

"THE DUTIES OF FREE MEN"—A REJOINDER

[This article is so informing on the subject of civil liberties that we print it with pleasure and enthusiasm. Too often we take our freedom for granted, not realizing how extensive is the debt of every citizen to the few who watch over the rights of citizens and fight to protect them in the courts. While this article came in the form of a criticism of the leading article in MANAS for July 11—"The Duties of Free Men"—we publish it with the briefest of comment, since it seems to us that the writer mistakenly assumes that we have only small regard for efforts to preserve civil liberties.

Our comment—a paraphrase of the point of "The Duties of Free Men"—is this: People prize freedom most when what they want to do with their lives cannot be accomplished in an unfree atmosphere. *Great thinking and great objectives, in other words, create a climate of opinion favorable to liberty. In a country where original thinking languishes, freedom of expression will tend to languish, also, leaving its defense to an embattled few. This defense we identified as a "holding" or "rear-guard" action. We did not say it was trivial or unimportant or backward. We said that the vigor of original thinking is necessary to widespread appreciation of the importance of freedom of expression.* We also implied that there is not much original thinking going on these days. We offered this suggestion as a contrast to the idea that the sole or most important defense of freedom is to safeguard its legal security. We still offer it. Following is our correspondents letter.—Editors.]

AS to the "Duties of Free Men," first, a minor point, on your methodology, which is so untypical of MANAS that I can only hope it is a slip and not deliberate. After stating that you have not read MacIver's book, you proceed to blast it on the basis of secondhand opinion as being an object of your "distaste for such books. Such big books, and so many of them." We have enough anti-intellectualism in our society which condemns without reading and attacks "big books" in general without MANAS adding fuel to the flames. How do you know that MacIver's book is distasteful? I suggest that "a journal of independent inquiry"

should either read a book before labelling it, or not mention it at all.

Such a method would be particularly appropriate in this case because what is said in the article about academic freedom is pretty silly. It assumes, first, that there isn't much of a problem and that the answers are obvious, "freedom." But there is a problem, and a big one. A foundation of academic freedom is tenure, and tenure carries with it all the advantages and disadvantages of a civil service system. It serves to protect the incompetent and the lazy as well as the pioneer. I suspect that a great deal more academic non-productivity is due to the tenure system, which promotes laziness in many people in all universities, than is due to suppression. Don't misunderstand me, I'm not attacking tenure. But any system of tenure and academic freedom must resolve a very delicate balance between freedom for the institution to insist upon quality of performance and freedom for the individual to speak up on any subject. Take a case known to me of a professor at a large university who was not promoted to tenure status but was dropped instead. He had been active in left wing work, and a charge of academic freedom was raised. The University's position was at least reasonable, however: if we give him tenure, we're stuck with him for life, and he has yet to demonstrate notable scholarly abilities. I don't know the merits of that case, but in many such cases there is merit on both sides. It takes real skill to evolve an institutional system to handle such problems. It may even require big books.

Second, your discussion on tenure rests on a premise which runs through the whole article. The writer appears to assume that the Founding Fathers were like Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, set up a fine system, but then Eve ate the apple and now the fight for civil liberties is a

"rear-guard action, and can never be anything more," presumably because it is trying to restore the perfection which existed before Eve's sin. This is such a basic misconception of American history that I can only suggest that the editors of MANAS make a study of the fifty years, say, following independence. You will find Alien and Sedition acts before 1800, the exclusion not only of slaves from constitutional protection, but of "paupers, vagabonds and lepers" from the privileges and immunities clause of the Articles of Confederation (and by court decision in 1837, the Constitution) . . . etc., etc. To view civil liberties as a protection for what is past is a complete failure of understanding. Take one little point—the right of a poor man accused of crime to be defended by a lawyer at someone else's expense (usually the state). This may seem self-evident today, under the constitutional right to counsel, but it was not law prior to about 1932. To the Founding Fathers, the constitutional provision in the sixth Amendment meant only the right to be represented by counsel retained by the defendant, but it gave nothing to indigents. Only in the Scottsboro case in 1932 did the law start to change, and slowly, through the efforts of civil libertarians, the right has been extended first to defendants charged with capital offenses, then to all federal defendants, then to state defendants where there were "special circumstances," now in some states to all state defendants. There is a multitude of such examples, and not all in criminal law; for example, the growth in the protection afforded by courts and statutes to aliens (which started from zero, where the Founding Fathers left it), the growth in the last couple of years of rights to a passport, the change in the old idea that government employment was a privilege and that the employee could be fired at will to the rapidly developing concept that the state can not be arbitrary and capricious in its firings. The same applies to academic freedom. Until 1945, it meant little, had attracted little attention and was a slender reed. Goodman is right that it has been particularly weak in protection of conscientious

objection. (But note that Harrop Freeman, for example, held his university job all through World War II, something which would have been unthinkable in World War I.) In historical perspective, it seems to me the witch hunts of the past ten years may be the greatest thing that ever happened for academic freedom. I know many universities where for the first time the complicated processes involved are being carefully examined and thought out. This cannot help but be productive.

