

OUR PART-TIME FREEDOM

THE chief difficulty of the modern individual is to be able to believe in what he does. He is surrounded by situations and processes which he cannot respect, but in which he must in some sense participate, and while he may be able to imagine better situations and more constructive processes, the question of how to get them remains unanswered. A generation or two ago, he would have been able to think that an organized effort at reform was the thing to give his energies to. Today, however, having seen some of the consequences of organized political action, he is skeptical. The demands of political organization on human resources, apart from what can be done by this means, seem to consume so much energy and involve so much compromise that the entire undertaking comes to appear unreal. The people who work in politics are earnest enough, but the words they use sound like echoes that have been bouncing around in the public atmosphere for a hundred years or so—with nothing really happening.

There are probably deep, psychological reasons why politics seems so futile, but an explanation lying on the surface of events, plain to see, is the inevitable association, today, of all practical politics with acceptance of nuclear war—preparation for it being, on any hypothesis, acceptance of it. How is it possible to take seriously a politics which has this acceptance in its background? It is politics locked in the embrace of a vampire that will eventually extract all remaining vitality from the body of the people, even without the final destroying holocaust.

But our difficulties do not end with the overt intentions of this society. They continue in the daily processes of maintenance, through what is required of us in order to stay alive and support families. You get up in the morning and at once you become a "consumer"—a sales target and a

cog in the great economic machine. If you have cereal for breakfast and can't help looking at the box it comes in, you are involved in space-exploration projects (for kids), premium silverware, atomic weapons, and you get to thinking about the grown men on boards of directors who sat around one day wondering about how you would "respond" to their latest premium offers, and you decide you don't want to have anything to do with those people or even eat their corn. What a way to make a living! How can they possibly put out a good cereal? You feel as though weevils in the gruel would be better than premiums with your oats.

Then, with the first part of the morning spoiled, you walk fast past where somebody left the newspaper, to avoid all the pseudo-facts of the day, and go off to work. Suppose you're in the printing business. For eight hours or so, you'll be putting onto paper words that for the most part aren't worth saying about a matter that is of no importance—something that somebody wants to sell to somebody else at a price about five times what it actually costs to make it (distribution comes high)—in order, as the saying goes, to "lubricate the wheels of our great, expanding economy"; in other words, much ado about nothing. You develop a fine sense of craftsmanship about a product that is about three per cent efficient (that's a good return on a piece of direct mail advertising), which means that 97 per cent of what you make will get thrown away without anyone being moved to "buy now"! (Who won *that* contest?) Of course, there are compensations. You may get to print at a loss something you think ought to be said, or once in a while reproduce a picture that people will enjoy looking at, just for itself. And then you thank your stars you're not in the missile business and

have to lie awake nights hoping all the missiles will miss when they come back home.

If you're unlucky, you can't say anything like this out loud around the office where you work, or maybe even think it, since it might show on your face. Suddenly it comes to you, what Dr. Einstein meant when he said that if he had it to do over again, he'd become a pedler, or take up something simple he could do without getting *involved*.

How do you measure success, if *he* couldn't feel successful? How do you measure value, if he felt that something had made him miss?

What are you—what are we—going to do about it? It won't do any good to go to Russia. They have a similar problem, maybe a worse problem. Laurens van der Post has a short article in the January *Liberation* which tells about it:

Power in our time expresses itself in great measure through the mass, in what may be called the tyranny of numbers. We think and even feel in terms of numbers.

I had this brought home to me afresh recently when I visited East Berlin. It was one of the most terrifying experiences of my life to feel myself in this world which is all numbers and slogans. The feeling of terror was emphasized by my visit to the vast Russian War Memorial. There 70,000 soldiers are buried. I was there on the anniversary of the unveiling of the monuments. There were countless wreaths but every one of them was from group to group—from this trade union or youth group to the soldiers of such and such a regiment. Not one was from one individual to another. I cried out for a wreath inscribed simply "From Mary to John."

The Soviet Shakespeare of tomorrow will have to write, "Citizens of correct corporate identity, lend me your ears!"

But so will the American Shakespeare. We have it on the good authority of a Fund for the Republic writer that in the United States "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."

If you want to talk to Americans, you get in touch with business corporations, labor unions, farm organizations, veterans' organizations, and a few other groups. The rest of the people, if there are any, don't exist.

