

WHOSE TOOLS CONFINE US?

A READER has made a spirited—if somewhat simplified—reply to Roderick Seidenberg's thesis in *Posthistoric Man* and *Anatomy of the Future* (reviewed in MANAS, Oct. 18). The reply is in terms of logical analysis, its validity transparent, so far as it goes:

Mr. Seidenberg may be a myth-maker, but I don't seem to be superstitious in his case.

It is all too easy to look around us at the increasing apparent conformity, and decry it. I would suggest that human institutions change but man goes on. The statistical distribution of human cultural types may vary from time to time, and land to land, but I would bet the major classifications of people stay pretty constant.

There is an elite, intellectually. There is an elite, politically. There is a large underdog. There are rebels and lickspittles. If there is a culture at all, there is, by definition, a certain necessary level of conformity. Increasing the conformity, by force of one kind or another, usually—perhaps always—results in a kind of homeostasis action. The basic human being has certain tolerances and certain needs. He will act in response to them.

Now let us examine the idea of freedom, and its opposite, confinement, briefly.

This is by now a fairly common argument, but let it be restated: freedom can be extended by confinement; in fact total freedom turns out to contain a paradox. Where there is a road and you have a car, you are confined to the road, and may not choose your own route from here to there. Where there is no road, you have freedom to go any route you fancy—but you may have to walk. A piano confines you to a certain finite number of tones (the well-tempered scale); yet once the scale had been invented, or discovered, note the prolific production of music within this confining, but inspiring, framework. The necessity to turn over part of one's income to the social security administration limits his immediate discretionary disposition of it—but may grant him a certain present and future freedom of action based on the premise that he'll at least always be able to eat.

The examples could be multiplied without limit. I believe that fact is that present-day man has more potential freedom than anyone ever before him had. The main source of this freedom is the enormous flux and flow of ideas. Freedom to study biochemistry is meaningless if one has never heard of biochemistry. Now, an individual, by simply wandering into a free library, may be put in touch with practically the total reservoir of human thought, history, and information. If he rejects the opportunity, or chooses not to take any action as a result of his perusals, this cannot be construed as a denial of his freedom; it is, rather, an exercise of it.

If anything, I think that today's vast public consciousness, created by literacy, the press, public schooling, etc., has made today's man far more the master of his own fate than any of his predecessor's. More alternatives are open to him, and when he acts, it is more likely to be an informed action. He will not so readily be drawn into the follies of others, and when he is, the folly is often exposed in a brief time, instead of extending on through centuries.

If anything threatens the further progress and maturity of the human race, it is probably a premature harvesting of the fruits so carefully nurtured by the great men and movements of history. If we attain peace and plenty in short order, through some colossal miscalculation of our rulers, we will quickly forget the suffering and the hard but necessary lessons inculcated (inadequately) during the long ascension. Civilization will quickly decompose, as people wander peacefully and plentifully about wondering what it's all about and, not finding out, searching for kicks.

What then (in MANAS style) is the main question to which we should address ourselves? There is nothing intrinsically wrong with technology and the increasing organic nature of human groupings. As before noted, freedom on an individual level may actually be enhanced by the increasing efficiency with which mundane tasks are performed. Nor need we go the opposite way and worry overmuch about advancing the state of the art. It's an inertial system with a tendency to accelerate asymptotically. People are going to organize—organize nature, machinery, themselves. But there is no need to organize the individual out of existence.

Functionally it's not necessary, and besides I think human homeostasis wouldn't permit it. Men have always rebelled when deprived of the things that make them essentially human rather than animal or machine.

The main question, then? Well, philosophy still holds its fascination. We still haven't figured out whether a theology is justified, and if so, the terms of its statement. Onward, and shed no great tears for the decline of spontaneity in mass-man, were such possible!

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Of the dozens of ways of attacking these questions, we may start out by selecting two.

First, do the tools developed by a given human being for the further exercise of freedom seriously obstruct his own freedom? Second, do they obstruct the freedom of other people more than his own?

The first question is at root a metaphysical question—the question we raised in our discussion of Mr. Seidenberg's latest book. The paragraph in our review was this:

How can man, ideally a being of freedom, become creative without submitting to the captivity of his creations? How can mind wear a form without suffering the limits of that form? How can man participate in an inexorable process without going to an inexorable doom?

The second question is commonly thought of as a social question: The "large underdog" of our correspondent's brief classification of humankind is called an underdog by reason of the fact that in his political and economic life he is most easily recognized as a cog in the machinery of other men's intentions. His fulfillments, to the extent that he has them, are reached according to the scope of the role he plays as a tool of others, or within the narrow boundaries left to him by the spreading mechanisms of other men's plans and projects.

Both questions are complex and difficult even to consider, not to speak of answering them. A worse confusion results when they are not made into separate inquiries, but left in a solid mass of

contradictions, as though they were a single problem with a single solution.