None of the foregoing are "rear-guard" actions, and could it be possible that your writer's "overwhelming sense of inadequacy" is the product of ignorance both of history and of what is now going on? Our society today is no one-way street propelled by McCarthyism. The challenge is being met in many ways, most of them unspectacular, but in the finest spirit of the founding fathers. Your statement that "no one is saying anything really important" is of course only your own opinion. I certainly don't share it, and I think an objective examination of our present society will make it untenable.

And now to another premise of your article. What we need is new principles, you say. There is too much concern with "the mechanisms and guarantees of freedom," ours "is a world entranced by methods." Apparently we need new abstract principles. I don't understand this, but if you mean what you appear to say, then it requires a vigorous dissent. How do you create this split between abstract ideal and method? How can there ever be too much "method" devoted to the end of freedom? Do you not ignore all the philosophical and religious teachings about ends and means? The methods for which you have such little use are the means without which the ends in practice would be hollow indeed.

You are all for the Founding Fathers, so look at the Bill of Rights, and you will find people who were entranced with the mechanisms of freedom. These ate not abstract ideas but concrete procedural protections, . . . no unreasonable

searches and seizures, no excessive bail, venue protections, compulsory process for witness, right to counsel, right against self-incrimination, etc. Pretty humdrum stuff, but constituting a body of law about procedural due process which is the core of our democratic system of law. This is tremendously misunderstood in our society, schools don't teach it, newspapers pervert it—but I hope MANAS will study it. Just as the means form the end, so the mechanisms of liberty will create or destroy liberty. I wish there was as much preoccupation with method as you seem to think.

Again let me turn to the example of academic freedom. I have before me the governing rules of a large midwestern university never noted for its liberalism. There a faculty committee has been working for two years and has come up with the following:

1. Academic tenure as used herein shall mean permanent tenure with continuous appointment, and, once acquired, shall be terminated only for adequate cause, except in the case of retirement for age, or under extraordinary circumstances because of financial exigencies.

2. In all cases involving termination of services to the University by one who has acquired academic tenure, such person shall be fully apprised in writing of the specific charges against him, and be accorded a full hearing conducted by the regularly elected members of the faculty Senate Committee on Academic Tenure and Privilege. At the hearing, such person shall be permitted to be represented by counsel of his own choosing. Copies of the full stenographic record of the hearing as well as the findings and recommendations of the Senate Committee in the case shall be made available to the party concerned. The recommendations of the Senate Committee concerning the case, together with the Committee's findings and the full stenographic record of the hearing, shall be submitted to the Chancellor for presentation to The Board of Regents for appropriate action. In the event that the Board action is at variance with the recommendations of the Senate Committee, the Board shall detail the reasons for such action in a written opinion, copies of which shall be made available to the parties concerned and to the Senate Committee.

Which paragraph strikes the best blow for the principles of freedom? How realistic would it have been, as your article would apparently prefer, if the committee had stopped after writing paragraph I? The first paragraph is a statement of principles, and of course must be read in the context of existing law that "adequate cause" refers to competence or illness and not to expression of opinion. Many universities have had the first clause, few the second (except in the last few years). The result has been firings without hearing, or after secret hearings before a special committee handpicked for the case by those who are trying to fire the professor concerned. Paragraph I without paragraph 2 has had limited effect, just as the vague generalities of the preamble of the Constitution and Declaration of Independence would have meant little without the specific procedural protections of the Bill of Rights.

This will illustrate why I am impatient with your article and unable to comprehend it. Perhaps all you are trying to say is that procedures alone are not enough and that no law can protect people who have lost the will to be free. If so, you have masked your intent in sloppy expression, but it does not fundamentally change the issue. I know of no period where I have seen adequate support for the view that most people, people in the mass, were devoted to the principle of freedom . . . certainly not the days of the Founding Fathers. The struggle to be free, to have a climate that invites intellectual inquiry and struggle, has always been a struggle waged, by and large, not by competing slogans and abstract principles, but in the resolution of concrete issues. A feeling pervades your article for the big broad statements of earlier days, a longing that only if we could discover a new principle it would wipe away all this messy wrangling with procedures and difficult specific issues like academic freedom about which people have to write their big books. Such nostalgia is an illusion and does a disservice to the principle of freedom.