But then, after you've said all these things, and after you've experienced the heavy-handed discouragements of the times—all the slammed doors, blind alleys, and broken ladders—you look again to see the other dimension, the dimension of humanity. Something is happening, in spite of the universal *impasse*. A general loosening of the bonds is taking place. The young, for all their faults, are growing up with fewer prejudices; and if they are "uncommitted," they are at least without mistaken allegiances. Mr. van der Post has a paragraph along these lines in his *Liberation* article. "White African parents," he says, "in many cases are saying: 'What is happening to our children? They don't believe any more what we tell them about relations between races!'" He adds:

The youths have to express that change both in the way they live daily and through political activity. So far as the black Africans are concerned, I believe that if they can keep their anger under control, just a little longer, immense changes will come and we can build a very marvelous human society in Africa.

While all the bad things are still bad, there is a way of looking at existing society which makes all the processes appear as organic relationships which are what they are because human beings think of them that way. That's the way the body corporate of humanity sustains itself just now, because of the way the vast majority of men think. The processes may be wasteful and faulty, but they can't be changed except by basic adaptation, *organic* adaptation, to a new kind of thinking.

A man doesn't have control over his *whole* life. Part of his life, especially the mechanical part, is inextricably involved with the lives of others. If you're going to drive a car, it has to be a car that you can buy—that other people have made. If you're going to eat, you have to eat food

other people have raised. If you're going to have money, you have to use banks. Some of these things you can do for yourself, but to try to do everything, to keep it *pure*, is wasteful, and probably self-righteous to boot. Your purity is not that important. The most useful man is the man who helps to create the psychological and physical space for freedom of decision for other men, as well as for himself. We all of us have to use the existing facilities in many ways. Even when we don't like them very well. You pick your front and you fight on it, and let some of the other, less important battles go. There will be other people to fight them, one hopes. You may draw some well-defined lines marking off things you *won't* do, like killing people, or planning or building machines intended for killing people. And maybe you won't work in industries which represent bad health and emotional disturbance, like the liquor industry.

If there are some twisted and stunted plants growing on a rocky hillside, it isn't reform to dynamite the hillside and then level off the rubble. That way you kill the plants and destroy as well the intricate marvel of their adaptation to the inhospitable terrain. You let those plants live out their life, respecting what they have done under terrible conditions. You let them live, even though you make very plain that the conditions *are* terrible and that future planting should be done in better soil. And you find that soil and *plant*.

Fundamentally, this means that you figure out something you can believe in doing, and go do it. It may be, if you have the capacity, to start a Koinonia Community in the Deep South. It may be, if you can sail a boat, and have one to sail, that you sail into the nuclear testing area and get thrown in jail. It may be that you join with several others and finance an Acts for Peace Center, as some people have done in Berkeley, California. Or start a new children's school, or a small publishing venture, or a listener-supported, noncommercial radio station. The freedom to do

things like this in the United States is simply terrific—anybody with some energy and some determination can do things like this. The main thing is to believe in what you are doing. Maybe it is impossible to do it full-time; then you can do it part-time. If enough people would start to do it part-time, soon everybody could do it full-time. Doing what you believe in, here and now, is the only way to help to set men free.

Letter from **INDIA**

MADRAS.—Commenting editorially on "The Letter from India," MANAS for Sept. 30, 1959, points out that "something, somewhere is wrong" with the Indian revolution. If we start inquiring where and why, we shall perhaps start several hares, but the chase, though exhausting, may be rewarding. We may begin with Mr. Walter Lippmann's discussion, "The Economic Revolution in India," which appeared recently in *The Hindu*, Madras.

The Indian situation frightens many Indians and friends of India, and fright discourages thought. One cannot dispute the points made by Mr. Lippmann, but, like many others, he has been frightened by the task facing India's government and its people—providing adequate food to hundreds of millions. He puts the immensity of the problem in a short paragraph:

Large masses of the Indian people, and we should add of their working animals, are undernourished and indeed hungry most of the time. They have so little to eat, they have such an unbalanced diet, that they do not have the strength and the energy and the will to improve their methods of farming. The Ford people are confident that they can master this situation in about six years. To do this there must be more fertilizers and more insecticides. There must be plants to make fertilizers and insecticides. There must be better ploughs and other agricultural tools. There must be more water for irrigation and more storage space. All this will require about 1.5 billion dollars in foreign exchange to pay for the tools and the chemicals that have to be imported. It will require also about 1.8 billion dollars worth of surplus wheat from the United States.

"This [continues Mr. Lippmann] is the price, say these experts, of 'continued political stability in India'." Mr. Lippmann is troubled because the economic revolution India must have depends for its success on a pair of circumstances: (1) a second generation of Indians capable of taking over from the "founding fathers of Independence" the execution of the several five-year plans that

India will have to complete and (2) a sense of dynamism among the people. Regarding what is available to fill these requirements, Mr. Lippmann is dissatisfied. Nobody in or outside of India knows who is going to take over from Mr. Nehru, and, as for the "dynamism," Mr. Lippmann feels that it simply is not there.

