

## IS ANYONE REALLY "RIGHT"?

[We print here a criticism of an article which appeared in MANAS last October. The writer is a subscriber who takes serious exception to what he believes to be the implications of the article. His objections are followed by some further discussion of the issues raised.—Editors.]

IN "What Have We Done?" (MANAS, Oct, 21, 1959), I find Macdonald outrageous and am very disappointed in the way you quote him.

Apart from the fact of whatever the Allies may have been guilty of,—and "That," I quote, "was during the war,"—from shooting down surrendering enemy soldiers during the heat of battle, to thinking first of our own armies before channeling aid to occupied or liberated countries, to dropping the bomb on Hiroshima, we have never been guilty of government organizations dedicated to the most "refined" cruelty against human beings as to "scientifically" rob men of their last shred of dignity while causing their slow death, nor have we attempted genocide. You speak of India: Does one really have to quote to MANAS the worn-out truth that Gandhi would never have finished his first hunger strike had the Nazis been the masters of India?

It is true that we have many faults and that we have failed abominably in the leadership that the people of the world expected of us. But the man who foams at the mouth at the faults of his own people is no leader and no prophet. Your article goes as far as to imply that the Nazi concentration camp paymaster is not guilty and that we are the guilty ones. Perhaps we are; we are guilty of many things, especially of not taking enough positive action to make our government reflect our ideals, providing we have any. But I wager that many a man who is too confused and too busy gaining a living for himself and his dependents, to stand up, for example, and demand that nuclear poisoning of the air we breathe and the food we eat must stop, would rather have joined the Nazi victims than remain the immediate witness for many years to the horrors

being practiced under his very nose. There is a difference. And if the concentration camp paymaster had the nerve to ask "What have I done?", that very fact condemns him as much or more than the trained tormentors to whom he counted out their keep.

But what is really wrong with the haranguer who feels himself called upon to condemn his fellow men for every fault he can find, is his lack of compassion. Everybody is guilty, but "I can accept no responsibility for such horrors," quoth Macdonald. What I think is that many of our leaders were not and are not free to fully enact their ideals of peace and a want-free world, because we, the people, will not let them.

But the man who condemns is no prophet and no leader. We are all guilty. If I said before that man's inhumanity to man has never reached the organized and "scientific" stage in a society which managed to save some liberal ideals as against the tyrannies of all times, it is a question of degree. I think it can be simply stated that man is capable of hideous crime as well as saintliness. As the clear-cut cases are few, who is to judge and condemn? Pacifism, for example, is a great ideal, but the pacifist is not always right. If the henchmen of a tyrant break into your or my home and rape our daughters, sisters or mothers, or take away our sons to torture them and to leave their mutilated bodies at our door next day, or take us to concentration camps, I think we should fight if there is a chance to fight.

The heroes of any people from Krishna in the *Bhagavad-Gita* to the Song of Roland, to Joan of Arc, to Paul Revere, are heroes because they protected and led their fellow men against disaster, be it man-made or otherwise. They are heroes because they fought the good fight, as embellished by the human ideals of any people. So, there is such a thing as "the good fight." But if fighting means death and destruction, not only to both protagonists, but to all innocent bystanders as well, and especially when the preparation for only the possibility of a

fight means the crippling of future generations, then it is high time to find an alternative to violence. Of course, death and destruction have always been, to a degree, the by-product of any degree of violence. If there is guilt, it lies here, in not always doing our utmost to prevent the conditions leading to violence or to find the alternative to it and to create a world with room for all.

The leader, the prophet, the hero, they have a tremendous task today. Not only do we have the means today to make room in this world for all, but fight, as a recourse of dissolving differences, has become impossible, at least in international issues as they concern the great powers of today and violence must be ruled out. But can it be ruled out and can a better world be built by pronouncing guilt? We should have no patience with those who set themselves as judges, they achieve no positive goal. Those who are able and willing to speak to and act before their fellow men as leaders, must have and call for the courage to think, speak and act in the face of all fears and prejudices for what they recognize and deeply believe to find response in human beings as good and right. They should not flinch from calling for the actions of a saint and try to awaken them in as many people as they can. And there is no meekness there. It takes courage. It takes all the attributes of greatness to try and find and act upon truth and to demand that men do so.

We have no need for inquisitors with ready lists of sins to be punished and no human compassion. We have need for saints who seek and speak for truth, with love and compassion for their fellowmen and knowledge of their frailty.