What would you have the professors struggling with academic freedom and the civil libertarians and the "backward"-moving Fund for the Republic do? Apparently they are to bear the burden of "the good of all," say something "really important"? How do we learn and apply first principles, anyway, if not in the specific struggles in concrete cases? What have the professors who drafted paragraph 2 above really done? It is evident that they have not preserved academic freedom in that way alone, for a people determined to be unfree can ride roughshod over any procedure. But what they have accomplished is to make sure that disputed cases of academic freedom will be fully and publicly heard, that there will be public discussion and turmoil and a discussion of competing principles, and that no decisions can be made hastily. This is a not inconsiderable contribution, and I see nothing "backward" in fighting for freedom in this way, or for the Fund for the Republic, which has financed projects to examine academic freedom and examine why it is an important principle and how it can best be achieved. Under paragraph 2 above, it will take the university concerned at least two years to fire a professor irrevocably, if the professor chooses to contest in the courts. The agreements to such a leisurely and orderly procedure is in itself a major blow for freedom, for our history is full of short lived hysterias. For example, I can imagine a California college trying to fire a professor in the summer of 1942 for measured opposition to the Japanese evacuation. If the decision was made then, the man might well have been fired, but not two years later, when shame had replaced hysteria.

Who carries the burden for the common good? The fund for the Republic has financed studies of job blacklisting, academic freedom, and oppressive postal censorship, to name only three examples with which I am familiar. All are making major contributions in areas that are on the front lines of the struggle for liberty. Such studies are significant developments, long overdue, from foundations that have for too long

concentrated almost exclusively on medical and other physical science research. For example, we have almost no knowledge today about postal censorship. What is "backward" about finding out what may be a very significant infringement of liberty?

Freedom is not an abstraction but a fabric woven out of how we resolve concrete problems in its application. Let me give an example with which you may be familiar as Californians. Suppose the police illegally arrest a man (i.e., capriciously, without cause or warrant), but on searching him find that he has a quantity of narcotics on his person. What should society do? The Constitution says the police shouldn't have done what they did. Common sense says that this man is obviously guilty of possessing narcotics, and (if the quantity is large, which we will suppose) there is a presumption that he is a peddler who is selling the stuff. To convict him, we must have evidence, and the only evidence is the illegally seized narcotics. So if we convict him we weaken the Constitution, by inviting the police to make more capricious arrests. If we don't convict him, we turn him loose to continue a course of criminal conduct which probably everyone will agree should be stopped. At the moment I am not concerned with what should be done in the way of treatment, I am only concerned with the administration of constitutional liberty within the framework of criminal law. Most people would agree that something should be done with addicts, whether it be medical treatment, punishment or (according to a backward Congress) the death penalty. This is not a make-believe problem, but one of pressing importance. The police insist that without illegal searches they cannot enforce the law against narcotics. Many lawyers and more non-lawyers insist that it is silly to let an obviously guilty man go scot free just because a policeman has made a mistake. The courts have split, but recently the California Supreme Court ruled that the defendant must be freed. A majority of the judges decided that implementation of the constitutional provision

against being molested by the police without cause was more important than the apprehension of narcotics peddlers who could be caught if the illegality were tolerated. Although I don't know, I suppose it was California libertarians who fought for and obtained this decision. Of course one result may be that a public determined to be unfree will override the decision by legislative action or constitutional revision. But another result may be that California citizens will not only be freer as a result, but will learn in the process. Your article ignores the interaction between the fight for the specific civil liberties issue and education on the abstract ideal of freedom.

I should now sit down and rewrite this letter and tone down my extreme statements. But I'm afraid if I put it aside for this purpose, it will never get mailed, so please accept it as an intemperate first draft, but in the spirit of "independent inquiry." I guess what aroused my rather sad irritation was a tone of contempt running through the article—contempt for the big books, for efforts to apply the goal of freedom to concrete situations, for the foundation which above all others has broken out of the ruts which have confined institutionalized philanthropy. I hope it will prompt further writing. If these methods offer little promise, what do you suggest?

REVIEW

THE AMERICAN NEGRO

GOODBYE TO UNCLE TOM, by J. C. Furnas, an analysis of the myths pertaining to the American Negro," is in our opinion among the most valuable literary aids to "race relations" yet produced. Mr. Furnas has been known as a distinguished writer for a number of years, but *Goodbye to Uncle Tom* may keep his name alive for generations.