Mr. Lippmann thinks the Indian people and their leaders lack dynamism because in his opinion the implements with which they are seeking to work out their economic revolution are hopelessly inadequate for the job. Indians are proud of their parliamentary democracy of the British type is alone a major challenge to Indian democracy. In Mr. Lippmann is afraid that these forms will give way before the huge demands that India must place upon them in the years to come. The task of having to feed India's millions is alone a major challenge to Indian democracy. In Mr. Lippmann's words: "The task of feeding India is critical and if it is not carried out, the human and political consequences will be dire."

It is precisely at this point that fright takes over completely and thought ends. Discussions of the Indian economic problem usually conclude that the problem is overwhelming and will end Indian democracy if it is not solved and in a very short time. India's rulers have done so far what they can to stave off the disaster, with the two five-year plans, and a third now taking shape. But these five-year plans run their term, leaving most Indians nearly as poor and hungry as before; the economic problem remains in all its bigness, filling the rulers with dismay. But if one were not so frightened about the prospect of totalitarianism taking hold in India, other possibilities might be seen. Most of those who are frightened by the dimensions of India's economic problem assume the prospective dictatorship to be omnipotent. They do not explain—or explain badly with a spray of words like "collectives," "land ceilings," etc.—the mystery of how a problem that can destroy democracy ceases to exist under totalitarianism. Millions of Indians are now poor

and hungry and would in all probability be poor and hungry at least for several years under a dictatorship. Dictators have no Aladdin's Lamp. Why should most people believe the myth that a dictatorship always has its way and is irresistible, while a democracy is ever at the mercy of sinister forces?

Independence spelt "Paradise Gained" for the majority of Indians. But historical circumstances made millions of Indians poor and hungry. And, unless you were to rain billions of dollars on India at a very rapid pace, poverty and hunger could not be abolished before thirty years, at the earliest, whatever form of government Indians might choose for themselves. Russia needed that much time. Being so circumstanced, it is absurd that Indians and their friends should long for a Golden Age, here and now in India, be impatient at the failure to produce it, and threaten themselves and others with a black millennium if it does not materialize.

This writer believes that democracy will remain in India, because Indians cannot help but be democratic. It is no doubt a very big job to provide food for India's millions, but it has got to be done, and might as well be done with an intelligent patience. The gentlemen who think that if it is not done quickly, dictatorship will take over the management of India's politics and economics, do not really know what they are talking about. When you cannot feed people, it is unfortunate that you cannot give them anything more than a vote. But it is madness to try to herd them into collectives and shoot those who will not be so herded, and in the end produce blood and smoke instead of food. Recent European history has demonstrated that dictatorships are not as mighty as they imagined themselves to be, and even Russia has tired of sitting on bayonets.

Mr. Lippmann is perhaps right in seeing a lack of dynamism in India. Mr. Nehru has himself deplored that the young men of present-day India are not imbued with the sense of mission and dedication that characterised the youth of Mr.

Nehru's generation. But in that period there was freedom to be fought for, and won; in those circumstances, heroism was something tangible. If present-day India seems to have no challenge to heroism to draw its young men, the young men may not be wholly to blame. The young who have inherited the revolution and its freedom include university graduates, sixth formers, third formers and first formers, literates, semi-literates and illiterates. Most of them are dissatisfied with what they have to do. If they are lucky enough to get jobs, they become clerks, skilled or unskilled workmen, or peons—to mention only a few of the nondescript jobs that are available. The snobberies that have grown up in India make these young men spiritless. They resent the hypocrisy of their rulers and politicians who talk to them about the dignity of labor. "Take off your coats, boys, roll up your sleeves, and realize that you have a strong pair of hands. That loin-clothed peasant is your own brother. An engineer's work is just as holy as the plumber's and the ditch-digger's." The hopes for making these sentiments meaningful in India died with Gandhi, who thought in terms of small village communities where co-operative teamwork was possible and the sharing of menial chores would have made real the equality between person and person. Instead, the urban hierarchy that Gandhi disliked in British India has become larger and more powerful in Free India, creating an *elite* of the engineers, the civil administrators, and the business executives. The stenographer and the clerk become insignificant, and the unskilled worker, disposable material.

India's rulers, many of whom Gandhi inspired and led, may think they have good reasons for turning their back on Gandhi; perhaps they are right in believing that the Gandhian utopia was a hopeless impossibility in the modern world in which India must industrialize or perish. Nation-building fails as a romantic enterprise and is now a job for those who can build roads, bridges and dams, and organize a technocracy with

transformers and ten-ton cranes. Those who write poetry are the beat generation.

