

ARGUMENTS FOR FREEDOM

A TECHNOLOGIST'S argument for social arrangements allowing maximum freedom is contained in the April 1956 issue of the *Technology Review* (published by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology). The writer, H. B. Phillips, is concerned with serving the general welfare, and after examining various ways of reaching public decision, he adopts the conclusion that "maximum freedom" for the individual should be the rule. The argument is this:

The probability of including a correct solution will increase with the number of choices, and will be greatest if each individual makes his own choice. The correct solution will then be indicated by the greater success of the individual who makes that choice. Throughout the history of evolution, this has been nature's method of making a choice, and in human affairs it is what we call freedom. The purpose of human freedom is thus to provide maximum diversity of action and therefore the maximum probability that somebody will be right.

The general validity of this contention is so obvious that it is necessary to take only casual notice of possible "exceptions." Projects, for example, which require the collaboration of the entire community, cannot be "proved" by the successful action of an individual. An individual may perhaps make a "symbolic" demonstration of his idea, but this is different from proof on a social basis. Gandhi, for one, lived a non-violent life, and his career was so impressive that he persuaded others to adopt his principles as a mode of social action. Then, as time went on, evidence approaching the level of proof of the power of non-violent action began to accumulate. However, there is no widespread agreement, as yet, on the ultimate validity of the power of non-violence. Even so, Gandhi might be claimed by Mr. Phillips as a rather remarkable vindication of his claim, since Gandhi *did* give social birth to

what was previously his private idea (this is not to ignore the extensive religious tradition of *ahimsa*, or harmlessness), and the fact that the social communities of South Africa and British India allowed Gandhi the scope of action necessary to lead demonstrations of non-violence was the sort of social midwifery necessary to bring the idea to birth. A Hitler would probably have shot Gandhi and thus denied his society this discovery of a new form of social action.

But let us examine some of Mr. Phillips' subordinate arguments. Reviewing theories alternative to the idea of maximum freedom, he speaks of backward peoples who imitate their ancestors, refraining from "doing the things that would enable them to work less, have more, and live longer." He then makes this comment:

Such failure to make use of opportunities has led simple-minded people in all ages to advocate restrictions on freedom. In the Middle Ages, for example, people thought they knew the way to heaven. They did not consider it right that others should be lost by following the wrong road, and so used force to make them follow the right. Assuming that they did know the way to heaven, this use of force was entirely justified. A few bruises or broken bones are trivial in comparison with broiling throughout eternity in hell. But, if they were wrong, they had no right to force their errors on others. In our own time many think they know better business methods. They do not think it right that the public welfare should suffer through the use of inferior methods, and therefore advocate socialist schemes for handling business. If these socialist schemes are really better, no fancied personal freedom should be allowed to interfere with putting them into effect. In all such cases, if right methods are known, they should be enforced, since freedom then consists merely in the privilege of being wrong. Ignorance is thus the only excuse for freedom.

We don't see why Mr. Phillips should end his paragraph this way, since it seems quite possible that ignorance *is* the only excuse for freedom.

Surely John Dewey, when he affirmed that freedom is knowledge of necessity, was putting the same conclusion in the form of a paradox. A man who knows what to do with absolute certainty no longer has a choice in what he does. Perhaps the difficulty is with the word "ignorance," which has an unpleasant feeling-tone. A synonym would be "unexplored portions of the universe or of human experience." This is ignorance in a more glamorous form.

But there are further difficulties. Mr. Phillips offers the hypothetical assumption that "right methods" may be known, saying that if they are, compulsion is entirely justified. Is he really entitled to make this assumption?

At the end of his article, he offers an account of what he means by "general welfare," to which "right methods" are hypothetically applied. He writes:

But some would ask why should we continue forever to advance? In terms of conventional morality a simple answer is that failure to make all possible advance is immoral. Helping others is the central feature of Christian ethics. These others are not only all now living but all who will live in the future. The advances we make contribute to the welfare of the present and to that of all future generations. The greatest contributions to human welfare are not made by those who serve the people, but by those who determine how to serve. The greatest contributions to engineering, for example, are not made by engineers but by physicists. The greatest contributions to medicine are not made by doctors but by chemists and biologists. The greatest contributions of all are made by those who establish the underlying principles. For example, Newton probably contributed as much as any individual in the last thousand years. For Newton's work laid the basis for the power age in which the labor of human muscles was replaced by that of machines.