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While the article with which this reader finds fault was no doubt the development of an "argument," and while the reader's reply is also stated in argumentative terms, our present view of the matter is that this is not the sort of argument which we have a great desire to "win." The stakes are too high for anyone to accept an easy resolution of differences at the verbal level. The profoundest of human feelings and values are involved, so that movement toward some final conclusion or stance

should proceed with the greatest of caution. Let us admit at the outset that when events press a personal decision of this sort upon a man, they almost always find him unready to make a choice. His unreadiness, however, may be not only a result of personal indecision. In many cases, it is the lack of practical alternatives that makes choice difficult. No amount of "argument" can change this aspect of the problem.

First, let us look at the question of whether what Macdonald says is "outrageous," and whether he "foams at the mouth" and is lacking in "compassion."

What is the framework and context of the quotations from Macdonald? They are taken from an essay, "The Responsibility of Peoples," first published in the March, 1945, number of *Politics*, a magazine which Macdonald edited and published. The essay set out to be an impartial investigation of the idea of collective guilt. Since the ideas of the Nation and of National action are under examination, the discussion of necessity proceeds from a position which is outside, beyond, or "above" the nationalist view. The "values," therefore, on the basis of which judgments are offered or implied, are humanitarian values, not national values.

The importance of abandoning the nationalist scale of values for a discussion of this sort should be obvious.

Macdonald's position, however, is not that of a "man from Mars." In any discussion in which moral values play a part, there has to be some kind of "we-and-they" equation. An essential region of morality is concerned with the things that *we* are determined to do, or not to do, regardless of what *they* do. Morality hinges upon choice. Without choice, there can be no morality. It is for this reason that freedom has such high standing as a moral value.

When, then, a man discusses the relationships of peoples or nations with other peoples or nations, and when he is considering the problem of moral action within these relationships, he cannot ignore the fact that *his* morality, or that of his people or nation, is a question that must be held in some measure separate from the morality of others. His morality is what he decides, theirs, what they decide.

A certain obvious futility pervades almost all discussion of the morality of other people. You cannot make their decisions; you can only make your own. You cannot make them better; you can only make yourself better.

Such matters turn on the question of what you are trying to find out. If it is a matter of which man, country, or people is morally *better*, then you have to look critically at the other people and at yourself or your own people, and, with what justice you can muster, add things up.

But why would a man want to find this out? The only motive that we can think of for this inquiry is in order to justify what he or his nation has done, or proposes to do. So long as men or nations feel obliged to control or affect by the use of power the behavior of other men or nations, this sort of thinking has to be done—at least, it has to be done by people who make pretensions to morality in action.

It hardly needs pointing out, however, that men and nations are usually prejudiced in their own favor when formulating their own justifications and the comparisons of themselves with others. So, it is commonly admitted that another sort of inquiry is also of value—the sort of inquiry Macdonald pursues. Macdonald looks at events which were contemporary in 1945 without any desire for self-justification or any interest in invidious comparison. That Macdonald as a man was quite capable of taking a position, in terms of "the lesser of two evils," became plain in 1952 when he said, in a debate with Norman Mailer—

I choose the West—the U.S. and its allies—and reject the East—the Soviet Union and its ally, China, and its colonial provinces, the nations of Eastern Europe. By "choosing" I mean that I support the political, economic, and military struggle of the West against the East. I support it critically—I'm against the Smith and McCarran Acts, French policy in IndoChina, etc.—but in general I do choose, I support Western policies.

It is not necessary to adopt either of Macdonald's positions to grant that both represent legitimate and necessary inquiries. He may be argued with, but not condemned for pursuing the inquiries. You might even say that unless both

inquiries *are* pursued, no kind of morality is long for this world.

So, it is on the basis of *our* morality and what *we* can do to better our moral position that the quotations from Macdonald in our Oct. 21 article are to be read. The point of the quotations does not concern the degree to which we were or are "better" than the Nazis were; it concerns whether we are like them *at all*. To be better than the Nazis is an interest of nationalist morality; to be not like them at all is an interest of humanitarian morality.

The unfortunate aspect of a comparison of ourselves with the Nazis lies in the license it seems to give us to remain without criticism so long as we are "not as bad" as they were. This is a dreadful foundation for national morality, in war or out of it. It is a foundation which, we think, should be carefully avoided. Macdonald avoided it, and we owe him a certain debt for doing so, even if he makes us feel uncomfortable. The one thing you cannot ask of a moralist is that he refrain from making you uncomfortable. That happens to be an essential part of his business.

The rest of our correspondent's letter deals with Pacifism. To keep the record straight, we give Macdonald's position as of 1952:

During the last war, I did not choose, at first because I was a revolutionary socialist of Trotskyist coloration, later because I was becoming, especially after the atom bomb, a pacifist. Neither of these positions now appears valid to me.