Mr. Seidenberg's book is essentially an examination of the first question, although in a social setting. He looks at the question of freedom as a common problem of all men, not as a "class" problem. Our freedom, he says, is lost to the mechanisms we create in order to gain our ends. If this is a law of nature, and if there is no counter-law of which, upon learning it, we may make use, then Mr. Seidenberg has given us a metaphysic of doom, as resistless as the final entropy of the second law of thermodynamics.

Mr. Seidenberg does not, of course, announce his thesis as metaphysical, but the mood of the metaphysician is upon him. He greatly fears that this is the Way Things Work.

Why should he display this metaphysical bent? It is natural enough, it seems to us, considering the evidence that is before him. A century ago, the idea that a universal house of confinement is slowly being built by advancing technology would not have occurred to anyone in the West. (The East, where cosmological metaphysics is inescapable in thought, might have offered such anticipations, although not in terms recognizable by a Western thinker.) A century ago, there was still a lot of "space" to be filled in by the activities of human beings. Like the enormous table in *Alice in Wonderland*, where, if you happened to find yourself staring at your own dirty dishes, you could move to a clean place for the next meal, the whole North American Continent was at our disposal. Our tools were comparatively primitive. Our organizations were small, and if you didn't happen to like the kind that operated in your neighborhood, you could move. As long as a man could design his own tools, without much interference from others, or could make up his own rules of organization and start in on any number of projects without finding himself trapped by the conditions he had himself established, so long would he be wholly uninterested in a metaphysical analysis of the problem of freedom. Why *analyze* freedom when one is so gloriously free?

Mr. Bowden says that we are *still* free, but note that the claim is made with a qualifying adjective: "I believe... that present-day man has more *potential* freedom than anyone ever before him had."

At this point, the subjective factor in feelings about freedom becomes quite apparent.

Today, Bertrand Russell, sitting in jail, doesn't *feel* free, not because he is in jail, but because he believes that power-mad nations are about to destroy the world in a nuclear holocaust, and he can't do very much to stop them. The Doomsday Machine keeps ticking away.

Mr. Seidenberg, sitting in Pennsylvania, has at his disposal all or many of the advantages listed by Mr. Bowden—both technological and cultural—yet is pressed to write books about the loss of freedom because he sees alternatives of human choice being lopped off, one by one, as rational techniques increasingly dictate the "best" way to build a house, locate a jail, transfer money, order a social community, or fight a war.

How about Thoreau? Would he be as "free" now as he was a hundred years ago? This would depend, it seems to us, not only upon conditions, but upon what Thoreau decided was the most important thing to do, today. He couldn't go back to Walden Pond. There is a fence around the cabin at Walden, now, to keep the tourists from carving their initials on the woodwork, and Thoreau couldn't stroll along the path to the village because the cars whizzing along the freeway would knock him down. But Thoreau, we are sure, would find a place to *be*. And he would find plenty to do.

From the viewpoint of the individual, the problem of freedom is a serious problem only for people who are confused about their ends. The asphalt jungle and the neon wilderness may seem more impenetrable and forbidding than the Okefenokee swamp, but only to the man who makes the mistake of trying to follow the street signs to find his way. There is still a continent to explore, soil to be reclaimed, morasses to be filled up, and deserts to irrigate. But the terrain is psychological instead of physical. There are still wild animals ranging in the forest, and horrors lurking in the

outside darkness, but these irrational and frightening elements of human experience are the unacknowledged offspring of the partisan emotions of men.

Freedom, as John Dewey said years ago, is knowledge of necessity. This is a metaphysical proposition, and it is true. At the risk of arousing the opposition of the sagacious critics of all absolutes, we would go on to say that Dewey's statement is absolutely true—because it declares a first principle.

When Edmund Hillary and Tensing Bhota pressed to the top of Mt. Everest, they didn't complain about "conditions." They didn't object to the loss of their freedom, which was considerable, compared to the less rigorous society of the valley below. The notion of freedom was shaped by their intentions, not by the conditions which they encountered, which were no more than the props of the drama. There are scenery and props wherever you go. The need to adapt to the particular circumstances of the approaches to the summit was an incidental conformity, not an issue of freedom.

First you set the project, then you define the conditions, and then you work with the conditions in ways appropriate to fulfillment of the project. Freedom is maximum when you define the conditions accurately—the *relevant* conditions, of course—and when you discover how to relate your energies to them. Freedom is knowledge of necessity.

We doubt if Gandhi ever complained about a personal loss of freedom. He set his project—which was two-sided, encompassing the aim of social justice and the object of individual regeneration—and went to work. Because of the nature of his ends, he could not wholly succeed, but neither could he wholly fail. In his case, his freedom was a function of his personal determination. He created his freedom as he went along, as a man will light the path ahead with an electric torch.