Now we begin to see what Mr. Phillips means by the general welfare. He means the benefits growing out of technology and medicine and physics, enabling people "to work less, have more, and live longer." Now these *are* benefits, for the reason that they are opportunities. They increase the potentialities of human freedom. But benefits

of this sort, as moralists endlessly call to our attention, do not offer any guidance in the matter of how to use our increased leisure, how to avoid bondage to our increasing possessions, and how to give greater aim to our longer lives.

This being the case, we may say that the general welfare, according to Mr. Phillips, is quite candidly material welfare, and his right methods, therefore, are right methods in relation to our material welfare.

Now since the service of material welfare is a matter of technology, and since the truths of technology are "scientific" in origin, and since scientific truths are by definition public truths which can be verified by anyone who will take the trouble, it is doubtless correct to say that when such truths are known, there need be no "freedom" to ignore them. Mr. Phillips shares this view, for he points out that 99 per cent agreement can be obtained from scientific experts on all matters which are covered by well-ascertained scientific facts. Accordingly, the administration of the general welfare at this level may be authoritarian without mishap or injustice. Fact is dictator. We need only have a care to be sure that our facts are really facts, that the agreements assumed are really agreements.

However ominous the implications of this last proviso, it should be at once admitted that there are large areas of human activity in which we need have no fear. There are no serious arguments on how to build bridges or railroads or steamships or highways. These undertakings involve only technical issues which may be safely left to the experts. The general welfare is adequately served by these experts, within the competence of their specialties. Problems arise only in the fields where "right methods" are arguable on other than technological grounds. As Mr. Phillips puts it:

The problem is then what to do when agreement is not practically unanimous. This problem has been handled in several ways. One method was to leave the solution to a dictator. In primitive societies that was probably not a bad solution, but one that is now

completely obsolete. Another method is to leave the decision to the intellectually superior. When the experts are in substantial agreement, as in science and engineering, that is certainly the correct solution. But when there is considerable difference of opinion, there is no evidence that the intellectuals supply any better answers than ordinary people. This has led to a third method, that of making decisions by majority vote. As Aristotle points out, this has the great advantage of making more people satisfied than dissatisfied. But a state of mental satisfaction doesn't help much if the decision is wrong, and the preponderance of votes in a ballot box has little connection with right and wrong.

These methods all have a common defect, namely, that they all lead to a single solution, . . .

Mr. Phillips' objection to the "single solution" is that it is likely to be wrong. Hence his "maximum freedom" idea to assure greater opportunity for the right solution to turn up.

But, on other grounds, we should like to object to the "single solution" idea for the reason that it is *toned* to be wrong in all those areas which have to do with another sort of general welfare than the material.

There is certainly no single solution for how to use our leisure, how to regard our possessions, and how to find direction for our lives. Thus the prophet who proposes a final single answer to these questions is inevitably a false prophet. There is no collectivist path to salvation, either on earth or in heaven, and for this reason Mr. Phillips is not entitled to assume, even hypothetically, that the "right methods" can be defined. Or, to put the matter in another way, if the right methods for such objectives can be described, it will be obvious that they are wholly unenforceable!

We have no real quarrel with Mr. Phillips, nor even a significant difference. Our point is a supplementary one—or, as we should prefer to put it, his point is supplementary to ours.

The grounds for freedom, in other words, begin with consideration of the welfare which is not material, but human—the welfare which is not general, but individual. We submit that the

general welfare, in these terms, has no existence except as the sum of individual welfares, and that the general welfare at the material level has little survival value without individual welfare above the material level.

The proposition, here, is that no genuine human problem is ever capable of final settlement, for the reason that each man must learn to settle it for himself. This is the ultimate complaint against revealed or dogmatic or creedal religion. Revelations, dogmas, and creeds all pretend to be final solutions. It is not, as Mr. Phillips proposes, that they have little chance of being right; it is that they have no chance of being right, since they attempt a collective solution for an individual problem.

They involve a terrible confusion as to the nature of certainty. An engineer can produce some certainties by means of his formulas. Within the application of those formulas, the certainties are final. We do not have to think about them any more. They represent finished or perfect knowledge of a sort. The great deception of dogmatic religious doctrine is that it is presented as possessing the same *kind* of certainty as the engineer offers us. This comes close to being the ultimate delusion of human life.

There are, however, parallels. Since we have mentioned Gandhi, we might as well use him again as an illustration. Gandhi seemed able to practice in his career with the same degree of certainty that the engineer illustrates in his work. Gandhi, that is, went about his appointed tasks with a magnificent serenity, supported by inward conviction. He gave no one who knew him the impression of being a deluded man. Rather he greatly moved most of the people who came into contact with him, even to the extent of changing their lives. The same sort of influence is recorded of Jesus, and, in fact, of every great religious teacher.