The revolutionary socialist position assumes there is a reasonable chance that some kind of popular revolution, a Third Camp independent of the warring sides and hostile to both, will arise during or after the war, as was the case in Russia in March, 1917. Nothing of the sort happened in the last war, despite even greater destruction and chaos than in 1917-18, because the power vacuum was filled at once by either Soviet or American imperialism. The Third Camp of the masses just doesn't exist any more, and so Lenin's "revolutionary defeatism" now becomes simply defeatism: it helps the enemy win and that's all.

As for pacifism, it assumes some degree of ethical similarity in the enemy, something in his heart that can be appealed to—or at least something

in his traditions. Gandhi found this in the British, so his passive resistance movement could succeed, since there were certain repressive measures, such as executing him and his chief co-workers, which the British were inhibited from using by their traditional moral code, which is that of Western civilization in general. But the Soviet Communists are not so inhibited, nor were the Nazis. So I conclude that pacifism does not have a reasonable chance of being effective against a totalitarian enemy. Pacifism as a matter of individual conscience, as a *moral* rather than a *political* question, is another thing, and I respect it.

There is not a great deal of difference between Macdonald and our correspondent on the subject of pacifism. Both propose that Gandhi would have made no headway against the Nazis, yet both concede respect for the pacifist—our correspondent by calling pacifism a "great ideal," Macdonald by his respect for individual conscience.

What, in general, can be said about pacifism?

Pacifism represents the rejection of war and the determination to labor for peace. This, for the normal, intelligent human being, is a natural outlook. Unfortunately, the definition cannot be left so simple. There is this common-sense pacifism, and then there is the pacifism which refuses to give way before the militarism and war-making of others. Not very many people, it is likely, are ready to adopt an absolute stand against all war and violence. The "henchmen-of-a-tyrant" argument is an impressive one. There comes a time, most people say, when you may have to fight.

This seems to be the view of our correspondent. But it is only fair to take note of the fact that this way of formulating the issue leaves out a matter of great importance. When a man says, "The time may come when going to war will seem just and right to me," he ought to go on and say that his private decision on the question may have little to do with whether or not he is called upon to go to war. The making of war is not decided upon by individuals, but by States. The invasion of one's home by brutal storm troopers is not the essential characteristic of war, but only an incidental element. The essential element in war is the violence and destruction determined upon by the State, but involving all the persons the State has the

power to command, regardless of what *they* think about the war. In relation to individual morality, war means the delegation of moral decision to the State—to the State's concept of the Good, which is formed by a wide variety of forces, many of them of amoral rather than moral significance.

So the question, for one contemplating the absolute pacifist position, is not really one of what he will do when animals in human form threaten to violate the women of his household, but whether entrusting his right of moral decision to the State will violate his most basic ethical resolves.

A sensible reply might seem to be: "Well, I'll decide each case on its merits." This sounds like practical wisdom, and would be, except that the operations of the State do not permit any such latitude or discretion. The moral alternatives are not relative, but absolute. The State does not say to the prospective draftee, "Fight in this war only if you think it morally justified." The State says: "Fight, or give us your assurance (with plenty of evidence to support it) that you have been instructed by your God (an *authorized* God, represented on earth, that is, by an established churchly institution) that you must not in any circumstances be a soldier." The State may say this, or it may say simply, "Fight, or rot in prison or be shot."

The pacifist's vice of "extremism" in his apparently unreasoning rejection of *all* war may, therefore, in some instances be a position to which he was driven by the unreasoning demands of the State. A further comment might be that the pacifist, in recognizing the compulsion characterizing the State's insistence upon an all-or-nothing decision by the individual, may come to a firm conclusion that nothing but an absolute rejection of war has moral meaning or validity.

It is in this context, at any rate, that the pacifist's intransigence ought to be judged, so far as the political implications of his decision are concerned. The question of individual conscience is a related but somewhat different matter, to be examined apart from political issues.

There is one further general consideration: the *consequences* of pacifism, should it be widely adopted.

There is only one obvious consequence of pacifism, should it be widely adopted. There would be no more war. But since, in these days, this possibility will hardly be taken seriously, the question is rather what will happen if in only one country enough people become pacifists to render military defense impractical. Guesses as to what might happen to that country if attacked by an aggressive military power are a riot of the imagination. Pacifist groups have put into print a number of projections, most of them assuming a measure of Gandhi-like *Satyagrahi* discipline on the part of the populations responding to invasion with non-violence. Jesse Wallace Hughan of the War Resisters League did a pamphlet on the question, and the British military commentator, Sir Stephen King-Hall, put together a careful study on the non-violent defense of England, as the only alternative to nuclear armament and war. (King-Hall contended that it is no longer practical to defend England by any military means against the offensive weapons now available to aggressors.)

