we now have is an exchange of destructive force between the two sides.

But supposing an all-wise and all-seeing judge were available to measure the efforts on each side. He could predict the outcome. He could gauge the extent of the victory. It would not be necessary that a bomb be thrown or a shot fired, to find out who must win.

The measuring of effort against effort is the essence of war. The exchange of violence is necessary only because we have never had a better measuring instrument. Everybody knows that it has been a wasteful, crude yardstick.

Now, with the discovery of the silicon reaction, this measuring instrument becomes too dangerous to use. But worse than that, it now becomes meaningless. Both sides can produce infinite destruction at small cost. The next exchange of violence will end the world, without performing its function of measuring effort and awarding victory.

Yet we must have war.

The dilemma seems insoluble, but it is not.

We need a new measuring instrument that will fairly judge between two war efforts, replacing the exchange of violence.

Well, the system works something like this: the enemy nations carefully stockpile their war materials and rush toward invention of the most terrible weapons. Then, when either side feels strong enough to issue a challenge, some pretext for a war-declaration is discovered. However, from this point on, a College of Judges takes over. The military geniuses of both sides present statistical plans for conquest, list and verify the number and nature of weapons at their disposal. When all the plans and materiel for attack are under scrutiny, judges especially trained for this task work out the war to a finish—on moon-type IBM machines?—declaring the winner according to the final totals. The war materials are destroyed in proportion to what their actual expenditure would have been, but with a certain prudence, so that part of the wreckage can be reassembled in preparation for the next struggle.

Mr. Wouk certainly commands the reader's attention when he describes how an "appropriate" number of human deaths is determined. For the Judges also decide how many men and women, in each stratum of the war society, should meet death. Young men and women, venerable scientists and energetic generals, must all supply a sufficient number of bodies for extermination. This takes place on Death Day when, in a sort of huge religious ceremony, those who have volunteered for death have their throats cut, after which the bodies are carried away in state. One's service to one's nation, in this sort of death, is regarded as "true heroism" and, unlike the case in any other sort of warfare, the victorious doomed are enabled to spend the last poignant moments with their friends and families.

After these dreadful ceremonies, a state of "reasonable happiness" returns, with recognition that some heartbreak and sadness is, after all, part of the salt of living!

As we conclude this brief summary of an oddly gruesome tale, it occurs that the author has at least succeeded in breaking down both capital punishment and armed warfare to simple common terms. For our part, we would welcome a "modest proposal" to conduct the wars of earth in similar fashion, since it might be easier to revolt against these cold-blooded procedures than to fire nuclear projectiles and guided missiles.

COMMENTARY
L'ENVOI

IT is some weeks now that we have missed the weekly appearance of *Harijan,* the paper founded many years ago by M. K. Gandhi. For *Harijan* has ceased publication. The announcement came without fanfare. It was said that the cost of circulating *Harijan* in three languages—English and two Indian tongues—could no longer be met.

It was natural, perhaps, that this should happen. Gandhi was a great man who appeared in India at a time when his country had extraordinary need of greatness. When a country comes into being, or is reborn, the vision of its founders should last through the centuries.

There is a deep and profound bond between the people of the United States and the people of India and a striking correspondence in their respective histories. Both countries began a national existence in the light of human greatness. The Founding Fathers of the United States were American patriots, but their contribution to world enlightenment lay in a form of human association which was based upon universal principles. There is nothing particularist or "traditional" in the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States. Given to the Americans, they were also a gift to all the world.

So with India. Gandhi was an Indian, a patriot, and he labored for the liberation of his home land. But he also labored for the world. Everything that Gandhi did that was good for India was good for all other peoples too. Not only Americans have shared in the beneficent heritage of the American Founding Fathers, and not only Indians have learned from and been blessed by Gandhi's presence.

After an interval of greatness—a kind of "visitation," perhaps—the people have need of strengthening themselves. The time comes when they must make their own vision. This time came to the United States, and it has come to India, too.