Perhaps there is no use grumbling. The *malaise* resulting from industrialism has afflicted the West for a hundred years and it is not going to spare India. An American wrote to me recently: "As for the disappointment in modern India, it seems necessary for India to be exposed to and go through all the influences of the twentieth century, and, being so exposed, India will surely have fortunes similar to the other countries of the world. No modern country or race is immune to this ordeal. Fifty years hence, perhaps, we shall see something of the real measure of the maturities of our respective lands; meanwhile, we are all in the same mess, we having been in it a little longer than you."

A final reference to the lack of dynamism that Mr. Lippmann has written about: Many bad men prowl about in India, and there is indeed much corruption and depravity, but some good may come even of this. An Indian proverb speaks of the beautiful lotus blooming in the dirty pond. When Gandhi appeared on the Indian scene, national decay had reached an intolerable state and there had to be the Gandhian revolution. Post-independence decay in India may accelerate toward a similar crisis. It is reasonable to hope that a people who evolved a Gandhi in the past may evolve another such man for the future.

C.V.G.

REVIEW

LIGHT READING TO SOME POINT

WE don't know how many MANAS readers sneak in a little time each week on "Westerns" and mystery stories, but your editors confess to making occasional "finds" in these fields. Two which we read recently seem definitely outstanding: Clay Fisher's *The Crossing* and Stanley Ellin's *The Key to Nicholas Street*.

The Crossing involves the story of a young Southerner, son of a former general, who rises rapidly from the ranks during the southwestern phase of the Civil War. His wish, at the outset, is to fulfill the family tradition in war, and he accounts himself so well in various bits of stirring action that there seems no doubt of his success. But Judah Reeves, before he passes the rank of lieutenant, starts to become an entirely different brand of hero. He turns his back on military tradition because he becomes convinced that this tradition should be left in the past. The significance of the title, *The Crossing*, is revealed in the closing chapter, where Lt. Reeves decides he will never again be a party to war.

Imagine a frontier cavalry story climaxed by the desertion of the hero before the war is terminated! But this is just what Mr. Fisher gives us. Reeves decides to become an outcast, save for two friends who will travel with him to live with some friendly Indians. Here we have him on the brink of a decision towards which much of the book has been building:

"I don't know !" muttered Jud desperately. "Let me think, let me think—"

He did not move to take the gray pony which Sobre had led up for him, but remained peering across the water at the blanketed figures on the far side. There was good reason for the belated delay. If he took the bridle reins from the Mescalero chief and turned with him toward Apacheland, he would have made an irrevocable choice. It would be a decision which would take more real courage than his father or his grandfather had ever known. It would require the moral will to abandon a lawfully governed society

of his own blood and color knowing that the act of abandonment, in itself, would make of him a frontier pariah for his whole life. Nor was this the entire depth of the question. There was, as well, the matter of his military and patriotic loyalties. To see the truth about a struggle against the Union, and to renounce that cause in mid-resolution before the fact of its failure was apparent to all, took three times the grit that it did to cling passionately to it. Yet the onus of such a renunciation was inescapable. There were many names for men who did what Jud Reeves had already done, let alone what he contemplated doing, and the least of these was deserter.

But Judah does it. And if the pacifists were to collect the novels most illustrative of their convictions, Mr. Fisher's *The Crossing* should rate high on the list. Previously, in the same chapter, the author describes how a man of integrity may reject an officer's role. Jud tosses down the well-worn copy of his father's book, *The Professional Soldier in Command; His Obligations as a Leader of Men*:

One way, that of the professional soldier and leader of men, he had already left behind him on the book-littered table by the barrack-room door.

In all the long hard road from San Antonio to Glorieta Pass and the last brave charge of the Salado Scouts, he had seen the price of leadership paid over and over and over again, and always in the same bankrupt moral tender of human misery and suffering. Whether it was a small company of Confederate spies caught by a Union rifle trap in the narrow, dark streets of Mesilla, or a full regiment of gray cavalry shredded by blue cannonfire on the broad, open plains of Val Verde, the terms of final settlement were no different. To the leader of men, be he squad corporal, regimental colonel, or army corps brigadier, the price of victory was the same as the cost of defeat—the lives of the men who followed him. Jud could not, he would not, any longer attempt to pay that price.

His failure might put the family honor in default, bring to a sorry end Southern history's proud accounting of his father's and his grandfather's names. If so, the blame could not be disowned.

There remained to him, however, the choice of ways in which he might proceed past that shameful first decision.