But against this manifest uncertainty must be set both the certainties and the uncertainties of the policy of war. The "certainties" have been well put by our correspondent:

. . . if fighting means death and destruction, not only to both protagonists, but to all innocent bystanders as well, and especially when the preparation for only the possibility of a fight means the crippling of future generations, then it is high time to find an alternative to violence. Of course, death and destruction have always been, to a degree, the by-product of any degree of violence. If there is guilt, it lies here, in not always doing our utmost to prevent the conditions leading to violence or to find the alternative to it and to create a world with room for all.

The "uncertainties" have to do with how another war will affect the very values which the war is undertaken to preserve. It is not unreasonable to insist that a war pursued in a spirit of heroic self-sacrifice is bound to ennoble the people who fight it, whatever else the costs. But it may be unreasonable

to insist that wars of this sort are any longer likely or even possible. In general, war degrades. It produces endless physical suffering and leaves a dark heritage of moral blindness coupled with anarchic passions and brutal impulses.

The pacifist, true enough, cannot predict what will happen if his proposals are adopted, but neither can the non-pacifist. Both operate in an area of moral decision which is tiny by comparison with the unpredictable and uncontrollable results. Neither should seek a victory in debate, but, admitting the darkness which surrounds us all in such matters, give what light he can, never pretending to a certainty which, at this juncture, no mortal can possess.

## *Letter from* **ENGLAND**

LONDON.—To a judicial chorus including the voices of the Lord Chief Justice, Lord Parker, and his predecessor, Lord Goddard, is now added that of the Roman Catholic Archbishop of London, in favour of physical punishment as the sovereign remedy for crime in adults and juveniles, and naughtiness and original sin in children. This growing movement for the restoration of the birch for crimes of violence, would seem to be gaining ground, and there is no question but that crimes of violence are increasing in the country.

But is corporal punishment, in the advocated form of the birch and flogging, the remedy? Too often emotion comes to impede clear thinking on this perennial subject. A surer guide, one curiously ignored by the advocates of a return to flogging, is the statistical. But statistics are unemotional and hence less acceptable as a guide than outraged feelings. The history of penology shows us that there is no relation between ferocity of punishment and the cure of crimes of violence.

In 1948 a Departmental Committee was set up to get the facts. It found after exhaustive enquiry that the subsequent offences among those flogged were more numerous than among offenders not so punished. They found, also, that offenders flogged were not thereby deterred by fear from reverting to crime. The figures are worth citation:

*Convicted of subsequent serious crime:* Flogged, 55 per cent. Not flogged, 42.9 per cent.

*Convicted of subsequent serious crimes of violence:* Flogged, 10.6 per cent. Not flogged, 5.4 per cent.

*Convicted of subsequent offences of violence:* Flogged, 13.4 per cent. Not flogged, 12.4 per cent.

There was long current, and, indeed, may still persist, the theory that garotting was finally stamped out by the lash. The facts are against this theory. The facts, easily confirmed, are otherwise. During the terror inspired in the public mind by the High Rig Gang of hooligans in Liverpool, popular pressure brought in the cat-o'-nine-tails as sovereign remedy. Mr. Justice Day resorted to it with the enthusiasm of a Judge Jeffreys. In three years—1887-1889—there

were 175 cases of robbery with violence in Liverpool. Three years later the number had risen to 198.

Long since it has been abundantly demonstrated that violence is not a sort of homeopathic cure for violence, and consequently flogging has been abolished in nearly every civilized country.

It is a curious fact of history that our judges have nearly always been reactionary about forms of punishment. Lord Ellenborough was reckoned in his day to be a great judge. Yet in opposing in the House of Lords a bill to end the hanging of petty thieves and other venial offenders, he observed, not in jest, but as a statement of belief: "A little hanging hurt no man." Though no English judge today would utter so revolting a dictum, they yet remain curiously reactionary in this matter. It is as though the spirit of Judge Jeffreys haunted them.

As far back as the time of Plato the problem of crime and punishment has occupied the minds of men. Plato himself gave it as his opinion that retribution should have no part in punishment. A wise community, he said, punished the individual to keep others from doing wrong from fear of punishment. But as to the form punishment should take the Greek philosopher is silent. By this criterion the statistical evidence is that past Draconian methods, in the form of flogging, have proved signally unsuccessful. Ours is the far more difficult task—it is to discover by psychological techniques and experiment, what makes the criminal "tick." A start has been made here by two institutions, one well-established in London, the other, of more recent date, in Cambridge. This is the start in the right direction. But it is not only our wrong-doers who need psychological readjustments: some of our judges are in the same case.