So, we admit the parallel and acknowledge the possibility that there *is* a kind of certainty in the religious or philosophic life, with one all-

important qualification—that it is not communicable in the same way that the certainty of the engineer is communicable.

And yet, it is a certainty or a wisdom which may be achieved.

What are the terms of communication, not of wisdom, but of the way to wisdom?

The terms of the communication of the way to wisdom are the subject-matter of religion and philosophy. Since they aim at contributing to the conditions of discovery, or self-realization, they are not simple and unequivocal, but paradoxical, subtle, and often obscure. Some of the terms of religious philosophy, of course, are simple and direct. Counsels to ethical behavior often seem uncomplicated, plain to all, but it is certainly a mistake to assume that ethical behavior is plain to all. Righteousness is simple only when it is wholly understood. Perhaps we should say that righteousness involves both simplicity and subtlety.

One great phase of the communications of religion is mystical in character. Mystical writing has in common with poetry the aim of invoking the imagination in order to produce a state of feeling which is a form of realization. The mystic seeks in symbolism the parallels of inner experience. He endeavors to write in the terms of a universal cipher—the language of the soul. He proceeds on the assumption that all men have potentially the same perceptive faculties and will eventually respond to mystical appeal, for the reason that all men are on the same path and already have in themselves half-formed impressions of the truths the mystic seeks to convey. But he cannot really "convey" them. Rather his aim is to convey imagery which, in the alembic of the reader's mind, may burst into life, ignited by some spark already present, but lacking in fuel.

Since, according to the mystics, there are degrees of internal illumination, so there is a kind of progressive form in mystic writings,

corresponding to the fires of inner illumination. But mystical writings are not, and never pretended to be, "The Truth." They are invocations to the deity within each man—the creative being, that is, the potential Knower of truth.

The materialization of mystical writings by the claim that they actually *contain* truth is a part of the degradation of the secularization of religion. This, we suspect, is the origin of all superstition—the dead shadow of ancient searchings for the truth.

The other great phase of religious communications is intellectual in form and metaphysical in content. Metaphysics attempts a logical blueprint of transcendental reality. Like mystical communications, metaphysics endeavors to establish the conditions for knowledge without itself being knowledge. Metaphysics is a kind of setting of the stage while mysticism intimates the performance that should take place. But the actor is the individual, and without the actor, there is no play.

The truths of metaphysics, insofar as they exist, are subjective both in origin and in confirmation. In materialized form, they become the dogmas of religion. Take for example the Christian idea of salvation through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Originally, the Christ was the anointed one—he who had passed through the ordeals of experience and had gained wisdom, maturity, or, as the ancients said, had been "initiated." The *Christos*, however, was regarded as a principle, not a single man or historical character, whether "Son of God" or not. This principle was held to be potential in every man, needing to be awakened, needing to become triumphant. Christian lore, usually refurbished pagan teachings, is filled with memorials to this ancient idea. Every man, in this view, if he is to become a Christ, must pass through Gethsemane, must endure the temptations, and must suffer a kind of crucifixion in order to be reborn as a complete human intelligence—a god.

But there is no *formula* for this transformation and illumination. As *formula*, the sacred drama became a travesty—the story of a miraculous being of flesh and blood who incredibly went through the trials and sufferings of initiation *for others*. What a terrible destiny—to stand before the world as the denier to all men who believe in him of the gift of their own illumination! This was the real killing of the Christ in all—the terrible loss and forgetting of the *Christos* principle!

Here, as in the case of mysticism, is again a dreadful literalism as the price of certainty. The uniqueness of each man's struggle to know became the uniqueness of Christ as Saviour and historical character. Through this transposition Christianity became a mass religion promising *collectivist* salvation, not through the authentic magic of self-realization, but through the spurious incantation of a "belief." And since "belief" became the key to certainty of salvation, the Christian doctrine of the Vicarious Atonement acquired the authority we now allow to engineering manuals. The assumption which runs through all these inversions and degradations of religion is that the stuff of human life, the minds and souls of men, can be made to act and react in the same way that the physicist or the chemist compels matter to respond to his intentions.

Science is prediction, and the reliability of the scientist's predictions is the measure of his science. All technology is based upon this principle. But human beings represent another order of reality. They cannot be manipulated as matter is manipulated. Men try to manipulate them, it is true, but they succeed only as they dehumanize them. A manipulated man is no longer a man.