The project of this book began when Mr. Furnas found himself alone for a while with a copy of Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. As an expert dealer in stereotypes, and in abysmal ignorance of the actual conditions of the South under slavery, Mrs. Stowe turned the whole problem of Negro-white relations into a romantic melodrama. Her stereotypes were immediately accepted, and have lingered on to this day, precisely because most men—in 1852 as today—prefer melodrama and side-taking to sober study of a problem. And because of this "make-believe" approach, Mrs. Stowe, though undeniably a "do-gooder," may have done the Negro considerably more harm than any other single individual in the history of the United States. There is a lesson, here, for all those who champion unwisely, moved by the urge to dramatize or by uninformed sentiment.

By the time the twentieth century had arrived, nearly fifty years after *Uncle Tom's Cabin* had been published, the specific characterizations employed by Mrs. Stowe had fortunately been altered, but innumerable psychic impressions arising from this now revered myth still survive—strangely enough, most particularly in the South. As most people know, "Uncle Tom" represents the subservient Negro who, while he may not say "Yassah, Massa!" will deliberately cultivate a split personality in order to survive. An "Uncle Tom" is a Negro who pretends, half the time, that he doesn't really exist as a human being, and Southern Negroes who accept this psychological

refuge make it convenient for arrogant Caucasians to maintain that "Uncle Toms" are the "good" Negroes.

Mr. Furnas begins at the beginning, tracing the whole history of slavery. He preceded his five years of writing with a visit to the West Coast of Africa, then traveled through thousands of miles and hundreds of interviews in both the North and South of the United States. The history of slavery makes its own argument and plea; we begin to realize that the great care taken by Furnas in writing the early sections of the book is due to his belief that opposing prejudice and holding that slavery should never have existed, are less important than learning the *anatomy* of our racial confusion.

Basil Davenport has spoken of Furnas' way of showing "that slavery as an institution was cruel, as someone has said, 'not with the savage ferocity of the tiger, but with the dull insensibility of the cartwheel.' The bitterness of slavery was not the occasional melodramatic tragedy, but the daily and lifelong brutalization of slaves born to a life sentence at hard labor—to the punishment which most civilized countries reserve for the worst of criminals." Davenport further observes that "most sensational—and particularly important, in view of the present ideas of race-purists—are the chapters on miscegenation in the Old South. It was so usual and so extensive that on scientific grounds, Mr. Furnas points out, a good case can be made for the suggestion that most Americans of older stock have unknowingly inherited a trace of Negro blood."

Among the many passages we should like to quote from *Goodbye to Uncle Tom* is his following objection to overdone romantic novels of Negro struggle:

The device substitutes the melodramatic for the meaningful, the teary for the tragic. It aims to discredit racism by *reductio ad absurdum*, but actually it distracts the reader from issues that he might otherwise be cajoled into facing but would really rather skip. It lets him dwell on the minor problem "What would it be like to know you're a

nigger even if you look white?" in order to avoid having his nose rubbed in "What is it like always to be treated like a nigger because you look like one?" Usually, too, the novels named above and their many rivals implicitly misrepresent the meanings of racial mixture. Too often the residual impression is the old error of *Uncle Tom*—that cross-breeds owe their energy and acumen to "white blood."

Mr. Furnas will probably not win friends among professional "pro-Negroes," for he tries to build his thesis on so broad a base as to leave the question of racial equality somewhat "open." While any one reading between the lines can hardly be confused as to this writer's opinion, it is clearly his intention to cut through any possible "racial difference" arguments to propositions which are scientifically demonstrable. An illustrative series of paragraphs:

Suppose the equalitarian right. Then the caste system must be abandoned. Morally it is unfair and cruel. Economically it impairs the full usefulness of millions of more or less able people.

Suppose the racist right. Any conceivable "racial inferiority" is nevertheless too slight to justify the caste system. One does not tie tin cans to the tails of Dalmatians just because they are, on the average, not quite so clever as poodles.

Whichever is right, the only practicality and the only decency is to let the American Negro find his own level according to the luck and genes chance gave him, without caste pressures to keep him underdeveloped or overstrained. To do anything else amounts to that silliest of blasphemies, trying to play God.

If only to save our faces, it is high time we "whites" learned not to care. Perhaps our descendants can manage that. For all its thralldom to the irrational, mankind also has a sporadic rational streak. As each succeeding generation learns a little more impressively through a growing body of research that a sizable and growing proportion of itself consists of crypto-Negroes, race feeling may pass less virulently to the next generation. If our progeny does manage this, it will be a very rare thing—intelligent popular use of a statistical generality.