ENGLISH CORRESPONDENT

## *REVIEW*

### WAR AND "THE ENEMY"

THE reviews we have seen indicate that John Hersey's *The War Lover* has struck a rich vein. It is an imaginative case history of a young airman who is emotionally incapable of enjoying anything except destruction, but who, in the eyes of his better-balanced comrades, seems at first made of sterner and more heroic stuff than they are. Reviewing *The War Lover* for the Oct. 12 *New Republic*, under the title, "Breakup of a Warrior," Michael Straight suggests that the case of "Buzz Marrow" gains its impetus from our scientific approach to armed conflict. Speaking of Marrow—who is well on the road to a full-blown psychosis—Straight is also speaking of thousands of men who share Marrow's emotional immaturity. There is a "Marrow type," and, as Straight puts it, "war gives him a standing; it absolves him of conscience and responsibility; it makes virtues of his aggressive instincts; yet he is shielded from the sobering experience of witnessing the destruction that he accomplishes." Straight continues:

Marrow takes his Fortress twenty-three times into Germany and brings it back unscathed. He invests his crew with the sense of his own inviolability. He eats heartily and sleeps well while others, including Marrow's co-pilot, begin to crumble.

The qualities that enable Marrow to be decorated as a war hero make him contemptible as a man. His outward bravery in combat conceals his inner fear of being exposed as a coward. His calmness while crews around him go down in flames reflects his inability to feel affection for anyone save himself. His ease of conscience results from his lack of compassion and imagination. "It's the man with imagination who suffers during a war," says Lynch, a sensitive (and short-lived) pilot. "To imagine is to suffer. Really it's very painful but you get used to it. The man without imagination takes a lot; he doesn't even bat an eye. But when he does break, good-bye!"

Even Clifton Fadiman's polite review for the Book of the Month Club notes the central theme of Hersey's novel, although, since Fadiman generally hopes to please everybody, he tends to treat Buzz Marrow as a most unusual case of

"those specialized perverts who kill well because they love war." But Hersey's clarity is such that no reviewer, apparently, can miss the author's intent. The following paragraphs from Fadiman's article make frequent reference to "men like Marrow," "such heroes," etc.:

Marrow is a genius at flying, and some of the most remarkable pages, crowded with rich technical detail, show that genius in violent action. And he is a kind of genius at leadership, too, as long as his arrogance, his sadism, and his heroic conception of himself remain tested only by situations involving death and destruction. But, though men like Marrow continually try to mold experience so that it will consist entirely of such situations, life is too wily for them. Eventually they have to face what they really are. . . .

Such heroes—for Buzz *is* a hero—are without loyalties. Buzz would have been just as happy flying a German bomber and killing Americans. His real need is merely to kill; without the exercise of this magnificent capacity he detumesces to nothing. Daphne may be giving "a woman's explanation" of the cause of war—"Some men enjoy it, some men enjoy it too much"—but it is at least an explanation worth pondering, if only because men for thousands of years have rejected it.

Where does all this lead us? Certainly Hersey means us to discover two things. First, that men like Marrow constitute the real "enemy" in war or peace. But because "such men" are entirely irresponsible, it is in no sense justifiable to regard them as *personal* enemies. This is only another way of rounding out the picture a few of us are beginning to grasp—that there is no enemy.

A novel by Gordon Merrick, called *The Night and the Naked*, might be regarded as a supplement to David Davidson's *A Steeper Cliff*. It reveals the reactions of an American espionage agent in occupied France, a man who discovers how little he likes the task of bringing a French collaborationist to execution as a spy:

I suppose it was a serious indiscretion for him to have spoken of the affair at all, but he was anxious to share his burden and I hoped that I might be able to help him. When he had finished his account, I asked: "Just what is it that's bothering you in all this?"

"Jesus Christ, don't you understand?" he demanded, with torment in his voice "What's it all about? We're fighting Nazism, but these people aren't Nazis. They're damn nice. They're a lot better than average."

"Good God, you don't expect the enemy to be composed entirely of monsters, do you? There're lots of nice people on the other side. Some very good friends of mine were on the wrong side in France."

"That's just it. If this sort of thing had happened in the States, I can imagine my father and a lot of my friends winding up in the same fix."

"I can too. But that doesn't make them right."

"Of course not. But it makes the whole thing such damn dirty hypocrisy. We have no right to judge these people."

"Ha. That sounds pretty naive. Don't misunderstand me. I think you've got a very tough job on your hands. The most gruesome story I ever heard about the last war was the one about the Christmas Eve when German and Allied troops climbed out of their trenches and met out in No Man's Land to drink together and exchange season's greetings. When the party was over they went back to their trenches and a little later they were all blazing away at each other. I don't like that story. I hope it isn't true. There're not many men you'd want to kill after you'd had a drink together. War's got to be kept impersonal, or we'd all have to face the fact that we're cold-blooded murderers. And that's not a realization that's good for the soul."