Harijan was Gandhi's instrument. Gandhi is gone, and the instrument is laid aside. But we should not suppose that the two editors who succeeded Gandhi in the conduct *of Harijan* were not equal to the task they assumed. During the years since Gandhi's death in 1948, K. G. Mashruwale and Maganbhai P. Desai, successively, edited *Harijan* with skill and consistency, in what seemed to us full recognition that they were carrying forward a principle, not celebrating a memory. *Harijan* was an inspiration before and after Gandhi's departure from the scene. We are sorry to see it go.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves

WE have a letter which may present nothing new in the way of reflection upon "youth and war," but the perspective afforded seems worth noticing, since its contentions are of a sort that are often ignored.

> Editor, "Children . . . and Ourselves": I have just come home from a 4 A.M. expedition, after returning my son to the United States Navy. As I drove home alone, the lights of sky and city faded, as day arrived from over the edge of the world. Then, to me, came an incredible sadness, a sadness of realizing the immature graves resultant from nationalism. The vision of death spread a pall, and my heart suffered for the young of all nations, who must submit to the stupid, kowtowing process called militarism! I recalled the words of Thomas Paine . . . "The world is my country—to do good is my religion." Instead of the sword-rattling, flag-waving, tin-hero potpourri which is taught as military training to children the world over, it seemed possible to teach a finer kind of patriotism, a patriotism of mankind.
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> It may be claimed that bringing about a peaceful world is not the prerogative of schools. Why not? What comparable concern exists? The school seems now starting to attempt something of this kind. The trouble is, mass opinion is rooted in the past, and change for the better must always encounter mass opinion. The school still fosters an immodest patriotism, for this is the popular thing to teach; and we collide with "foreigners" who have received similar instruction. Then, the more bloody the circumstances, the more falsely virtuous the situation becomes. The result of such teaching—the world over—is disastrous! We are to act like savages because others act like savages; this cycle must be broken. When water has for long enough eroded a channel, we grow a Grand Canyon, and now, as everyone knows, humanity is balancing on the brink.
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> The school believes, of course, that by instilling *patriotism* it is bestowing something sacredly fine, the ultimate essence of character and worth. However, seen from a world-wide perspective, seen in its final and overall results, this ideal scarcely holds up. Over and over, patriotism clashes with patriotism, and now we are coming into the final act of the play. Unless the true results of narrow patriotism are speedily discovered, we may have the extermination of all life on this globe.
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> It is strange that so few feel the need of educational involvement in reversing the old trend. Perhaps before the secondary schools and university can begin to so concern themselves, they will have to break away from that partnership, the world over, between the school and the "armed forces." By intensifying local patriotism, the schools erect a barrier to worldwide kindliness and tolerance. Instead schools assure "war-readiness," and herald the virtue in young men of submitting to war, as obedient and "manly."
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> But there is an opposite type of hero. In him there is nothing of the murderer or the bully. His main concern is to reduce the prestige of the fighter who cannot be tolerated by his neighbors. An outstanding example of such a hero is, in my estimation, Nehru, and a fine example of wisdom expressed in a nation's foreign policy, is that of India. Were all nations to hold such attitudes, there would be no wars. These are examples of the finer courage. Would that Russia, and America, might heed the voice of their anti-military minorities. Treasonous though it may sound, I believe there must be found a way to deglorify the prestige of those who are trained to kill. The meaning of the words—manly—and—hero—must be redefined. Analysis of the capacities which over the ages have been associated with the words must be brought to judgment by the mass consciousness. Removal of this sequence requires the shedding of passionately held concepts of the past.

Yes, indeed. The last sentence places the problem of international violence correctly and, as psychologists have lately pointed out, the only hope for a new ethical orientation lies in revaluation of nearly all the "passionately held concepts of the past" which contribute to man's negative estimate of man. Brock Chisholm, Canadian psychiatrist who headed the UN's World Health Organization a few years ago, stoutly maintained that the worst "passionately held concepts of the past" are those which presumed to define morality. In a controversial address, Chisholm proposed that the true interpretation of the Biblical "fall of man" is that whenever a man claims to be possessed of "knowledge of good and evil," he has already set himself for fratricide.

The psychological logic here is that men judge others only because they are unsure of their *own* rightness, beginning a vicious circle which ends in recrimination and violence. Nationalisms are simply the result of this tendency working itself out on a large scale, with the best method of obscuring deficiencies of national government being that of "proving" that other national governments are still worse. However, somewhere underneath, man knows he does *not* have knowledge of good and evil, and since he cannot quite rid himself of this troublesome intuition, his pretense of certainty becomes more and more frenetic.