The Key to Nicholas Street is not an easy book to quote from, but it is, as a New York *Herald Tribune* reviewer remarks, "the sort of novel that traps reviewers into suggesting that it is more than a mystery," except that we should hardly use the word "trap." Mr. Ellin has written a story of subtlety, in which the murderer—so hard to identify—is nevertheless not a villain. Not only this, but the woman who is killed is the heroine! All the characters in the book are suspects, and Mr. Ellin uses this device to indicate how close we are to one another in our problems—in reactions of violence and in our mutual dependence.

An unconventional character in *Nicholas Street* is named Matt Chaves, and his discourses on life provide a kind of philosophical background for Mr. Ellin's psychological developments. Here Matt is trying to explain to his perplexed fiancée, by means of a "vision" he had experienced, why he wants to "desert" the average dream of success and be a deck-hand on a broken-down ferry boat:

"Oh, now we're out of dreams into revelations."

"Not revelations. Just Revelation, like the last book of the Bible. You know, thunder, wild cymbals, and then—the light."

"And a voice out of the wilderness. We mustn't forget that voice."

"No, it was a voice from out of the traffic on the northeast corner of Fifty-Sixth Street and Fifth Avenue, and the first I heard of it it sounded just like the squeal of brakes. The next thing I knew, there I was flat on my back in the gutter, and everybody in New York City standing over me and making appropriate remarks." . . .

"You might have been killed!"

"That is not an original thought. You are the twentieth person that has had it about my adventure, and, as a matter of fact, I was the first."

"I'm glad you thought enough of me to let me become number twenty. If you hadn't started on this crazy thing about revelations—"

"But it *isn't* crazy, that's what I'm trying to tell you. I sat there in the gutter, and my rear end hurt, my dignity hurt, and there was a rip in the knee of my pants. And what do you think was the first thing that came to my mind?" . . .

"The first thing that came to my mind was that I had a rip in the knee of my pants, and that if I walked into Wallace's office like that he'd be annoyed to death. Not worried, mind you, or amused, or even angry. Just annoyed. Petulance is his forte."

"But you could go home and change and then go to the office."

"That was my second thought. I thought, 'My God, now I'll have to go home and change and come back to the office late, and he'll be annoyed at that.' You see, there wasn't any getting around it, no matter what happened Wallace was going to be annoyed. Even if I were killed he'd be annoyed because we're right in the middle of a circulation drive.

"And then sitting there like that—remember, I was sitting in the gutter at the northeast corner of Fifty-Sixth Street and Fifth Avenue . . . and I thought to myself, really a little surprised at how obvious it was, 'Matt Chaves, for one second you were in a place where it is all darkness . . . and where you couldn't ever see, smell, taste, touch, or hear any of the wonderful things back on this side of the Styx. But you have been given another chance, Matt Chaves, so go forth and make the most of it.'

"I walked directly to Central Park. I saw strange beasts, and I ate a Popsicle. And no matter how I tested my revelation I found it good. The old dream was gone."

Matt became a free man.

COMMENTARY MAKING AN ISSUE

RECENT MANAS mail indicates a resurgence of protest against the preparations for nuclear war. Within a week we received two articulate statements of tax-refusal, one of which appears in this week's *Frontiers*. The other, equally forceful, came with a letter which said:

I send you this statement because (1) you may find some interest in it; and (2) MANAS is partly responsible for what I have said. In MANAS for May 6, 1959, the lead article contains the following statement: "History collaborated with . . . Washington, Paine, Jefferson, Lincoln, Gandhi, Nehru . . . by producing issues which could be dramatized in both moral and nationalist terms." I agree. But the very next sentence I incline to challenge. You said: "But we have no such issues in America today." Granted, the issues of our day have not been dramatized. . . . I for one don't have noticeable success in convincing anyone that the issues of that kind exist. But I cannot abandon the idea that *the makings of such issues are all around us*. Our job is to formulate the ingredients into an appeal picture.

Regardless of how that may be, I wanted to thank you for the concept of the importance of fusing morality with nationalism at critical junctures in history. That idea helped me to get away from all factional "isms," which are really provincialisms, and stultifying.

While we have every sympathy with this reader's attempt to formulate pertinent issues for our time, we would question any expectation of joining moral and national interests in the manner, say, of the American Revolution. One may argue of course, that a "national interest" which today runs counter to the interest of all mankind is not a national interest at all, but a national delusion. One may say that times have changed, that no longer will partisanship serve the good of even partisans.