The closing passages of *Goodbye to Uncle Tom* comprise a sort of self-help treatise on

fighting the psychology of prejudice. Here Furnas is concerned with the importance of recognizing in oneself the indicia of prejudice—even while paying lip service to a beautiful liberalism:

The remedy for *oncletoimerie* lies not in scolding about stereotypes one by one but in getting people out of the puerile habit of using any stereotypes, no matter whose, no matter whether liberally or reactionarily sponsored. Abolish the whole mental-emotional function now performed according to the subject's taste and fancy, by the Bolshevik-with-the-bomb, the politician-with-the-paunch, the boss-with-the-blacklist, the hero-with-the-halo, and so on.

Teach your children *not* that "Negroes are just like everybody else." That is untrue, thanks to the hangover from slavery, caste segregation and perhaps—barely possible, though very unlikely—to minor differences innate in most American Negroes. Teach them to respect persons, not preconceived notions about them—not even preconceptions that feel generous.

So much for your and others' children. While you last, you yourself are more of a problem, because there is no knowing how superficial your reorientation has been. Your present confidence that you may be above race feeling can be deceptive. Middle-aged caste-feelings rooted in irrationality may not yield to widening knowledge, may well persist under well-meaning lip service. If you once felt caste values to some extent—and reared as we were, most of us have done so—they probably went deep into the in-group/out-group feeling so prevalent among mankind. You probably acquired them before you knew how to wash your own face. Haul as you may on your spiritual and emotional bootstraps, you can hardly aspire altogether to win free.

This dismal truth has uses. You may well be an incurable case of the disease of caste feeling, if only as a sort of typhoid carrier mistaken about the fact of recovery. The procedure is not to lie to yourself about your suspicions of yourself, but to act as if you had lied and succeeded in believing yourself. Think of it as treating your embedded caste feeling like an irreducible deformity, which it actually is. Ignore it as far as possible, practice movements and attitudes that minimize its clog on your behavior and intensify the lip service. Be an outrageous hypocrite about it. Letting no caste-inspired word ever escape your lips keeps you from contributing to others' moral delinquency by encouraging their caste-feelings. So at least you will no longer be a stumbling block to

your brother. And you will pass on to younger persons, all the way down to small children, who pick such things up with ghastly alacrity, a minimum residue of such feelings. . . .

And such successive diminutions of caste-feeling are the only way in which, in this respect, people-to-be will ever be improvements on you. This is assume-a-virtue-if-you-have-it-not to some purpose. Perhaps—don't count on it—prolonged forcing yourself to make yourself to make sense outside will help you to make sense inside, and your illusion of lacking caste-feeling will gradually come nearer actuality than you realize.

Most MANAS readers, we think, will feel privileged to participate in the determination flowing from the 400 pages of *Goodbye to Uncle Tom*.

COMMENTARY CONCERNING FREEDOM

WHILE the editorial note introducing this week's leading article says that comment concerning its criticism of "The Duties of Free Men" would be brief, two points in the rejoinder seem to deserve attention.

First, as to the fact that we had not read the MacIver book, we made it clear that we were reporting Goodman's opinions, and emphasizing a particular point he made, rather than attempting our own judgment of the volume. We said: "The manifest pertinence of this *kind* of criticism is all that need be considered, here." Goodman's contention, which we adopted, was that universities are not typically the source of creative thinking, and he objected to the tacit assumption that a blow struck for academic tenure is necessarily a blow for unconfined thinking. Goodman made a judgment of the book *in this respect*. We repeated the judgment as worthy of note.

The second point needing attention revolves around the question of whether or not things "of importance" are being said, these days. Doubtless we should have qualified our opinion, here. What we meant was that there is little expression of deep-laid conviction of a sort which might lead to a renaissance of the human determination to be free. The modern world is under a cloud of sceptical unbelief, and the now virtually traditional claim of scientific "objectivity" tends to produce a mood of indifference toward moral issues. Freedom, we contend, is the product of Socratic intensity, a consequence of absolute commitment. Gandhi's inspiration of the entire Indian people arose from a moral philosophy which gave him values that he would not consider "sacrificing" for reasons of expediency. They came first. Other men were fired by this devotion to ideals and thus was born the movement which led to Indian freedom and independence, and, finally, to the formulation of the Indian constitution with its

legal provisions for securing the freedom of the Indian people.

Every great burst of the spirit of freedom in human history has resulted from a renewed inspiration concerning the nature of man. This is true of both religious and political movements. At this writing, it seems to us, a new inspiration is possibly in genesis—in the ferment of psychological thinking connected with the problems of psychotherapy, in the tendency to revive ancient philosophical ideas, and in the sense of need for orientation which has followed the relative break-down of past religious and political ideologies. But thinking of this sort has by no means reached a level of integration and intensity where it becomes a positive force for human freedom.