But Gandhi, you will say, was virtually unique a moral genius. This may be so, but his uniqueness was quantitative, since he was a man, with no more essential potentialities than all other men. His uniqueness was a historical phenomenon. He

clarified his ends and shaped his definitions and marshalled his energies with a whole-souled commitment found in the very few. The point, however, is that he was *free*, in the only sense that the word has genuine significance.

Gandhi, they say, was against machinery and progress. He was not against them as means, but only as ends. He was for a better *charkha* (spinning wheel). He wanted to develop cottage industry. His thinking, here, was quite clear. He wanted the stage of human life set for his people with props that would not obstruct their serious reflections about ends. He knew that one man cannot set the project to be undertaken by others. You can set an example for others, but not their project. Gandhi knew, from the root of his being, what Lyman Bryson declared in 1953:

It is the mistake of thinking that a political process is justified by its public result. This is not true. A political process is justified by its private result, that is, by its result in the lives of the members of the state, and the most important thing in the lives of the citizens at any given time, even at a time of public danger, is the development of their own best selves.

The key to freedom lies in thinking about ends. When Emerson said that Thoreau had no "wake," he meant that the tools which Thoreau developed in order to reach his ends left no trail of discarded rubbish and obstacles behind him. Buddha (in the *Dhammapada*) called the enlightened man "trackless." He meant the same thing.

But, you may say, that is all very well for Thoreau and Buddha. There is still the capacity of mankind to be considered. There is still the "large underdog" who suffers the conditions established by the selfish and the skillful and the unjust. So, if you wanted to be precise, you could say that Thoreau *did* make a wake. He left a call to stirring indignation at the sight of the mechanical confinements of his fellows. Such men leave a track through the jails of the world—those symbols of the unfreedom of both the jailers and the jailed, of those who are both victims and executioners. When Camus declared that the psychological circumstances of the age have made modern man into both victim and executioner,

he said in moral terms what Seidenberg has said in sociological terms. The track of past human behavior has become so confining that it is a monument raised by reason to unreason. The spiral course has become a closed system, a circle of deadly repetition of yesterday's intentions, which, we are now obliged to see, go nowhere at all.

And this is the reason why Gandhi broke into political action, why Thoreau shocked the countryside with his fighting address in behalf of John Brown, and why Socrates, after a lifetime withdrawn from politics, challenged the Five Hundred and then went calmly to his death. They did these things, not as politicians, but in order to break the fascination of old patterns of behavior—in order to gain a few moments of looking upward, at the realm of ends, for the many who were plodding around the weary treadmill of the past.

So, the answer to the question, "Whose tools confine us?" is a twofold answer: Our tools and theirs—in that order, and in that order of importance. This, at any rate, is what we take to be the instruction we have from the men who have been free, and it would seem an incredible folly to take instruction from anyone else.

Letter from **GENEVA**

GENEVA.—The central problem of international life today is the division of Germany. It is not Communism, or the decay of capitalism, or the Chinese, or the population explosion, the Cold War, or the stupefaction of the United Nations in face of its 103 members. No event of modern times has so determined our future as the meeting of Russian and American troops at a point in Germany in April, 1945. From this event stems the division of Germany, from which in turn spring most of our current problems.

The central fact of the human condition, on the other hand, is an old fact: the inability of men to apply their rational capacities to the solution of political problems. The Communists, of course, claim to have done just this, but the claim, from where I sit, lacks substantial validity at the points which count.

The question of Berlin, which dominates most public thought here, together with the West German political crisis, brings these two—the political and the human—into a frightening juxtaposition. The deeper one dips into the question, the more fascinating it becomes. A recent letter from a West German professor brings the political and the human aspects of the situation into unusually sharp focus. What follows is freely drawn from that letter, with direct quotations so marked.

"Since the 13th of August, 1961," he begins, "life, peace, humanity itself are in jeopardy." Four problems concern him most deeply. First, of course, is the event of August 13 itself. "I have seen the 'wall' rising in principle for years. West German politics, from at least as far back as the 1954 Paris agreements, could lead to no other result. Only by sheer hypocrisy or from a grotesque underestimate of the determination and ever-growing might of the Eastern bloc could one suppose that it would be possible to pursue at one and the same time military integration with the

West and reunification. It would be true to say that West Germany has helped to prepare the way for that wall by declining every contact with East Germany and cursing Communism. I see now, beyond that wall, how the human countenance is seared—how hate, bitterness, and resignation are spreading, not so much in the direction of officially encouraged anti-Western feeling, but rather against the East German regime itself, which has the power to exact abject submission. I fear for the people beyond that wall and know that facile accusations and declamations, violently expressed on our part, can but worsen the fate of those who live there. Do you understand why I want to preserve contacts and links with whomsoever I can in a meaningful way?"