Thus freedom, while indispensable to the general welfare, is even more important to the welfare of the individual. It is Mr. Phillips' contention that diverse activities permit the originality which, in the end, will lead to the best way of doing things for the general welfare. It is our point that originality of thought, or the

privacy of personal experience, is the *only* way that the individual welfare can be gained. Practical compromise may have a place in the arrangements for general welfare, but not one decision can be delegated to another in the search for truth.

REVIEW

"COMPOUNDED OF FEAR AND SHAME"

NEARLY everyone is investigating everyone else these days, and it is quite evident that the proponents and sometimes the opponents of "loyalty" probes are highly factional in both approach and language. John Cogley's *Report on Blacklisting*, however, prepared under the auspices of the Ford Foundation's Fund for the Republic, serves in our opinion as an excellent example of non-factional writing. It is also a psychological study, and one which is quite easy for the average layman to follow. Until 1954 the executive editor of *Commonweal*, Mr. Cogley was appointed in September of that year "by the Fund's Board of Directors," and spent the next eight months interviewing key figures on both sides of the dispute. The Fund asked for a "full factual report on the situation," and for the following reasons, as stated by Paul Hoffman, Chairman of the Board:

At the time this study was launched, blacklisting was a subject of vigorous public controversy, involving civil liberties issues of a serious kind. It raised questions of freedom of thought and speech, of due process, of the protection of the individual against group pressures and of the community against the disloyalty of the individual. It was a controversy in which all participants commonly spoke in the name of the Constitution and civil liberty, but in violently conflicting terms.

Cogley's particular task was to discover the extent of blacklisting in private industry—particularly in the entertainment and communications fields. The broader issue of the constitutionality of Senate investigating committees is touched upon only indirectly—partly, as Hoffman puts it, because "most Americans are convinced that loyalty-security investigations of people working for the government in sensitive positions or seeking key federal jobs are necessary to protect the government from the infiltration of persons who might try to destroy it. But when loyalty tests are applied by private groups to people in private

industries—and people are barred from jobs because they are 'controversial'—many citizens become alarmed."

The appearance of these two 300-page volumes, dealing with blacklisting in movies, radio and television, has, as might be expected, stirred up still further controversy. *Time* for July 23, apparently keeping safely on the side of bigger interests than those represented by the Fund for the Republic, damns the work with faint praise and much sniping, remarking that "Cogley's findings were poorly catalogued, highly opinionated, unbalanced, and in some instances, incomplete." However, *Time* does not deny the basic findings, saying that "Cogley's report found that blacklisting of Communists, 'unrehabilitated' ex-communists and Commie liners was (1) 'almost universally accepted as a fact of life' in Hollywood, (2) prevalent in radio and TV, (3) part and parcel of life in the Manhattan advertising agencies that have powerful influence on radio and TV programming." Yes, the Cogley report establishes these facts beyond any shadow of a doubt, and if it is "opinionated" to acknowledge the harassing effect of the fears felt by entertainers concerning any connection with Communist literature, former "Party" friends, etc.—then we are "opinionated," too.

The Cogley report is chiefly a psychological study because it demonstrates how far out of proportion concern about minor political opinions on the part of entertainers can throw the perspectives of three industries. At one time, a letter-writing campaign, resulting from an American Legion list of "possible subversives," frightened the major studios so badly that they began to "police" their own personnel. Cogley summarizes:

The letter-writing program which began as a result of the American Legion's list was not limited to answering Legion charges. In time the studios began a program of "self-policing." The program opened the door to private accusations and lengthening lists. In some studios, private investigators were hired to run down every charge that might later be presented

as reason why someone should not be employed. Several smaller studios pooled their resources to hire a single "clearance" man.

Other information was voluntarily submitted by busybody citizens and organizations. One young motion-picture worker who joined the industry long after the Legion list was submitted, for example, was called in, after he had been at work for 18 months. He was charged with having written an editorial for his college newspaper criticizing loyalty oaths. He was also asked to explain "active trade union work after having been at the studio for only six months." He refused to disavow these activities and was fired. The young man has no idea of who supplied the studio with this information.

Many actors' contracts were broken, others not renewed when they expired—often merely because personal enmity or political differences had led someone to "write a letter" to the studio. Yet, as Cogley shows from *The Red Decade* by Eugene Lyons—a veteran anti-Communist—most of the actors and actresses who had lent their names to Communist front organizations "had not the remotest idea of what communism was in terms of economic structures or political superstates. For nearly all of them, it was an intoxicated state of mind, a glow of inner virtue, and a sort of comradeship in super-charity."