In conventional culture, then, the "hero" becomes the man who does the most to help us preserve our delusions, the one whose demeanor seems to speak of an assurance we do not, ourselves, really have. At least, the great "Leaders" often fall into this category. Our correspondent agrees with Dr. Chisholm, then, when he cries for a proper definition of heroism—one which recognizes that the true hero, as distinguished from the conventional hero, shows his stature by refusing to accept the prevailing superficial standards of righteousness. We have always done the best with this sort of hero, for he fights against the injustice of arbitrary judgment, *on principle,* and not *against people.* He encourages independence and difference of opinion, leads the rebels and the reformations, because he knows that the belief that right and might can go hand in hand is the most pernicious of all doctrines.

An excellent place to start with revaluation of conventional standards of right and wrong is in one's own home. If we attempt to force children to adopt our canons of behavior, and our peculiar developments of logic, we shall probably succeed in giving them, *not* our standards, but our idiosyncrasies. The child who grows toward physical maturity in a home pervaded by arbitrary self-righteousness may not adopt his parents' opinions, but he is apt to be just as harshly demanding of his own children, in his turn.

The root, then, of the mistaken idea of strength, the root of dangerous nationalism, may lie in the human tendency to bolster personal confidence by presuming to know—and to be above—the wrongs that other people do.

FRONTIERS

"The Place of Opposition"

WE have found some more fundamental thinking on the subject of education in the pages of *i.e., The Cambridge Review*, a quarterly magazine, apparently published by some undergraduates of Harvard University. This issue is unnumbered and undated, and since we have had it for a while we can identify it only by saying it has a yellow cover with black and purple spots all over, which may help in directing an order (35 cents a copy, $2.00 a year) to P.O. Box 145, Cambridge 38, Mass.

In an editorial, "The Place of Opposition," explaining why the magazine came into being (the editorial seems by far the best thing in this issue), it is said:

> The struggle of this magazine has been to assume the critical position which dissatisfaction with the University necessitated. There is, it has been our conviction, much that is drastically wrong with Harvard's system. *i.e.* itself was started partly to give some of the content which we felt was lacking in University courses, and partly because the only other possible outlet, *The Harvard Advocate*, was a hotel for stuffed shirts.

The role of this review will not be to echo criticisms of Harvard. In fact, the reader will quite possibly feel a bit grateful to Harvard for provoking *i.e.* into existence. We may be wrong, or not have our finger on the pulse of things on contemporary campuses, but the quality of this thinking and writing seems to us to mark a new plateau of student criticism (student criticism is hardly an adequate description) .

There is not, as a matter of fact, much direct criticism of Harvard in the editorial, but discussion of university education, which the reader is left to apply for himself. After arguing that the undergraduates are the best judges of the system of education they are experiencing, the editorial says:

> The primary concern of both teachers and the institution of teaching is frequently not with the act of teaching but with rewards extrinsic to that act. There is too little relation between advancement and good teaching. This is partly because nobody has decided exactly what teaching is, though everyone can recognize a professional chair; just as not many people understand what makes a good paper, though everyone understands an A. The temptation is to shortcut directly to the extrinsic reward, which in the end gives only a monotonous satisfaction and a sense of futility. The essential thing about this type of reward is that it was not originally designed as a reward. Originally it was intended to be an evaluation of an activity that had its reward in itself—just because it was an immediate activity whose actor was in contact with the present, lost neither in remembrance of past nor in future dreams. At this stage evaluation demanded human response as its basis, and it was only when this response was not forthcoming, that evaluation became what so often it now is, mere measurement, which has less and less to do with the nature of the thing measured, as the score of a tennis game does not embody the quality of the game. Now a man's height has suddenly become his personality. This change in the originally intrinsic standard of value has resulted in the present absence of energy in teaching and learning. A standard of measurement increasingly distant from its object, increasingly independent of that object, will almost invariably be a distraction from the pursuit of that object.