Second, he says, is the appalling danger that the Germans will revert, in their continued political immaturity, to disastrous authoritarian patterns of past years: "The more West German foreign policy takes a firm line, the more the West German situation exhibits characteristics with which we are familiar from the early thirties. Now, as then, we are faced with a crisis which demands the profoundest examination and appreciation of the others' position as well as clear insight into one's own, and consequently the surrender of goals hitherto quite justifiable—in short, a complete reappraisal and the formation of new conceptions. 'He who cannot think politically alongside his opponent cannot think politically at all.' One is evading the duty of being rational by escaping into the irrational." Germans, nurtured for centuries on authoritarianism, have recently experienced ruthless, irresponsible authority. Faced with the frustrations of division, and tempted by the flesh-pots of unheard-of prosperity, can they be expected to choose the road of grinding self-application to a rational solution of problems? The more likely response is nihilism, a belief in nothing, not even in themselves.

Third, since 1945 Berlin has progressively lost its reasons for being considered an important

German city, either East or West. While Berlin was once "the economic, cultural and communications center of the German Reich, in 1949 East Berlin won back this function for itself within the modest limits offered by the D.D.R., and West Berlin became, commercially speaking, an offshoot of the West, which, thanks to its outreach into the D.D.R. and in its link with East Berlin, justified its existence as a city of contact and encounter." Further: "Its development took place in relation to the (possible) reunification of Germany. The events since August 13 eliminate these specific functions of West Berlin almost completely. The higher the wall becomes, the more mere existence will become the preoccupation of this city on the very frontiers of the West. The spectre of provincialism, already looming large during the past few years, assumes alarming proportions." And what about this city itself, for which men are preparing to fight? "There was an exodus of 110,000 people (from West Berlin) to West Germany in 1960, compensated for by only 24,000 moving in the other direction. Only the acquisition as citizens of 109,000 refugees from the East covered up this loss through migration to the West. The flight of private capital escaped notice only because of the substantially more considerable stream of official investment which flowed in the direction of Berlin. A community so much on the periphery of its Western hinterland, and in addition conceived, within the limits of the possible, as a 'neutral free city,' will not, in the long run, offer especially attractive opportunities, professional, political or cultural, particularly to eager and active youth. Berlin's future is irrevocably linked to the future of Germany as a whole. Only when it succeeds in establishing a working agreement and the resumption of relationships of all kinds between the two parts of Germany can Berlin recover its own attraction as a city of mediation. The much discussed proposal of a U.N. solution seems to me unrealistic. The addition of a Berlin crisis to a U.N. crisis solves neither problem."

Lastly is the agonizing necessity of separating the wish from the fact. This writer sees the possibility of fruitful cooperation between West Germany, if its politics permit, and the United States: "How many men, parties, institutions in Berlin or Western Germany think beyond the status quo? With no realistic conception of the situation, one fears to make a concession and thus risks the unavoidable atomic war rather than a tough struggle for life. Not firmness alone, but only firmness and reason can lead to peace (quoting President Kennedy) . How can the voice of reason escape from the dilemma: either to remain silent or be branded a traitor? How can reason make itself heard in Western Germany where manifestly against the will of the majority, not only is Adenauer's term renewed as Federal Chancellor, but also his principles of foreign policy continue to be implemented? The hope and responsibility for world peace, on the Western side, lie with the U.S.A. The latter is in the process of emancipating itself in its European politics from the former Bonn line and of breaking the vicious circle whereby Bonn's fear, backed by American power, constitutes a menace for Russia and evokes reciprocal fear and threat, the two inevitable consequences in West Germany being "an arrogant, frankly fascist, self-sufficient show of strength, and an all too ready abandonment of the 'poor relations' in East Germany. The settlement is being sought in Washington so that men from East and West may live in peace. The West German contribution to this must be to do everything possible to renew contact with people from the other side after the recognition of East Germany, a step which is unavoidable and in present circumstances necessary."

This seems to me to have the authentic ring of human agony. The political dilemma, as MANAS implied in its lead article of June 28, this year, is an inescapable part of the human situation.

ROVING CORRESPONDENT

REVIEW

RELIGION IN NOVELS

WE are not quite sure what is meant by a "Catholic novel," but assume the phrase suggests that the story has something to do with the Church and that the author is himself a Catholic. It seems, further, that other members of the Catholic laity are expected to understand and sympathize with the book. But whatever the intentions in books of this sort, *The Devil's Advocate* (Dell) by Morris L. West is an unusually good story. Unlike most books conceived in the framework of Faith, *The Devil's Advocate* has a universal appeal, and for this reason, no doubt, was chosen for the annual Brotherhood Award of the National Conference of Christians and Jews.