Along with the other regrettable features of blacklisting comes a marked restraint upon creative work. Dorothy B. Jones, chief of the film reviewing and analysis section of OWI during World War II, said in a concluding article in Mr. Cogley's first volume:

After a year's study of this entire subject, the writer cannot but question to what extent the attack made by the House Committee on Un-American Activities on the content of Hollywood films was the result of a fear (also reflected in earlier Congressional inquiries) that motion pictures—the most popular medium of our time—were beginning to devote themselves seriously to an exploration of some of the social, economic and political problems of our time. There have long been some people—both in Washington and Hollywood—who regard these new trends in film subject matter as both unfortunate and dangerous. And it is possible that this was one of the factors which influenced the manner in which the

1947 hearings were conducted, and which led to the emphasis in these hearings upon film content.

It is one of the basic tenets of democracy that the truth—whatever it may prove to be—is one of the greatest resources of mankind, that unbiased information is one of the ways in which we are continually able to renew the freedom which is so essential to our way of life. During recent years, doubts and unsubstantiated opinions have blurred our vision with respect to the role which the motion picture can play in our society. Claims and counterclaims that the Communists have subverted the Hollywood film (and conceivably could in the future), have aroused fears and suspicions, and hampered a free screen. It has been one of the purposes of the present study to examine dispassionately the *facts* about what the Communists tried to do and what they actually accomplished in relation to Hollywood film content, in the hope that such an inquiry might help to clear the air and accelerate an already evident trend toward making it possible for movie-makers to speak freely on the screen on whatever subjects they please, just as our newspaper writers, our novelists, our public speakers, our TV lecturers and commentators feel free to speak their minds.

The only encouraging note in the whole carefully prepared report by Mr. Cogley comes at the end of Volume II, telling what happened when blacklisting activities threatened legitimate theatre actors and producers. Here, at least, the "blacklisters" encounter intelligent resistance, and the demand that every actor about whom anyone says "red" be "cleared" by a special agency is refused:

The audience for movies and radio-tv is sharply differentiated from legitimate theatre audiences. In the first case, the audience is many removes from the producer. It is vast, impersonal. The legitimate theatre retains a select audience. It does not advertise in the same way as movies and radio-television. It makes its appeals on the basis of the judgment of a small group of critics in New York City.

The result is that the theatre has a better conscience: it is freer. The characteristic attitude of industry people in Hollywood or on Madison Avenue is compounded of fear and shame. The theatre people are proud that they have not succumbed. They are proud of their tradition and proud that they have lived by it, even during a period of great stress and assault.

COMMENTARY ON "GROUP" OPINIONS

THE attention given in "Children . . . and Ourselves" to the compulsions felt by children to hold the opinions of their parents reflects a perception that is slowly dawning in many quarters—the perception that a *group opinion* is practically a contradiction in terms.

The most explicit statement we know of on this subject is in Simone Weil's *The Need for Roots* (Putnam, 1950):

Generally speaking, all problems to do with freedom of expression are clarified if it is posited that this freedom is a need of the intelligence, and that intelligence resides solely in the human being, individually considered. There is no such thing as a collective exercise of the intelligence. It follows that no group can legitimately claim freedom of expression, because no group has the slightest need of it.

The obvious evil in expressions of group opinion is the constraint that tends to be felt by some members of the group. "The intelligence is defeated," Simone Weil notes, "as soon as the expression of one's thoughts is preceded, explicitly or implicitly, by the little word 'we'." She proposes the abolition of political parties—at least, of the "French" sort of political parties—remarking in passing that "the rival teams in the United States are not political parties"! She adds:

A distinction ought to be drawn between two sorts of associations: those concerned with interests, where organization and discipline would be countenanced up to a certain point, and those concerned with ideas, where such things would be strictly forbidden. Under present conditions, it is a good thing to allow people to group themselves together to defend their interests, in other words, their wage receipts and so forth, and to leave these associations to act within very narrow limits and under constant supervision of the authorities. But such associations should not be allowed to have anything to do with ideas.

The thing that makes Simone Weil's book sound completely utopian is such casual references to "the authorities"—in nearly every

case in a connection where the authorities would be called upon to exercise exquisite judgment.

But this is not really the point. If a proposal for social order seems unenforceable, the idea may nevertheless be vitally important to think about. Reforms which are impossible today may become quite feasible after a generation of serious reflection on them, with widespread effort on the part of individuals to put into practice the principles they represent.