It took but a few years for many of us to realize that the horrors of a nazified Germany resulted chiefly from those historical circumstances which allowed psychotic "war lovers" to assume authority. The vast majority of the German people just did as they were told, even as you and I. When the American Army of Occupation took up its duties in Germany, only the most obtuse failed to see that there was no German "psychological type," that we had our own fascist types, and that among the Germans there were many who believed in freedom for the individual conscience.

There is another subconscious force which sometimes asserts itself to declare a common humanity. During the Korean action hundreds of

carefully trained American soldiers, though standing firmly at their positions, were unable to trigger their rifles and machine guns. An American general, in presenting this story frankly, revealed that the Russian military had encountered an identical problem during World War II.

Perhaps a few more turns of the pages of history, after another chapter is written, will demonstrate that it is the "war-lover" who is the anachronism, not the man who refuses to accept the "we or they" psychology.



## COMMENTARY

### THE CRISIS OF THE INDIVIDUAL

EARLY in a recent "occasional paper" by Arthur S. Miller, *Private Governments and the Constitution*, issued by the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions—now the main activity of the Fund for the Republic—the following paragraph appears:

While orthodox theory and constitutional doctrine presupposed only two entities—the State and the individual—it is now widely believed that the isolated individual does not exist as such, and that he is significant only as a member of a group. In addition to the large corporate enterprise, which includes both the managerial class and the labor union, the new groups include farm organizations, veterans' associations, and charitable foundations, and others.

By coincidence, a not unimportant instance of this belief that "the isolated individual does not exist as such, and that he is significant only as a member of a group," is provided in this week's lead article, in connection with the problem of private decision concerning war. The individual who is determined to decide for himself on the morality of war can barely remain a member of the political community, should he decide against participation. For the State, his existence as individual usually depends upon his membership in a religious organization. He is virtually obliged to share a *group* opinion in order to qualify as having the rights of private conscience under the law.

But this is only one among many illustrations of the plight of the unattached individual. The burden of Mr. Miller's study is the conclusion that American civilization is today dominated by pressure groups—groups making decisions which result in actions affecting large numbers of people—and that traditional conceptions of democratic government take little account of the means necessary to control or regulate the behavior of these pressure groups. Mr. Miller says:

The original constitutional theory of limited government, particularly that of centralized authority, requires revamping. The notion that that government is best which governs least is no longer tenable. The essential negativism of the Constitution toward government requires alteration in the light of the affirmative duties of the State today.

There is considerable irony in this situation. Perhaps the "negativism of the Constitution toward government" ought to be reversed, but will this increase the negativism, already very great, of the practice of government toward the individual?

It is not, of course, that the government is *against* the individual; it is just that the government is concerned with what it regards as the constructive use of *power*, and the individual, "as such," is so minute an element in terms of power that the government cannot afford to recognize him in relation to its use and control.

The point seems to be that only groups—large and small—have power, and since the individual does not serve any of the ends of groups, the individual does not exist for groups. Here, then, lies the wrong—in the ends of groups. The indifference of groups to the general welfare obliges the State to seek more power to control the groups, while the individual loses his identity in the contest for power.

## CHILDREN ... and Ourselves

To our certain knowledge, more than a few MANAS readers who are parents have avoided all conscientious attempts to involve them in P.T.A. and other school-oriented affairs. Some have tried, in a sort of "Render unto Caesar . . ." mood, only to wind up battling about prayers in the classroom, pledges of allegiance to the flag, or daily milk-bouts featuring nothing but pasteurized products. All in all, we take it, a recalcitrant lot.

But there is something to be said for plugging along with efforts to honour thy neighbors and share thy children's teachers' planning, and most of what can be said is set forth in a small volume produced in 1953—*Working Together for Better Schools*, by Menge and Faunce, (American Book Company, New York). This book should be read by all critics of modern schooling, for it portrays the problems of the thousands of teachers and school administrators who are doing their best to be educators in their community.

The authors begin by pointing out that the American public school grew out of the necessities for community cooperation. American schooling did not begin "at the top" but, in a sense, at the bottom—not with high theory, or ecclesiastic guidance, but from communal planning for literacy. The universities of the Eastern seaboard, of course, were sponsored by the churches, but during the cycle of westward expansion the people had to teach themselves, and this meant that the problems of American education became considerably different from those of the European continent. Menge and Faunce write:

Participation of parents in school affairs used to be a much simpler thing to achieve than it is today. The rural primary school, often the only publicly owned building in the school district, was the center of community social life. Quilting bees, dances, and box socials were held in the school. There the board of supervisors and the Grange held their meetings. On Sundays the building doubled as a church in many

a rural district. The school did not seem as remote from the lives of ordinary citizens as it does today in our cities. The school trustees were a person's next-door neighbors or relatives. Their thinking usually was quite representative of the community thinking.