One reviewer has characterized *The Devil's Advocate* as having as much suspense as *The Anatomy of Murder*, while another called it "an excellent sample of the 'tough' school of Catholic writing." In this case, "tough" means a good hard look at the imperfections of hierarchical Catholicism. In addition, the characters in the novel who make the most searching judgments are themselves members of the hierarchy. Take for example the following, in which Cardinal Marotta talks with Monsignor Blaise Meredith—a key character who, at the outset of the story, discovers that he has but six months to live:

"I grieve for you, my friend. It comes to all of us, of course; but it is always a shock."

"Yet we of all people should be prepared for it." The drooping mouth twitched upward into a wry smile.

"No!" Marotta's small hands fluttered in deprecation. "We mustn't overrate ourselves. We are men like all the others. We are priests by choice and calling. We are celibates by canonical legislation. It is a career, a profession. The powers we exercise, the grace we dispense, are independent of our own worthiness. It is better for us to be saints than sinners—but like our brothers outside the ministry we are generally something in between.

"I've been in the Church a long time, my friend. The higher one climbs the more one sees—and the more clearly. It's a pious legend that the priesthood sanctifies a man, or that celibacy ennoble him. If a priest can keep his hands out of his pockets and his legs out of a woman's bed till he's forty-five, he stands a reasonable chance of doing it till he dies. There are plenty of professional bachelors in the world too. But we are still subject to pride, ambition, sloth, negligence, avarice. Often it's harder for us to save our souls than it is for others. A man with a family must make sacrifices, impose a discipline on his desires, practice love and patience. We may sin less, yet have less merit in us at the end."

"I am very empty," said Blaise Meredith. "There is no evil that I repent and no good that I count. I have had nothing to fight. I cannot show even scars."

If this is percipient material in regard to Catholicism, it is also applicable in degree to the situation in any systematized organization of morality. The character who is "good" in accordance with the standards of his doctrinaire compatriots may find that he has never discovered himself—and has not, therefore, made a personal encounter with the moral struggle. In another conversation a bishop confesses the limitations of viewpoint which are inevitable in a hierarchical structure. The bishop says:

"I believe that the Church in this country is in drastic need of reform. I think we have too many saints and not enough sanctity, too many cults and not enough catechism, too many medals and not enough medicine, too many churches and not enough schools. We have three million workless men and three million women living by prostitution. We control the State through the Christian Democratic Party and the Vatican Bank; yet we countenance a dichotomy which gives prosperity to half the country and lets the other half rot in penury. Our clergy are undereducated and insecure and yet we rail against anti-clericals and Communists. A tree is known by its fruits—and I believe that it's better to proclaim a new deal in social justice than a new attribute of the Blessed Virgin. The first is a necessary application of a normal principle, the second is simply a definition of a traditional belief. We clergy are more jealous of our rights under the Concordat than the rights of our people under the natural and divine law. . . . Do I shock you, Monsignor?"

The Devil's Advocate also deals with two men, or perhaps three, who seem to be on the way to genuine sainthood. On the other hand, the Communist anti-Christ representatives in the war-torn Italy which forms the setting for *The Devil's Advocate* are portrayed as intelligent men, dedicated to faith in their system as Catholics are to theirs—and with this comes the double-edged admission by Mr. West that natural humanists can be neither Catholics nor Communists at heart, while there are others who can never be humanists, but can be *either* Communists or Catholics. Ben Hecht's 1959 novel, *The Sensualists* (Dell), includes some unusual psychological observations by another "bishop" of the Church. Mr. Hecht's title, by the way, is by no means misleading, for the story deals with those whose pursuits of sensual delights are both unabashed and extreme. In the end, one of these people presents herself as a candidate for becoming a nun—a fate which she subsequently escapes—but while in the religious mood is made to listen to forthright words from a bishop who perceives that she is swinging on an emotional pendulum, shocked into it, in this case, by an experience involving sexual abnormality:

"I'm afraid," Ann said.

"That means that your intelligence is returning," said the Bishop. "You came in here like a sleepwalker."

Ann remained silent. Memories came to her. . . .

Ann stared at the Bishop as he started talking, "Dear Madam, sexual oddity such as you fancy yourself to have is no excuse for cutting yourself off from the world. There is hardly a human being—and I'm speaking of the good, pious humans who come to church—who isn't the victim of some sexual perversity. . . . We live in a disordered time and the sex glands of our world are apparently as confused as its statesmen. Not to mention its clergy. Imagine what trouble we are in for, I mean theological trouble, if we arrive on the planet Venus and discover that its inhabitants were not graced by a visit from our Saviour. As for our own little area of existence and its little sexual confusions, I have always disapproved of converting a deviated libido into a worship of God. In fact, I think it even dangerous. Most of the

religious failings in the world's history are due to sex perversion trying to heal itself with prayers and flagellations of various sorts. Usually wars, schisms and unreadable books are the result. . . .