CHILDREN and Ourselves

SOMETIMES, when one ponders the complexities attending adult life, some simple counsel of great advantage to parent or teacher emerges. Take for instance a recent discussion of institutional versus individual ways of thinking, which turned up the following thought: One thing we know for sure—that the "individualist," unless he has a true calling for independent action, is a sorry sight.

Even the "radicals"—pacifists or revolutionaries along political lines—are clearly subject to stereotypes of judgment. Not all "radicals," of course, and not all the time. Many an ardent reformer who could not stomach the superficial values of a prevailing economic or educational system has been, at least at first or for a while, able to "stand alone with his principles." Though such a phenomenon may be lightly treated, considered simply as a flush of enthusiasm, or even as withdrawal to an impossible world of fantasy, the man who stands alone in quiet confidence is apt to be a happy man and a good one. Even his opponents learn something of courage and perseverance from his tenacity or integrity. Such persons, however, usually attract to them others who wish to share the secret of this strength, to feel something of a guiding purpose sensed in a self-reliant man's thought and actions. And when a *group* of "radicals" begins to form, some entirely new psychological factors are apt to intrude. The equation of leaders and followers is inescapable, and this, in turn, produces something of the atmosphere of a religious institution. The sons and daughters of radicals either react strongly against the thought of the parents—which is a kind of "following" in itself—or are apt to think that they *should* be radicals, and radicals of the same sort as their fathers. An influential teacher in high school or college has the same effect—or it may originate simply in the close ties of personal companionship. Yet any one, whether man or adolescent, who is a "radical" according to someone else's pattern, is usually still a long way from finding himself, since the true radical is such precisely because he knows how to stand alone.

Individual pacifists, for instance, are quite likely to be remarkable people, but pacifists who join with one another in organization, as a man joins a team or a church, are often not remarkable at all. They, too, like the rest of us, lift their timid spirits by recourse to the words or example of some current hero in the field, and the tragedy of it all is that the bolstering is not quite adequate. Then there are the "tired radicals"—men who once had the fire of conviction, but whose energies have flagged, and who now show but a reflection of former convictions. And if you are no longer much good as a "radical," it is best to stop trying to think of yourself in those terms.

The upshot of all this is, we believe, that no man should attempt a commitment unless he has a true calling for the task. If he *has* a calling, he will never be querulous or cynical, but if he is merely a follower, a hanger-on, he will likely exhibit both attitudes. He will begin to judge people by their alliances rather than by their motivations, and what he gains in the number of his nominal associates he will lose in depth and intensity of friendship.

So the parent or teacher would do well to instruct a child to undertake no alliances for which he does not feel a spontaneous calling. One has to earn a living, it is true, but to prepare for the medical profession, for journalism or for business administration, because in a given social or familial circle these lines of endeavor are approved, may cause indefinite postponement of self-discovery. Most youngsters who enter college with "an intelligent plan" of career have somehow been betrayed. A man doesn't make a life to pattern—not if it is a life worth living—because a life worth living must involve exploration and self-discovery. Granting all the notable exceptions, one gains the clear impression that the young people who eventually have the most to give in a particular field of endeavor are the least sure of themselves until they reach their majority—and sometimes for ten years afterward. If this happens, it is perhaps because they are honest, above pretending that someone else's definition of a good life is satisfactory to them.

Some of our farmers should be college professors, and some of our college professors,

farmers. Many who go to sea should stay on land and *vice versa*. Others who have never written a novel should write one, while the scions of some literary families would have done better to never attack a typewriter.

There are, in other words, two kinds of drifting for those who seek personal orientation. The first sort is natural and normal—constituting an open-minded exploration of both values and specific opportunities for work. The man who makes up his mind too quickly, however, or because of the unconscious pressures exerted by his circle of acquaintances, may do his drifting later. Whether he consider himself a military man or a pacifist, a socialist or a Republican businessman, he may have to labor painfully to produce the proper responses for his calling. His feelings will drift while his mind remains anchored, and when he is in this position he has no calling at all save that of seeking painful adjustment to a predetermined course.