CHILDREN and Ourselves

ADVERTISEMENT—UNSOLICITED

FROM time to time this Department feels impelled to recommend the purchase of some reading material. This, it seems to us, is a healthy "communal" equivalent of sharing valued reading with a close friend. Usually such commendations involve magazines such as *The Progressive*, *Encounter*, and *The American Scholar*, but occasionally something outstanding appears in a more conventional periodical. Our present suggestion is that every MANAS subscriber secure the September *Pageant* (4600 Diversey Avenue, Chicago 38) and read "Would You Want this Man to Teach Your Children?"—a featured article inspired by a news report of the firing of an Iowa school teacher.

Certain things about the "Riceville episode" led the staff of *Pageant* to investigate. It developed that Paul Richer, twenty-one-year-old graduate of the State University of Iowa, has been summarily dismissed after twenty-seven weeks of hectic controversy with community and school officials. He was accused of being "Communitic," "anti-religious," and so unorthodox that he "disturbed" the minds of the children. But *Pageant* verified that Richer had absolutely no Communist connections and that he discussed Communism in class only because he felt that social study which avoids mention of the development of Marxist ideology is ridiculous. His "anti-religious" attitude consisted solely in the fact that he opposed the released-time-for-religious-education program, although he occasionally read to his class parallel or contrasting passages from the Bible and Buddhist scripture, to indicate that the educated man must be fair-minded toward all religions.

Some of *Pageant's* findings:

Last fall he [Paul Richer] got his first teaching job in the junior high school in Riceville, Iowa, a

village of 960 people. He was assigned to 50 seventh and eighth graders (between twelve and fourteen years old). He was to teach English, reading, spelling, and social studies, and his annual salary was \$3,350.

From the first day there was an astonishing informality about his classes which admittedly were the noisiest in the building. His kids called him Paul, and as one mother put it, "followed him around as if he were the Pied Piper." So many children crowded around him at lunch time that he used the hour to instruct them in Spanish, which wasn't in the curriculum.

Within a few weeks it seemed that if Paul Richer had deliberately planned it that way he couldn't have offended more people in Riceville; he had an antagonized American Legion, the clergy, the members of the school board, some of the other teachers, and most of the parents. It appeared that only the kids loved him.

For one thing, he added four social study units to the course of study; mental health, crime, war, and communism. The two-and-one-half-week course on communism was an objective, historical study, but most of the parents rose up in arms over exposing their children to the subject at all. One of the most vociferous was the Rev. William Bohi, minister of the 150-member Congregational church. He denounced Richer to his face, and when Richer asked him if he suspected him of being a Communist, the Rev. Bohi, according to his own statement, told Richer, "I do suspect you of being a Communist." With the Rev. Bohi, others also objected to the mental course as being too advanced.

Richer offended Riceville clergymen by letting them know that he objected to the school's mandatory released-time religious period. Parents joined them in protest, particularly after Richer used the book *How the Great Religions Began* in class, and discussed Buddhism with his kids. They said he was encroaching on the clergy's territory.

The president of the school board refused Richer an open hearing in the face of the many accusations made against him, saying that "he couldn't see himself stirring up a lot more difficulty," yet admitted that "Richer is a brilliant chap, very intelligent." Richer's mistake was in being "a crusader, a reformer." The school board official said: "I don't believe Richer had any intent

to do harm. He is quite enthusiastic about his work."

Richer's pupils decided to go on strike to force the board to let their teacher finish his year—and only Richer could convince them that this was not a good idea. What he did do, however, was to write a letter to the inquiring editors of *Pageant*, discussing his philosophy of teaching, and explaining why he chose to do such odd things as to discuss Communism, introduce Shakespeare's plays, and read excerpts from *Of Mice and Men* and from Salinger's *Catcher in the Rye*. It is this communication which MANAS readers will probably want to own—and hold in readiness for passing to appropriate people at appropriate times. For Richer, as anyone can see, simply wanted to teach children to think for themselves:

The sequence of events leading to my discharge is confusingly complex, as is almost always the case when the human element is involved. The following is an illustration of how, by merely adding the ingredient of a misinformed person to the learning recipe, we can endanger the success of the educational cake and run the risk of poisoning the student-eater and/or destroying the teacher-cook.