Mr. Hecht writes well and provocatively in this first novel in twenty-five years. Here we have the two principal characters—a confused but brilliant husband and wife skirting the subject of religion in another context:

"This seems to be a rather serious war scare," said Ann.

"Yes, it's become a sort of permanent scare," Henry sighed, "and it's taken the place of nearly everything else."

"The threat of atomic war and our subsequent global suicide is our new religion," said Henry. "It's taken the place of our forefathers' concern with original sin, eternal damnation etcetera. Religion is always a hobby for the old. And this one is an ideal religion for elderly statesmen and editorial writers. Old men are secretly thrilled, I'm sure, at the possibility of the whole world dying with them.

"Politics, war, newspaper headlines, rumors, pronouncements, ideologies are the shallow things," said Henry indignantly. "Events are the toys of old men."

COMMENTARY

RESISTANCE TO QUESTIONING

THE euphoria bequeathed to us by the nineteenth century dies hard. This is the musing conclusion one reaches after reading I. F. Stone's review of *Life's* light-hearted account of the dangers of nuclear attack. (See *Frontiers*.) It is still too soon for such organs of mass opinion to concede that the world has become a very bad place.

If you were to try to give an account of the state of mind of the popular periodical and newspaper publishers of our time, you could say that they are obliged to practice an almost continuous resistance to any serious questioning of the philosophy of naive optimism in which they were bred and brought up. The ground of the survival of their institutions depends upon the maintenance of this optimism. There is not in their thought any capacity for deep analysis or self-examination. So, when things look bad, they get irritated, and then offer the same solution as the manufacturers who buy white space for advertising—a cosmetic treatment which will fix up the appearances of things.

We have a cosmetic foreign policy, which we hope will make us look "good" to others—that is, tough and unbeatable; and a cosmetic domestic policy that is supposed to make us look "good" to ourselves—that is, tough and invulnerable. We get the real dope from the scientists, so we know about that—we aren't fools; but neither are we "soft," so in our public relations we ignore what the scientists tell us. From practical experience in merchandising we know that you are bound to get a few contradictions if you try to prove that you have *all* the popular virtues, so we don't worry much about occasional break-downs in logic. We have our spots of bother, but we still expect to go upward and onward with our Way of Life.

The fact is that the moral climate of civilization has changed. It has either worsened, or we are now becoming aware of certain of its qualities that didn't show up during the more

loose-jointed years of the past. The unpleasant truth is that we are slowly being compelled to acknowledge that the very basis of our common life is not good. No wonder the organs of popular opinion resist this conclusion. No wonder the great majority of the people are frightened by the uncertainties of the times, yet reluctant to undertake the serious thinking that a great many symptoms of social and moral sickness demand.

The fear will not go until we recognize the kind of world we have made. Men do not fear evils that have been defined, nor draw back from tasks which they understand. It is the element of the hidden and unknown in today's ills which paralyzes the good will and intelligent resolve. The need of the age is still for honest and discerning diagnosis.

CHILDREN

. . . and Ourselves

NOTES ON GODDARD COLLEGE

A READER who works in the field of education has long been impressed by the unique accomplishments of Goddard College in Vermont—for reasons which seem readily apparent in the quotations we have from the *Goddard Bulletin*. In this college the aim is to have no more than eight students for each teacher, with students and teachers working together on practical projects as well as in the areas of the liberal arts. Here is a constructive flowering of the best of educational opportunities as conceived by John Dewey, and it was the Dewey influence, via the Progressive Education thinking of Columbia's Teachers' College, which led to the Goddard plan. It is interesting to note, incidentally, that many parallels may be drawn between this kind of progressivism-in-action at the college level and Gandhi's educational training centers in India. Goddard is set in open country near Plainfield, Vermont, and the maintenance of buildings or any necessary addition to them becomes the responsibility of the entire college community. The 1960 *Bulletin* says:

Goddard College has three large aims. The first is to provide undergraduate education in the liberal arts for young men and women of many economic, religious, and racial backgrounds. The second is to carry on a continuing program of research and experimentation in the teaching-learning process. The third is to provide adult education services related to the needs of the community, state, and nation of which the college is a part.

Four fundamental propositions underlie the Goddard philosophy of education. One of them is that human beings are inherently cooperative, and that the best in human living results from recognizing and using that native cooperation. Another is that each human being is different from others, and must be recognized and accepted as an individual. A third is that human learning occurs through purposeful experience carefully examined, in every aspect of living. The fourth is that the human situation and the

human beings who make it up change, grow, and evolve continually, as must their institutions.

From these propositions is derived the college program.

Organized learning activities at Goddard are in general of three kinds: group courses, usually meeting as seminars; community-service projects, in which field work is paralleled by library study and group or individual conferences with a faculty member, and independent studies, in which student and teacher plan a program of reading, research, laboratory work or other activity which the student then pursues largely on his own, with only occasional formal conferences with his teacher. A fourth kind of learning activity is the mid-term conference, during which the entire college community and a number of expert consultants spend several days making an intensive examination of a single problem.