When a man is tired of being a radical, he has already become something else, and when the youngster is wearied by the prospect of the profession he has chosen he no longer belongs in the aura of that profession. Instead, he drifts. To *know* that he is drifting, and to know also that a "casting loose" from what used to seem secure moorings plays a necessary role in the cycle of learning, makes everything all right—but to be afraid of a lack of fulfillment in a chosen line simply creates a split personality. Institutions often kill a man by draining away his creativity, by compromising his individuality. The labels of institutional alliances are comforting, but the glue for affixing them is corrosive; the man trying to be something he is not, or mechanically trying to continue something he once did spontaneously, is lost. Hope, then, that your children will not channel their efforts too soon, that they will avoid early alliances and the temptation to bolster a personal lack of certitude with the propagandized certitude of other people. And hope that they will remain uninterested, for quite a while, in specializing their talents. No one can stop the youth who has a genuine calling for one of the professions; the rare one who desires with an abiding passion to be a doctor is not to be turned aside, nor

one who feels he *must* teach, or write. The young man with a calling does not need to be counselled or encouraged: and if he finds the way to his work difficult, this may merely heighten his passion.

But the approach of many parents and teachers seems to be grounded on the false assumption that youths need to be wheedled or bribed into accepting the disciplines of a casually chosen "career." Like the child who dislikes, or becomes indifferent to, music because his parents instituted "for his cultural good" the tyranny of weekly piano lessons, the youth who lets someone else put his feet on the path will not have much interest in walking. Children and adolescents need to be "trained"—if one can stomach the word—but training should help them to accept their actual responsibilities in the home. The activities for which they feel a true calling will spur them to train themselves.

The offspring of well-to-do families often are "trained" to play a musical instrument, trained to swim and to play tennis. And, so far as we can see, the result is usually discouraging. What one eventually achieves is a young man who looks a bit like a swimmer when he swims, or a tennis player when he plays tennis, but isn't really either. No calling. And a psychological barrier is set against discovering a true enthusiasm for either at a possible later date. The best professional assistance becomes a part of that barrier, too, for the youth feels quite keenly, even though he may not understand, what amounts to a humiliating situation; *he is expected to be a good imitator*, and, while docile enough about his lessons, cannot feel himself a genuine participant.

For young people in college, we still favor Joseph Wood Krutch's proposal for a six-month's "thebaid," or hermitlike retreat, to interrupt the mechanical passage through courses to graduation and specialization. Young people need time to think, time to mature. Often those who leave college for one, two, or even five years, simply trying this and that to earn their way, and then return, are in the best case—least likely to pretend to a calling they do not feel.

FRONTIERS ... And so Proud

ALL it can do is get out of the way, said Felix Cohen. "The Indian Bureau cannot give self-determination to the Indian, all it can do is get out of the way." Felix Cohen's strong sense of justice was symbolically written into the massive *Handbook of Federal Indian Law* which he compiled for the Department of Interior (Administrator of the Bureau of Indian Affairs) as Solicitor under Harold Ickes. The *Handbook*—unfortunately exhausted at the Government Printing Office—is a calm, factual historical survey that documents the betrayal of the Northamerican Indian by the citizens of the United States, through their trusted agents, over a span of three centuries. Staffed by appallingly myopic bureaucrats with little human or cultural understanding, the Indian Bureau retains the mentality of eighteenth-century colonial administrators whose pernicious policies deride the moral pretensions of the United States in the eyes of millions of non-white people abroad.

When Uncle Sam was negotiating the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, so the story goes—this happened over a hundred years ago—Yankee spokesmen, upon questioning the Mexican representatives as to what they intended to do about their Indians, by indirection proposed that the original Americans of Mexico should be herded into "reservations," following the precedent established in the United States. In countering the virtues of this noble example, Mexican officials pointed out that the white man constituted a tiny minority in Mexico and that if any one were to be settled on Mexican "reservations," it would be the white man, not the Indian. This shocking revelation was followed by embarrassed silence and a sudden change of topic.

A comparison of the Indian policies of the United States with the Mexican experiment in international cooperation and a glance at the enormous problems comprehended in the

acculturation of her vast autochthonous population offer fresh perspectives and contrasts to our own indifference and disregard of the issues.

Not far from Bonampak, gateway to the Kingdom of the Ancient Maya, the Greeks of the New World, lies Las Casas, last principal Mexican town west of Guatemala. Named in honor of the intense Indian champion, Friar Bartolomé, Las Casas is an enchanted town where picturesque traditions of her Mayan population flourish.

Here the National Indian Institute—*Instituto Nacional Indigenista*—equivalent of our Indian Bureau, maintains its pilot coordinating center, reputedly the world's foremost experiment in applied anthropology. Appropriately, the Mexican is not heir to a culture of festering ethnic neuroses: he is innocent of racial snobbery. Directed by capable anthropologists, the Institute aims to incorporate the autochthonous population into national consciousness without annihilating their organic culture; to synthesize their ancient social values with the historical continuum. Following the pattern of this center, Mexico has established similar projects among the Tarahumara, Mixteco, Mazateco and other aboriginal groups.