But this is really the point. Times *have* changed. A national interest which is redefined as a world humanitarian interest is no longer properly called a national interest, save in the rhetoric of

argument. When we said, in the May 6 issue, that "we have no such issues," we meant that the obvious folly of partisanship has made the union of nationalism and morality impossible.

If we are to have issues, today, they will have to reach the foreground of general awareness by reason of another sort of appeal. We readily agree, however, that every serious effort to give moral form to the issue of nuclear war may bring us a few steps closer to a statement that contains the necessary ingredients. The great issues of the future exist already, of course. But issues become real by being grasped and *felt*. When the issue of nuclear war will be grasped and felt by more than an embattled minority, we do not know. When or how history will eventually collaborate with those now grappling with this issue-to-be, we do not know. Of one thing, however, we feel sure: The efforts of the tax-refusers will not be without effect upon the shape of the future.

CHILDREN ... and Ourselves

ALBERT GUERARD'S "The Quest of Excellence" in the current issue of the *American Scholar* reaches its readers soon after the sudden death of its distinguished author. Many, and we are among them, after reading this piece, would have wished that the emeritus Stanford professor who came to this country from France might have lived several more decades, for he was a man who would always have had provocative ideas flowing up from profound philosophical depths.

The portion of Mr. Guérard's thesis in "The Quest of Excellence" which strikes us as most interesting is contained in the following paragraphs:

As "the chief dignity of man is Thought" (*toujours Pascal!*), the core of a humanistic education is the art of thinking. This art is not purely intellectual; it cannot be reduced to formal logic. It implies a moral attitude: the desire to know the truth, the will to follow the light, the willingness to sacrifice if need be the rugged individualism of immediate self-interest. Such a training was for centuries the unchallenged quest of the Western world. It was the ideal of the medieval school of arts, preserved at Oxford and Cambridge, in the German Gymnasium and the French Lycée. Its aim was to prepare *un honnête homme*: a Christian, and not a bigot; a scholar, and not a prig; a gentleman, and not a snob. This ideal was dimmed by a thickening crust of traditions. But break the crust, and the flame will shine again.

Now my contention is that this all-important goal can and should be reached *in adolescence*. Thus prepared, the young would be able to absorb technical training, either through apprenticeship or through advanced studies, without being absorbed by it. The humanities alone will enable them to remain human.

In my own experience, I owe my formation to Lycée teachers, not—much as I liked and respected them—to my university professors. After eighteen, I was consciously on my own. I know also that most of the courses I have been offering even to graduate students should have been given in high school. Boys and girls of sixteen are more receptive to essential

ideas than candidates for the Ph.D., who are already the victims of a professional deformation.

This last sentence is, of course, a challenge to the assumptions of those who plan to dispense conventional education today. It is also, simply and absolutely, a truth for those who are capable of starting out on a quest for "excellence." So far as philosophy is concerned, the youth of the world are today on a starvation diet. Somehow or other, they are vaguely led to believe that *after* they have mastered knowledge about *things*, they will *then* begin to think. But you can't starve a young tree or a young child during its early stages of growth and then expect it to reach its maximum growth-potential. Here is another passage from Guérard, which unites various educational problems of "children and ourselves":

Contemporary literature and creative writing are better educational instruments than the biographies and bibliographies of ghostly third-raters. Philosophy, as it was with Socrates and with Descartes, should be a declaration of independence, a sweeping of cobwebs, an assumption of personal responsibility in wrestling with the problems that most concern us: "true philosophy laughs at philosophy." It cannot be reduced to a weary expose of systems that never lived. A man might be intelligent without being on familiar terms with Leibnitz' monad, or with Santayana's essences. According to the Master himself, not one of the eighteen disciples who collaborated in the symposium *The Philosophy of George Santayana* understood what he meant by *essences*.

Do I mean to say that education in the fullest sense should stop at sixteen? Exactly the reverse: it is the moment when it should begin. Schooling is but an initiation: graduation means *commencement*. That continued education—at eighty, mine is still hobbling along—can take many forms.

As Guérard also points out, the young should have a *sense of philosophy* before undertaking pursuit of excellence in any field; otherwise, they are apt to be forever confused in their attitudes toward such words as "standards" and "values." And this leads us to what Guérard calls "an all too familiar notion: perfection as interchangeability; every American a rugged individualist exactly like

everybody else." But "what if excellence were to imply the spurning of standards? What if *to excel* meant to transcend conformity?"