Here, the editorial is saying over and over again that education is an end in itself, and not a means to some other end. This is not a new idea, but it is an idea that is easily obscured by people who care more about other things, yet are so desirous of the "spiritual" prestige connected with having an education that they surround education with symbols of status in educational achievement, so that they can both have it and not have it. Accordingly, those who really want an education are obliged to discover afresh with each generation that they are not getting it, and to insist that this be admitted, while setting about getting one for themselves.

In our recollection, the protest of the present generation at Harvard is better than any previous protest. It does not say, as was common in the thirties, that education ought to have a better end than the one it has. The *i.e.* editorial does not demand ends for education, but for recognition

that education is its own end and reward. The editorial continues, examining the idea of "measurement" in education:

> The whole concern for measurement probably reveals an initial absence of commitment to what is being measured, an insecurity of interest. For measurement is reassurance derived from an abstract point of view—but one who is interested in his activity does not often think of bringing measurement to justify it. Its existence is its justification. In fact, if it truly exists its justification is not even thought of. Again, the need to measure something indicates distraction. If you are interested in what you claim to be interested in, you intuit its nature so completely, you are so occupied with it, that there will be no question of erecting an alien standard with which to justify your activity. An art critic who has to ask how long it took to paint a picture before he can make judgments of it is not much interested in painting. The irony is that time can often be a condition of quality. However, it is a descriptive element, external to the act; it has nothing to do with the general nature of painting. It takes two hours to wash a car [*no*; a Greyhound bus, maybe], but two hours do not mean a washed car.

This point is well made. We doubt if marks have much part in the interest of those who work at Princeton's Institute of Advanced Studies; marks really belong only to the instrumental studies which the student pursues in order to acquire an education. Skill, after all, can be measured, and doubtless should, in order to qualify the student for a life of the mind which is relatively unhampered by lack of technique.

One thing that ought to be said about a university is that it involves compromise, like all other institutions. The evils of compromise in institutions become evident in direct proportion to the height of the ends which are sought. In education, therefore, the signs of compromise are peculiarly odious. A university which rewards its students with high grades for "excellent work" is a little like a church which rewards its members with certificates of the Good Life. *Of course* a university student does good work: that is what he is there for.

Marks are a compromise with childhood in the university; and its degrees are a compromise with status in the world. This is bad enough, but the situation becomes intolerable when the compromise is mistaken for the authentic processes of education.

Degrees do not make lawyers, doctors, teachers. Degrees put men and women in position to either serve or swindle the public as lawyers, doctors, teachers. Since we need lawyers, doctors, and teachers, or think we do, the universities must turn them out, and since the public must have, or thinks it must have, protection against incompetent lawyers, quack doctors, and ignorant teachers, the universities issue degrees which purport to guarantee that their possessors will not swindle, but will serve. A university, of course, cannot guarantee the motives of a professional; it can, however, measure, after a fashion, a graduate's skill, so that here we have a working justification for marks and degrees.

It is one thing to admit that we have to have a system of this sort, but something quite different to regard the system as a fine thing. Nor is this system of any great importance in fields where the student does not intend to make a sale to the public after he graduates. Yet professionalism of this sort now dominates all education.

i.e.'s diagnosis continues:

> Standards of measurement are strong distractions both in the B.A. and Ph.D. systems. Now, though the Ph.D. student is no longer required to master knowledge in Augean quantities, he still focusses primarily on facts, to the detriment of understanding.

This is natural enough. Facts can be "counted." The student can be rewarded according to the number of facts:

> On the undergraduate level the examiners are suspiciously concerned with how much of what was supposed to be done has been done, not with responding to accomplishment itself.

But how is the instructor to recognize "accomplishment" when it occurs? How shall he refute undergraduate vanity in the place of accomplishment? How, indeed! This is one of the reasons why teaching is and ought to be difficult. The substitution of facts for imagination, or arrangement of the facts for original thought, makes teaching easy—a kind of trade:

> When the necessitarians explain that anything more than simple measurement is impossible because of "prevailing conditions" they are saying that they are themselves "prevailing conditions."