The anthropologist, whose preoccupations with the *why* of a culture should deepen an awareness of his own ethnocentrism and sharpen his perceptions of the universal values of Man, is far better trained to guide a project in intercultural coordination than political opportunists. This is not, however, to ignore the sheer naivete and/or timidity of academic anthropologists who would continue to acquiesce to powerful economic interests, rather than apply the principle of self-determination, sole just basis for winning native cooperation.

Paradoxically, the all-pervasive *mañana* attitude of Ibero-America—never do today what can be done tomorrow—an acute aggravation to Northamericans who stress celerity, has been innocent ally of native self-preservation. Given

time, more Indians might have recollected their dismembered roots and healed their seared souls, with happier consequences to a freer nation. The slow-down or "What's the rush?" frame of mind, component in Mexican ethos, is another major contribution of the Indian to the entire world. The unassimilated Indian has no anxiety neuroses, peculiar symptom of syncopated industrial urban culture.

In recalling Mayan history, one is reminded that the aboriginal residents of Chiapas, Tabasco, Campeche, Yucatan and Quintana Roo maintained a fanatic resistance to the intruder, whom they fought to their last retreat, the forests, where many found refuge. Even here they were not left in peace. Torn from his ancestral womb, the autochthonous American generally lost continuity with history. Deprived of identity, his hope wrenched, he became Nobody. His occupations destroyed or perverted, procreation remained one of his few diversions; and his children were bequeathed a heritage of personal and social chaos, a destiny of meek servitude. Debauchery insensitized his humiliation.

Admirably, the Mayan has preserved his racial roots, his cultural traditions and language—above all, an innate human dignity—behind a barrier of passive resistance to the alien invader, the Bishop Landas and the chicle hunters who have brought disease and death. The veneer of Catholicism assumed by this tribe is a distinctive Mayan adaptation to Roman trappings, a superimposition of ancient indigenous pageantry upon an alien theology. His own unique synthesis, without trauma to his soul, has resulted.

The descendant of the old Maya is still Indian from the peak of his hat to the soles of his boots. Miraculously, he has escaped the cycle of deculturation, demoralization and degradation, legacy of colonization and conquest. One's pride swells to see these descendants of the old Maya come to market attired in native dress modified little from that worn by their forefathers. Esteeming their ancient traditions, exalting their

bright ancestral costumes, even the poorest Mayans are clothed in tasteful homespun woolen skirts, blouses, colorful hats that today carry shining ribbons instead of the quetzal feathers of 1900 years ago; and for sandals, the men of Zinacantan wear the boots almost identical to those painted on the Bonampak murals.

The Mayan male is more lucently costumed than his spouse or daughter. True to nature, he has not forfeited his prerogative of alluring plumage any less than the quetzal or host of other winged male creatures of the tropical jungles. They throng in the market place, each one distinctly apparelled, poised and dignified, and so proud. French fashion designers would gladly copy many features of Mayan costume.

When questioned about his indigenous neighbors, the *ladino* town dweller invariably pays respect to the high intelligence of the contemporary Mayan. To live among them constrains one to question the popular trend of corporate assimilation which blithely ignores the small nuclear community, foundation of Indian life. The observer wonders if retarding acculturation may not be a good thing.

A short distance east of Las Casas begin menacing tropical jungles, home of the Lacandon, a scattered and self-reliant tribe of Mayan descendants numbering about 300 who seldom mingle with the disdained Indo-European town slicker. The visage of these hardy inhabitants of the primeval forest hints a rare intelligence and innate kindness, qualities universally admired by rational mankind. To the tourist, of course, they may appear as beggars. But while they seem physically rugged, their bodies lack immunity to the ravaging ailments of the intruder. A common cold is as potent as genocide.

The Lacandon worship the gods of their ancestors, hunt game with bow and arrow and fish with spear in cool clear waters. They grow cotton, from which they spin their own garments, and corn and tobacco, and collect fruit in season—mango, papaya, banana, to name a few.

The slash-and-burn technique is utilized to make forest clearings where they raise their minimum food requirements, supplementing harvests gained in the wild state. With their long hair and robe-like dress, the sexes are hardly distinguishable from one another. Of their rectitude, a saga-like legend has arisen. One cannot but wistfully hope for more specimens of free men, that we might absorb some of their inscrutable discernment. That we had, in fact, the wisdom to protect the authentic American rather than destroy him.

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Mexico City