Such considerations involve *basic* education, yet Guérard is one of the comparatively few who have set the issue clearly. His illustrations are singularly effective, as in the following paragraph:

Our key words, *standards* and *values*, are linked with a third, *purpose*. When Kant defined art as "adequacy to purpose," he was careful to add "without purpose": else its purity would be imperiled. But except in the realm of grace—art, love, religion—the purpose, not the perfection, is of the essence. We do not admit that a perfect crime is excellent, that a perfect disease is desirable, that a perfect politician is a boon to mankind. There are cases, no doubt, in which an intelligent scoundrel might be less dangerous to society than a well-meaning fool, because the basis of workable ethics is cogent thinking. "Let us strive to think exactly," said Pascal, "for that is the foundation of moral life." But even in art—which etymologically means technique—technical perfection is not the highest goal: rather a crude genius like Douanier Rousseau than "faultless painters" like Andrea del Sarto, Alma-Tadema or Bouguereau. So if excellence is the closest possible conformity to a standard, we are led to establish a hierarchy among standards; and we are as perplexed as ever.

The foregoing does not by any means "cover" Mr. Guérard's discussion of "The Quest of Excellence," which should be read in its entirety. Guérard envisioned completely decentralized education for the only acceptable "humanistic utopia." He does not argue against the specialists in any field of thought or endeavor, but shows that specialization should be preceded by independent thought and by generous acquisition of liberal culture during the early years.

Why don't we have what Guérard calls "truly super-national countries of the mind"? Because the young are not led in this direction by compelling personal desire and by unique qualification.

It is during the early years of adolescence that students need to begin to experience the responsibility of choice. Guérard firmly believed,

furthermore, that those who are trained as "true humanists" in high school will not, even if they become the loftiest of scholars, lose contact with the rest of life. To the best of our knowledge, his last published words are: "Wisdom, learning and humanity must not be severed."

FRONTIERS

Death and Taxes

LAST spring I decided I could no longer in good conscience continue to pay my income tax while such a large proportion of it is used to prepare for war, and wrote a letter to this effect to Internal Revenue. [The letter is appended to this report.] Since then I have received in the mail and ignored half a dozen routine demands that I pay the tax. If the government wants missile money from me, it will have to come and pry it loose.

Today, having returned home from a trip, I received a message asking me to telephone a Mr. L____ at the local Internal Revenue office. My first impulse was to disregard the message, but on second thought I decided to return the call. Here was live communication on a personal level instead of IBM cards and form letters. I telephoned Mr. L., identified myself, and asked what was on his mind. It took him a moment to locate my file, after which he told me how much money I owed and asked me about paying it. Our conversation was courteous throughout and lasted a full fifteen minutes. In substance it ran as follows:

ME: I don't see why you're dunning me about the tax. Wasn't it clear from my letter why I'm refusing to pay?

MR. L: No, we don't know anything about that here. All we know is that you owe the money.

ME: It looks as if your office isn't very efficient if it doesn't even have complete files. I sent a letter to the Philadelphia office of Internal Revenue along with my tax return last March. In it I explained in detail that I was refusing to pay on conscientious grounds. I don't believe in war and I don't want my money to buy bombs to kill people with.

MR. L: Hold on a minute . . . (pause) . . . I don't find anything in the regulations that allows exemption for a reason like that.

ME: You mean you've never run across this situation before?

MR. L: No, never. Not in this office. The people we try to collect from are the ones who decide to take a trip to Florida or make a down payment on a new Chevy instead of paying up what they

owe. But it seems you're different. I don't suppose you'd mind if the government would let you pay an equal amount to a charity or something like that.

ME: I stated in my letter that I wasn't objecting to taxes as such, and that if the money was going toward something worthwhile—schools, roads—I'd be willing to pay. But as it is, I feel I have to do what's decent by humanity and obey the moral law instead of the government's law.

MR. L: I don't *make* the law. I'm just here to see that it's carried out. You know what I mean?

ME: Of course. But sometimes it turns out to be a good thing to disobey the law. Back when Washington and Jefferson and the others started a revolution they were *really* breaking the law; but nowadays we think they were pretty fine fellows.

MR. L: Yes, yes, I know all that. I don't like to do this to you—you seem gentlemanly enough—but if you don't pay we'll have to levy on your wages or something. I just work here. A man has to make a living, you know.

ME: Sure. But there are all kinds of jobs. Some people made a living working in Hitler's death camps.

MR. L: I wouldn't take that kind of job.

ME: I'm sure you wouldn't, Mr. L____. It's just a question of how far each of us is willing to go in doing what he knows is wrong. You sound as if this were going to be a disagreeable case for you. Maybe we should explore just what it is that makes you reluctant to go ahead with it.

MR. L: No, let's not get into that. That's not the point. Tell me, what is the policy of your organization—

ME: Organization? Who said anything about an organization? A person doesn't have to belong to some group in order to know what's right and wrong.