Exactly. A teacher is not called upon to solve the problems of growing population in a mass society. It is not his job to meet Lockheed's requirements for graduate engineers. It is his job to teach, and if "conditions" make real teaching impossible, he should climb on his soap box and tell the world that teaching has stopped, and that the production line of certain skills, technologically useful to our society, has taken its place. Or, lacking this sort of courage, as most of us do, he can at least perform his odious tasks without piety, platitude, or apologetic, and help the boys and girls to understand what is really going on:

> The teacher knows himself to be a teacher because of some lively change that takes place within himself and within his students, when he conveys his concern with life to them; he knows that simulating the appearance of teaching and being called a teacher do not make him one. Similarly the academic compulsion to "write" can only impede this transfer of interest from teacher to student, since very little scholarship or academic criticism has active pedagogic value. Scholarship is not teaching, just as the dates of a war, or a complete paraphrase of Plato is not learning. Living personalities that know what to be courageous about and what has to be suffered and what can be done to countervail this suffering—these are educated people.

Well, we don't know much about Harvard, but there are *some* teachers of this sort at the University of California; probably, the proportion is about the same in all big universities. But probably, also, the good teachers have to buck the system in whatever way they can, and usually without the help of people like the undergraduates who publish *i.e.*

Recently, in "Children . . . and Ourselves," a University of California faculty report on student apathy was quoted. It was good, very good, but not any better than the following from the *i.e.* editorial, which may be taken as an unintended but pertinent rejoinder:

> The great lament now is apathy. This is the most inarticulate form of opposition, and it has come to exist because there is very little place for articulate response. There can be no responsiveness unless all its varied forms, including such a strong but uncomfortable one as opposition, are encouraged and reacted to. Opposition is blindly tabooed and ignored as immature. The danger of this taboo is that the teacher puts a hortatory value on the word "immature" as if the student could and should wilfully induce his own maturity. The most he can do is suppress what are considered his immature traits, which simply means that immaturity will then be characterized by suppression rather than by the traits which have been suppressed. This is a failure to see the undergraduate as a person who must simply grow toward maturity, who cannot impose maturity on himself, who is the way he is. He will change, develop and grow, but forcing this process will only result in stunted counterfeits of maturity. However weak, timid, and confused the response, the teachers must see it as it is—not pronounce upon it. As things are today, the teacher too often crushes the beginnings of responsiveness, which never therefore reaches articulate form, but from fear descends into apathy. The forms of apathy are innumerable. They are characterized by automatic, inflexible behaviour, and by the synthetic energy that accompanies alarm rather than zeal. This inarticulate, apathetic opposition leads nowhere, since the individual, becoming more and more his own background, loses all self-awareness; a more articulate opposition would force him into awareness, into a dialogue with his own immediate relation to society.

Many years ago, in *The Theory of the Leisure Class*, Thorstein Veblen described the after-effects of war—he wrote of the Civil War, but what he said applies generally—proposing that a sudden enlargement of the importance of *status* and other external marks of achievement results from the

gross emotionalism of the war spirit. Life tends to lose what inwardness it has possessed; also religion, which suffers a reversion to anthropomorphism. The *i.e.* editorial makes a similar analysis of the present, although not relating the condition to the aftermath of war:

> To a great degree this is a society of exhibitionists; everything is done to prove something. Everything is symbolic. What a writer writes is of no importance; that he "writes" is the subject of a million remarks. The common currency is reputation, which is floated in as many bad as good stocks. The reputationless poor are envious, and worse, do not express their envy except in a seeping resentment which occupies them completely; never do they free themselves of their pain. There are attempts at art, but never is there any general discussion of what is being done either by the doers or the viewers. There is no interest in general principles, no attempt at summing up what is happening, what one is doing. If people are not aware in this way, there can be no communication. Now people act as if they were always scoring on some gigantic invisible scoreboard. Whose approval is wanted anyhow? Who is it that must not be disappointed? Until this is answered there will be no possibility for an activity to exist for its own sake, it will always exist to prove something else. It will only be evidence, and activities which are not allowed to assume their own reality can only be the concern of escapists, and can only produce escapists.

Well, we have managed to quote considerably more than half the editorial. Its preponderant accuracy, we think, justifies the sweep of its rhetoric. There are of course many other tendencies in the United States, but they do not dominate academic institutions, and academic institutions are what the editorial is about.