People took a keen interest in their local school. They felt free to visit it, and often did so. When the school put on a Christmas or graduation program, the entire community crowded into the little building. If a new table or a cupboard or painting and repairs were needed, everybody soon knew it and often lent a hand to improve the schoolhouse. Thus in rural America the people were, and to some extent still are, close to their school and its problems.

But in 1950, 60 per cent of our people lived not on farms or in villages, but in cities. The rapid growth of our cities has erected some barriers to school-community planning. Urban life does not encourage direct participation in school affairs. The typical citizen lives a considerable distance from the school. He commutes to work, and he treasures his few evening hours for rest or recreation. If he goes out, he goes less often to school affairs than to the lodge or the bowling alley. Even more often, he attends a movie or some other kind of commercial entertainment. The school is simply not the center of community life as it used to be in rural America.

Part of the cause lies also in the increasing size and complexity of the school itself. A city school is likely to enroll from 500 to 5000 pupils. The teachers are likely to be commuters and not available for social or civic functions after school hours. When schools become larger, relationships among the people involved become more formal. Regulations about contacts with parents sometimes discourage free visiting of the school. Some parents even feel that they must prove to the principal their right to discuss their child's progress with a teacher.

These considerations seem extremely important to anyone intending to engage in debates regarding the failings of the American school system. Always the problem has been one of such rapid expansion that educational theory has matured differently, according to location and background of teacher-training centers—and, in the over-all picture, matured very slowly. Moreover, because the schools were once so well integrated with community affairs, it became easy for parents to assume that the schools would "take

over" much of the character-training of the young. But at the same time parents lost contact with boards of education because of the lack of direct personal touch with most of the men who serve on the board. So, the argument for "Working Together for Better Schools" is to work for more direct parental involvement. The authors feel there is no aspect of school planning in which adults may not participate, and that many more will participate if they recognize that a gradual separation of home from school leaves both parents and teachers in isolation.

Menge and Faunce are not trying to prove that all the critics of American schooling are mistaken, for they are not basically partisan. Evidence of this attitude is revealed in their summary of "educational values," in which they indicate that parents and other adults of the community must learn to offer constructive suggestions and criticisms. The teachers will then, of necessity, prepare themselves to receive such suggestions and criticisms. As these writers say:

Now teachers are just like "other people." They must believe in what they do. They cannot adopt another person's values. They must act on what they believe to be true, or feel secure in doing. Even if it is an entirely false set of values, still, it is their own and it will determine their behavior. The principal who wishes to improve instruction in his building must begin with the values and purposes presently held by the teachers in that building. There is no other place to begin. Teachers cannot adopt the principal's values as their own, even if they wish to.

Parents, too, think about the schools in accordance with their personal sets of values. Whether sound or unsound, whether true or false, these values dictate the individual's behavior and judgments in certain directions until they have been basically altered. When a program change does not actually emerge from real planning by people, their values have not been altered or even discovered and tested.

In order to reach consensus on a given issue, any group faces the task of resolving the differences that may be expected to exist among educational values and goals held by different individuals. A constructive way to fuse these sets of individual values into one pattern is by some kind of group

action. People must discover that co-operative action leads to the results they seek—that it actually produces a better program, which *they personally* had a hand in planning.

Your local P.T.A. may conceivably waste a lot of energy dealing with peripheral issues, but even the peripherals, according to Menge and Faunce, may be important, offering opportunity for a closer meeting of mind among teachers, administrators and parents.

## *FRONTIERS* The Future of Science

WILL modern science ever be able to join the Humanities? The Humanities, as we understand the term, comprehend all those departments of learning which take cognizance of man in terms of his own nature—his consciousness of himself—and deal with him "as human in kind, as distinguished from the objective and superhuman worlds." This is precisely what science does not do, today. Not since the days of Galileo and Descartes has man, in the sense of the Humanities, had a place in the universe of science. Galileo divided the world of nature into primary and secondary qualities, the primary or "physical" qualities representing the "real" world with which science was to deal. Descartes confirmed the division and laid the foundation for Mechanism as the prevailing theory of causation and for Behaviorism as the basis of psychology. This view of Nature and of Man—it is not, of course, a view of Man, but of certain abstracted aspects of the *image* of Man—has prevailed more or less until the present day, despite the fact that Mechanism is in distinct decline (the decline is philosophical rather than methodological), and despite the disappearance of Behavioristic arguments.

What was science before it became *modern* science? It was *magic*. It was science, that is, with man at the center of the world of reality, instead of outside of it. Magic and science have in common the purpose of obtaining knowledge of and control over the elements and forces of nature. The basic difference between the two is the role of man. In magic man has a role as both subject and object; in science, man is only an object. The project for science, then,—for a humanist science of the future,—could well be to restore man, as man, to the scientific conception of natural reality, without accepting the extravagant theologies and supernaturalist doctrines that have made the word "magic" an epithet of contempt.