The intention at Goddard is "to help students know as much as possible about themselves as individuals and as members of society, that they may live and learn with purpose and direction, and make an informed choice of adult role and vocation." There is an interesting blend of emphasis on individuality and cooperation. Clearly, a Goddard education is what each student makes it for himself, but there can be little doubt that those who take the four-year program of courses and graduate with a Bachelor of Arts degree will tend to "see a job as a way of living, as well as a way or making a living," since living, learning and working are brought into daily synthesis.

Goddard was founded as a secondary school nearly a hundred years ago by a group of Universalists, and has been an accredited college since 1938. The general aims of the founders have been made more specific by a carefully planned program in which a thoughtful liberalism combines with an integral conception of community life. In a manner similar to that pioneered by Arthur Morgan at Antioch many years ago, students are expected to leave the campus for two months of the year to take jobs—all over the country. As the *Bulletin* remarks: "The main aim of the work term is not a

vocational one, though many students work in vocational fields they wish to explore more fully than is possible on campus. Nor is the aim a financial one, for few students find it possible to add to their financial resources during the winter months. Rather, the work term is provided to guarantee a wider area for the testing and evaluation of ideas developed during the resident terms. As an essential part of the Goddard curriculum, it demands planning, with the student's counsellor and the director of the non-resident work term; and evaluation, in counselling, through the preparation of a written work-term report, and through a report from the student's employer. Each student is asked to carry out and report on an independent study related to his work-term experiences."

A paragraph which describes how a new entrant is greeted shows the difference between the Goddard approach and the reception of entrants to the typical university:

A student entering Goddard is assigned as faculty counsellor that member of the staff whose interests and experiences seem most appropriate in terms of what admissions material tells about the student. Returning students work with counsellors of their own choice, within scheduling limits. During the several days of registration which begin each semester, the entering student and his counsellor meet first to discuss the various learning activities on the semester's schedule, and to select a number which appear necessary or interesting to the student. The student then visits the instructors in charge of each of the activities he has tentatively listed to talk about the work to be done, his readiness for it, the depth of his interest, and any other matters of importance to him in making a semester's commitment. He returns to his counsellor after these visits to talk over and decide upon a final program.

A MANAS reader who has been a Goddard student gave us these impressions:

The college life assumes a very cohesive force, which in turn makes the atmosphere one of a small community, rather than a "factory," which many of our present-day colleges are. Because of this, students and teachers have a very close contact with each other, which in turn creates an atmosphere

where learning has a chance to grow and prosper. The classes are in the form of a seminar, enabling the students to direct and mold the discussions. Furthermore, the students are permitted to do individual work in whichever area of knowledge they are most interested. Let me also point out that college life at Goddard does not wholly concentrate on the academic. Aside from this, there are what you might call student responsibilities, such as maintaining the college, the library, etc., where the students collectively participate. Another thing which should be mentioned is Community Government. Each student, although he may participate in community activities, must attend community meetings once a month. As you can see, Goddard has a very individualistic basis, yet strives for cooperation and understanding among students and faculty.

Since there are no marks given at Goddard, each student is required to give an evaluation of his progress for any given period. Aside from the purely academic purpose that this serves, it also produces, in my opinion, something like a therapeutic effect. This is probably the central idea of Goddard: that the student learn academically but at the same time learn about himself and the other individuals with whom he associates—how to cooperate on an individual basis.

Requests for further information on Goddard should be addressed simply to Goddard College, Plainfield, Vermont.

FRONTIERS

Almost as Safe as Ivory Soap Is Pure?

[This article is reprinted by permission from the Sept. 25 issue of *I. F. Stone's Weekly*, a journal of political and social commentary which commands much respect. For those who wish to see other copies of this weekly, the address is 5618 Nebraska Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C.]

CRISIS is piling on crisis, instabilities mount in an unstable world, frustration is added to frustration. At such a time it is dangerous to spread the illusion that thermonuclear war may be a way out, a cleansing thunder storm in the planet's humid summer, or a cathartic that would magically purge our ills, if only we are ready to spend a cramped week or two in underground shelters, emerging on a world from which communism had happily disappeared but where free enterprise was all set to go again.* As if orchestrated out of Washington, mass circulation media are beginning to condition the public mind for nuclear war. The *Saturday Evening Post* (Sept. 16) inaugurates a new department, "The Voice of Dissent," with a piece by that favorite iconoclast of the Air Force, Herman Kahn. The Associated Press sends out a series of interviews with Dr. Edward Teller, on how exaggerated are fears of thermonuclear war. *U.S. News & World Report* (Sept. 25) runs a cheerful cover piece, "If Bombs Do Fall," with a side story from Japan on how well the survivors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki are doing. *Life* Magazine (Sept. 15) puts a civilian in a reddish fallout suit looking like a partially boiled lobster on its cover, with the glad tidings, "How You Can Survive Fallout. 97 out of 100 People Can Be Saved. . . ."