Shortly after the start of the school year, we began the comparative study of capitalism, using America as an example, and communism, using the obvious example of the Soviet Union. In the two-and-one-half week survey we traced communism from its philosophical beginnings with Engels and Marx down through Lenin and Stalin and what it is and what it pretends to be today. The unit was taught objectively, and we were not afraid to discover and examine the advantages of communism. And just as intelligently we carefully scrutinized its weaknesses. At the end of this survey the students decided that in spite of its efficiencies and rapid economic progress, communism is undesirable because it destroys human inquiry.

The important fact here, however, is not so much the decision, heartening as it is to many of us. The importance lies in the fact that the students decided for themselves. They not only asked questions, they also found the answers. This is education, at least from the point of view of one twenty-one year old.

Apparently some Riceville citizens felt Richer was simply ridiculous when he asked students to write essays on their "outlook on life." Richer responds:

Perhaps a very brief theme by Sharon, one of my pupils, might show you the kind of "outlook on life" essays my kids turned in

"Thinking is like loving and dying; each of us must do it himself. Thinking must be done by you, yourself, no one can do your thinking for you. You may think different than anyone else in the room but do not change what you think so you will not be the odd person; it is the way that you, yourself, think that is important. No one else can do your loving for you, they do not know how you feel toward certain people and would not know how to express your feeling of love. It is surely obvious that no one can die for you. A person's thinking, loving and dying must be done by himself."

As the *Pageant* editors quickly discovered, Paul Richer possesses that "rare and intangible quality that inspired children to think as well as to learn." He is dedicated to the practice of free inquiry; he is a courageous teacher, even brilliant—and friendly to all those who allow it. A reformer, yes. But need we ever fear a reformer who is without a system—who wants only to participate in the release of minds from crystallized ideas? Another paragraph from Richer's letter:

The beauties of creative teaching are an infection. The kids get under your skin and, at the risk of sounding overly sentimental, they get into your heart. Here were 50 very real people preparing to meet a world of contradiction, dishonesty and hypocrisy. Sensitive and sensible as only the young can be, they had questions they wanted answered. Once again the easy way was evasion or the half-truths of generalities, but a kid can spot a liar. I was trying to fashion youngsters with an instinct for the truth into thinking, reasoning individuals. Somehow, in Riceville, this was not wanted.

As Richer knew a long time ago, and as the *Pageant* editors discovered, the oppressive forces in the small town of Riceville are the same forces which exist throughout the United States and throughout the world. By publishing such a story,

Pageant gave thousands of persons, whose own philosophy of education and social action may be confused, opportunity to straighten themselves out, and become able, as have both Richer and Pageant, to make a "teaching contribution." It is also encouraging to note that even before the Pageant article was published, simply in response to newspaper report, Richer received nearly two hundred letters at his home. These came from parents, from junior high school pupils, from university students and teachers, school officials, doctors and laborers. Several of the letters brought offers of teaching jobs, implying that his attitudes and principles were all that he would ever need to procure a position. So, as with many another lesser or greater hero, a moment of defeat is converted into challenging success.

A final note: Paul Richer is not a "radical intellectual" by training or background. The son of a Mason City, Iowa, car dealer, he just liked to teach, and became a Phi Beta Kappa in the University, not because he was interested in "honors," but because he thought so much he could not help it.

FRONTIERS

WHAT CAN SURVIVE A WAR?

IN the Christian Century for Aug. 22, John C. Bennett, dean of the faculty of Union Theological Seminary, gives his view of Christian teaching in relation to war. His actual subject is "The Draft and Christian Vocation," but his basic contention is that it is a Christian duty to prepare for, and fight if need be, a war. Dr. Bennett pays his respects to pacifists by dividing them into two groups—those who reject war without proposing an alternative policy, such as non-violent resistance, and those who believe that Gandhian methods afford a strategy which may be successful against tyranny or aggression. His judgment of pacifists is qualified by this division:

Christian pacifists often provide a corrective for more conventional attitudes in the church and in the nation, but they are a better corrective if they themselves refrain from offering facile political solutions that do not take seriously the tragic character of the dilemmas which our nation and its policy-makers face.

Dr. Bennett has always been a transparently fair and honest critic of the pacifists. In this article he makes the source of his convictions clear:

In the political sphere we should support those policies which have the best chance of serving justice and freedom and peace or, in some cases, the best chance of preventing some great evil that threatens a nation or a group of nations. . . .

I often ask myself this simple question: What would the world be like today if the only effective military power in the world were in the communist countries? The answer I cannot escape is that every free nation within the reach of the communist countries would be under continuous pressure—not necessarily invasion, but a stepping-up of all kinds of propaganda and conspiratorial pressure. . . . Even countries at a distance from the communist countries would be subject to blackmail. Gradually the communist world would become so enlarged that what would remain of the free world would have very great difficulty in maintaining itself. . . .