MR. L: Aren't there others who feel the way you do about not paying taxes?

ME: Yes, but I'm doing this on my own. Everyone ought to take what responsibility he can to help the human race from committing suicide.

MR. L: Well, we must have the money, no matter what. It would be a lot easier if you would pay it yourself. Maybe you'd feel better if you enclose a note of protest along with your check.

ME: No, I couldn't do that.

MR. L: I don't suppose you'd be willing to give us information on your sources of income?

ME: No, I couldn't go along with you that far, either. That's your job. Each of us has to do his duty as he sees it.

MR. L: You're not difficult to talk with, anyway.

ME: There's no reason why we can't be friendly antagonists, is there?

MR. L: All right, we'll leave it that way. Thank you for calling, Mr. Groff. Good bye and—good luck!

District Director of Internal Revenue
Philadelphia 7, Pa.

Dear Sir:

Enclosed you will find my Federal Income Tax return for 1958, complete except for one detail: I am refusing on conscientious grounds to pay my tax of \$125.00.

You are entitled to an explanation for this refusal.

I do not intend to pay because I believe the use to which the greater part of my tax money would be put is morally wrong. I refer of course to the preparation for war which is the major activity of the United States Government today. That a third global war would spell the virtual end of human culture as we know it is a fact often repeated but seldom appreciated. Those who obediently hand over their taxes to the government may well be financing the extermination of our species. I decline to be a party to that act. If one refuses to serve in the armed forces or to build the weapons of war (and I am one such person), how shall he justify his continuing to buy bombs and pay salaries that others may prepare to commit crimes against humanity? Taxes for war are tithes paid to the devil.

It is not the principle of taxation to which I object. If there were some practical way to pay that fraction of my tax which is to be used for constructive purposes, I would gladly do so. But I cannot now see a way to accomplish this. So I must refuse to pay any tax at all.

When we pause to consider the matter, we see that today our citizens are being presented with a fatal chain of cause and effect: the final link in this chain, a third World War, would be an unparalleled human catastrophe; the middle link is the fact that the most concentrated effort and greasest expenditure of our federal government is toward the preparation for this war; the first link is that the source of more than half these funds is the individual income tax. What thoughtful person is not inwardly disturbed at contemplating his role in helping to forge this chain? I for one mean to hold a chisel to that first link.

When two-thirds or more of the taxes demanded of me by the government is to be used to murder or at least to threaten to murder my fellow men on the other half of the globe, meanwhile contaminating with radioactive fallout all the earth and its creatures, it is just about time to draw the line, if indeed one ever intends to draw a line beyond which his honor will not allow him to pass in compromising with evil. We are indifferent and morally insensible to the horrors that steal upon us by degrees. Too late we may realize we have become helpless in their grip, as did doubtless many Germans under the Nazis.

Almost everyone is willing to agree that war is no solution to the problems of the world, that they should be met in a more creative way; yet almost no one is willing to *act* as if he believed this, which after all is the real measure of his belief.

Men have reason to suspect the worth of whatever must be guarded by terror and violence. Not one fundamental human value need be defended, nor indeed *can* be defended, by the inflammatory threats and denunciations of our Department of State or the missiles and H-bombs of our Defense (*sic*) Department. There is always the danger of mistaking the ugly symptoms for the disease itself, but if the chief enemy of man today is some institution, it is that of war itself, and not any mere form of government.

Man has only one defense against the horror weapons, and that defense is peace. Not the so-called peace which is really only an interval during which to prepare for the next war, but that state of genuine brotherhood in which the concerns and loyalties of men transcend the arbitrary limitations of national boundaries and political ideologies and instead approach *universal welfare* as the only legitimate frame of reference when making the value judgments which every day are demanded of each of us.

In all candor I cannot *predict* that this ideal state of affairs will ever come to pass; but that melancholy fact in no way lessens the obligation we all share to work toward it in whatever way we feel we can. Similarly, the fact that unjust deeds such as robberies and murders continue to be committed neither makes them just nor is it an acceptable excuse for our participation in them. Thus I merely propose to extend into a vital area what is commonly regarded as a valid principle.

How strange that a person should feel he must *explain* to others exactly *why* he opposes the extinguishing of his species! Surely it is the task of everyone concerned with ultimate human welfare to resist the forces which impel us toward the appalling crime and folly of collective suicide. If some charge that this seems a negative approach, I reply that the first step in doing what is right must always be ceasing to do what is wrong.

I therefore stand ready to risk the displeasure of the State and the penalties and inconveniences she may impose upon me rather than willingly assist her in her immoral acts.

RICHARD GROFF

Ambler, Pennsylvania