An interesting development in this direction is described by the noted physicist, Werner Heisenberg, in the November *Atlantic*. By "interesting development" we mean the general course of physical theory during the twentieth century to its present position at a sort of half-way house between magic and science as we know it. We shall have to review Prof. Heisenberg's article before this statement can be justified.

His title is "From Plato to Max Planck," with the subheading, "The Philosophical Problems of Atomic Physics." The content of the inquiry is set by two questions: "What is the nature of matter?" and "What can we know about the natural world?"

Passing rapidly over the history of theory concerning matter, from Democritus to Schrödinger, Prof. Heisenberg shows that matter, in modern physical theory, is no longer "material." Atom-smashing experiments and the interpretation of their results, he says, have turned atoms, or rather the elementary particles of which atoms are composed, into mathematical expressions which define the forms taken by energy. Summing up, he says that the fundamental law or equation of matter, when it is finally formulated, will be an expression of mathematical symmetries. He adds:

. . . the final answer will more closely approximate the views expressed in Plato's *Timaeus* than those of the ancient materialists. This realization should not be misunderstood as an all-too-facile rejection of the modern materialistic thinking of the nineteenth century, which contributed many important elements that were lacking in ancient science. But it is true that the elementary particles of present-day physics are more closely related to the Platonic bodies than they are to the atoms of Democritus.

Here, in casting the vote of modern physical theory for Plato rather than Democritus, Prof. Heisenberg is saying that the foundation of physical reality is conceptual, as the Idealists have always maintained, instead of "material," as the Materialists have contended.

He continues:

The elementary particles of modern physics, like the regular bodies of Plato's philosophy, are defined by the requirements of mathematical symmetry. They are not eternal and unchanging, and they can hardly, therefore, strictly be termed real. Rather, they are simple expressions of fundamental mathematical constructions which one comes upon in striving to break down matter ever further, and which provide the content for the underlying laws of nature. In the beginning, therefore, for modern science, was the form, the mathematical pattern, not the material thing. And since the mathematical pattern is, in the final analysis, an intellectual concept, one can say in the words of Faust, "*Am Anfang war der Sinn*"—"In the beginning was the meaning."

This is the half-way house we spoke of. If meanings are prior to forms—and to say that a mathematical symmetry is a "meaning" should not be pressing Prof. Heisenberg's idea too far—then man, who is that form of natural intelligence which seeks and comprehends meanings, is himself a primary natural reality.

Prof. Heisenberg's essay may not place man at the center of the universe, but it does create a matrix in nature where man could easily be at home. We have now a mathematical cosmology. When we are able to add a psychological cosmology, man will *be* at home in the universe.

Prof. Heisenberg's second question, "What can we know about the natural world?", is answered in the terms of a modified Positivist philosophy. Since the assumptions of classical physics do not apply to the observation of subatomic particles, traditional concepts of causality must be set aside, despite the fact that, as Prof. Heisenberg says, "we can carry out experiments in the atomic field only with the aid of concepts from classical physics." This leads to the following account of the meaning of scientific determinations, or "knowledge":

In these areas of atomic physics, a great deal of the earlier intuitive physics has gone by the board—not only the applicability of its concepts and laws but the entire notion of reality which underlay the exact sciences until our present-day atomic physics. By "notion of reality" I mean the idea that there are objective occurrences which somehow take place in

time and space quite independently of whether or not they are observed. Observations in atomic physics can no longer be objectified in this simple manner; they can no longer be related to an objective, describable interval in time and space.

Here again we are brought up sharply before the rock-bottom truth that in science we are not dealing with nature itself but with the science of nature—that is, with a nature which has been thought through and described by man. This is not to introduce an element of subjectivity into science, for it is in no way asserted that events in the world of nature depend upon our observation of them; it is simply to say that science stands between man and nature and that we cannot renounce the application of concepts that have been intuitively given to or are inborn in man.

It is of some interest to recognize that if science should accept "an element of subjectivity," it would at once be a species of magic, and no longer modern science in the traditional meaning of this expression. Whether this would amount to an enlargement or to a reduction or abandonment of the scientific undertaking is a question that remains unanswered. If the primary causes which bring the universe into being are in fact subjective or psychological, then science could become magic without loss of dignity or discipline. But we are a long way from any such consummation. Meanwhile, the acknowledgement, or assertion, that the universe is a complex of *meaning*, instead of a complement of blind forces, gives us a great deal to be thankful for. It appears that Plato and Alfred North Whitehead are indeed the philosophers of tomorrow's science and scientific world.