There is nothing in the Christian view of things which enables us to escape this dilemma. We have a responsibility to preserve as large an area of freedom as possible. We have a responsibility to prevent a

Third World War if possible. And there is no guarantee of success in either effort. Christian faith and Christian love must control our choices in this actual situation, and no choice that is open to us is free from great moral risk.

There are obvious pacifist rejoinders to these arguments, but what seems of greater interest, here, is the *corporate* responsibility declared for Christians by Dr. Bennett. The "we" in this last paragraph seems to fuse Christian and national obligations into unity. We (an editorial "we") wonder about this. We can find much about love in the New Testament, but nothing that we know of to indicate that Jesus thought it possible to implement love by a national act of war, or any kind of national act. There is a sense in which Dr. Bennett's proposal that war may be a duty can claim humanitarian grounds, but was the State, in Jesus' view, ever an engine of peace and brotherhood?

From what we have been able to gather of Jesus' teachings, he located all important moral decisions within the individual. The State was an element in the surroundings of the individual, but not a significant moral instrument for the individual to *use*. Times have changed, of course, and many people, along with Dr. Bennett, believe that the modern democratic State, as distinguished from the Roman Empire of Jesus' lifetime, can be an avenue of moral action by the individual citizen. But we should note that the State acquires this character only as it gives scope to the moral decisions of the individual.

Now the "good" that Dr. Bennett hopes for from war is the maintenance of the area of freedom in the world, and possibly its extension. "The most that military preparations can do is to help us to gain time, to preserve freedom of action for the free and the uncommitted nations." Again, the notion is corporate. The "free" nations, no doubt, are those nations whose citizens have greater individual freedom under their governments than they would under "unfree" or "committed" nations. The presumption, here, is that this freedom is important since without it men will have little chance to find their way to religious truth and redemption. What

other goal could lead a conscientious Christian to contemplate so dreadful a measure as modern war?

This, then, is the justification for war—that it may make possible the spread of saving truth; that the alternative is the possibility or probability of a tyranny which will suppress the truth and destroy those institutions devoted to making the truth known.

Or, in broader terms, an unfree society is a society prejudicial to humane values—Christian values—and the preservation of a culture favorable to those values may require a war in its defense.

Dr. Bennett's worst charge against the pacifist is that he is reckless of those values—willing to risk their loss by rendering his country defenseless against aggression.

One thing that seems quite plain is that Dr. Bennett must believe that the institutions of religion are a more important source of values than individuals. For, after all, aggression and tyranny do not destroy individuals, but they often destroy institutions. And Dr. Bennett is willing to destroy individuals (in war) in order to preserve our value-bearing institutions. We wonder if, in the modern world, Jesus would find himself able to take a political position of this sort.

The pacifist is accused of giving comfort and aid to the enemy. "In fact," writes Dr. Bennett, "a strong case can be made in our present situation for the view that if our military strength were allowed to decline on a military basis, there would be more danger of the very war the pacifist seeks to prevent." But the man who truly supports a war to save Christian values for the world inevitably finds himself allied with many men animated by motives less sublime. War, alas, is filled with the dirtiest of compromises. There is heroism and nobility in war, but war is neither heroic nor noble.

Plainly, if war can serve the highest good, then victory is at least hypothetically a pathway to the highest good, and thus the definer of all morality, *pro tem*. What honest man will support a war without adopting that hypothesis? Or under what circumstances should he withdraw his support—

legally, with institutional honor, or illegally, in public shame?

A war conducted for the righteous ends proposed by Dr. Bennett would be a war in which purity vies with purity across the battlefield. When was there such a war, or will there be, short of a mythical Armageddon?

Dr. Bennett tells of some R.A.F. flyers who felt so unworthy after certain bombing missions they had carried out that they refused to take holy communion. He, like Reinhold Niebuhr, sympathizes with their "sensitivity," but with Niebuhr says that the flyers failed "to understand that the gospel was meant for people in exactly their predicament." Perhaps. *Errarum est humanum* covers a multitude of sins. But where do you draw the line?

How do you decide which private immoralities are permitted when they are done to benefit the State, the "Cause," or to bring "victory"?

And how do you assess the moral value of an institution which does everything it can to hide from the individual the fact that he ceases to be even human unless he faces this decision? War, and the war-making State, are such institutions.

We are beginning to suspect that pacifism is feared in some quarters, and hated in others, not because it seems to threaten defeat, or subservience to an aggressor, but because it postulates, by implication, the unimportance of authoritative institutions. Ultimately, pacifism is the advocacy of life as an individual and a wholly private faith—and all the other values which can survive a war.