* "What about money? Instead of destroying all old bills that are taken out of circulation, the Government is storing money away in strongboxes around the country. Enough \$1 bills have been saved to last 8 months.

"Bank accounts safe? Plans are being worked out to enable you to write checks on your bank account—even if the bank itself were destroyed." ("If Bombs Do Fall in U.S."—*U.S. News & World Report*, Sept. 25.)

No doubt the purpose is to make our threat of going to war over Berlin credible to Khrushchev, as indeed it should. Our ultimate weapon, Madison Avenue, may be able to sell anything to the American people, even the notion—why fool around with aspirin?—that one little bullet through the head and that headache will disappear. Some years back, the Pentagon and popular magazines were advertising how many Russian cities we could "take out" if necessary. Now the same moral imbecility is being applied to our own cities. "About five million people," *Life* says lightly, "less than 3% of the population, would die." It adds hastily, to anticipate any vestigial humane twinges, "This in itself is a ghastly number. But you have to look at it coldly. . . ." *Life* has been telling us righteously that the Godless Chinese Reds put little value on human life. Mao is willing to see millions die to wipe out capitalism but Henry Luce is willing to see millions die to wipe out communism. Kennedy, like Khrushchev, prepares the public mind to gamble all, if necessary, on Berlin. This is the real mobilization. Our moral scruples and our good sense must first be conscripted.

Worse than the horror is the levity, the transparent mendacity and the eager commercialism. A happy family with three children is shown by *Life* in their well stocked assemble-it-yourself prefabricated steel shelter, only \$700 from the Kelsey-Hayes Company (and soon to be marketed by Sears, Roebuck). A picture shows a girl laughingly talking on the phone from an underground shelter, as if to her beau, who is presumably in his own shelter and ready to take her to the latest movie as soon as the all clear sounds. Grandmother's old fashioned remedies turn out to be best after all even in thermonuclear war. "The best first aid for radiation sickness," *Life* advises, "is to take hot tea or a solution of baking soda." Suddenly thermonuclear war is made to seem familiar, almost cozy. All you need is a shelter, a well stocked pantry, some new gadgets like geiger counters. The budding boom in these products

promises to stimulate badly lagging magazine lineage. *Life's* editorial hopes Khrushchev notices "our spontaneous boom in shelter-building" and concludes euphorically, "He cannot doubt our ability to wage nuclear war, or to erase his cities." Aren't we getting our people ready to accept the erasure of ours? We used to think thermonuclear war likely only if lunatics came to power. Well, here they are.

I am not arguing for surrender, a runout on Berlin, dishonor, national cowardice, appeasement or better-red-than-dead. I am trying to say that when a nation faces problems as complex as those which now face ours in Germany, the United Nations, the Congo, Laos and the resumption of nuclear testing, there is a duty on every publisher and every writer to help inculcate sobriety and the need for reflection. The President's power to maneuver and negotiate is not helped by piling delusion upon hysteria, by making people feel not only that we face a simple choice of death-or-surrender but that most of us won't die anyway—so why bother to negotiate?

Why should President Kennedy lend his name to *Life's* wicked stunt? Nowhere does *Life* tell us what level and kind of attack it assumes which need kill only 3 per cent of our people. The latest Rand study in the new Holifield committee hearings shows 3 per cent dead as the result of "a very small attack delivering 300 megatons" on military targets exclusively. Even this small attack, if aimed at our cities would put inescapable deaths (with everyone in some shelter) up to 35 per cent. The same study (p. 216, House Gov't Operations, Civil Defense, Aug. 1961) shows a 3,000 megaton attack on cities would put inescapable deaths up to 80 per cent. The new Holifield report on these hearings says that an attack half this size, as assumed by Secretary McNamara, would kill 50 million Americans and seriously injure 20 million more (see section on "Loose Arithmetic" p. 55). The report warns that the existing basement space on which the Secretary relies to save 10 to 15 million lives

won't do. "All deaths from fallout can be prevented," the report says, "but not in existing buildings, even when improved. Nationwide, the largest number of structures do not afford even the bare minimum factor considered necessary to bring the radiation hazard down to tolerable levels."

Stewart Alsop's "Report Card" on Kennedy in the *Saturday Evening Post* (Sept. 16) disclosed that the President told Congressional leaders a new war would cost 70,000,000 dead Americans. Even Dr. Teller did not go beyond saying that 90 per cent of our population could be saved. Where did *Life* get that 97%? Was it a copywriter's bright flash? Just as Ivory Soap is sold as 99 per cent pure, is thermonuclear war to be sold as 97 per cent safe?