

## TIME TO THINK

THERE is a curious balance behind the multiple disturbances and confusions of the present, illustrated by the double introspection—both individual and social self-examination—which is so marked in contemporary thought. Various reasons may be given for this reflective tendency, although they should not be regarded as "explanations" so much as a notation of concomitants which are somehow related to the deeply questioning spirit of the times.

First, we live in a period characterized by the maturation of certain historical movements or forces which have had far-reaching influence in shaping men's lives. One of these forces is the national state. Another is the spiritually unifying but socially centrifugal idea of freedom of conscience. Still another is the industrial revolution and the rise of technology, including military technology. To these should be added the immeasurable effect on modern thought of the secularizing influence of Darwin, Marx, and Freud. While limited humanitarian "gospels" were developed from the doctrines of these iconoclastic thinkers, no one of the resulting freethinking faiths, nor any combination of them, is today of sufficient influence to command the allegiance of the coming generation. They lead, instead, to questions. The ideas of these men may still be effective as *ingredients* of current thinking, but they are by no means taken as philosophies to live by. And here, indeed, is the rub: a general consensus affording a philosophy to live by hardly exists at all. We survive in the present on the constructions and securities of the past. There is a sense in which we may be thankful for the unsophisticated ardor which made our fathers build so well, as, today, we take for granted the solid inheritances from a more innocent past while looking with apprehension toward a structureless future.

For today we have no plans. We have fears, sometimes a mindless devotion to the status quo, but no real plans. Indeed, many men are far too intelligent to be taken in by plans offered in the name of manifestly faltering ideologies. And when we say "we," we mean the authentic reflective intelligence of the time. Serious thought is all wondering and questioning, today.

Within our immediate experience there is an exhaustion of systematic religious belief, an end to enthusiasm for any sort of ideological program, a retreat from all but *ad hoc* revolutionary thinking, and an astonishingly vigorous recrudescence of individual-mystical-existential inquiry and search.

There is a sense in which this awakening to the question of individual identity was inevitable. So long as the idea of the individual was obtained from predominantly *social* conceptions, self-definition in racial and national terms seemed adequate to the vast majority of people. So long as political activity, industrial expansion, and individual acquisition could be introverted into a workable substitute for an authentic inner life, the language of psychological health remained the private jargon of specialists, unneeded and ignored by the rest of the population. But today, after a space of time less than the life of a generation, a popular vocabulary of selfhood has suddenly come into being, requiring an account of individual existence and meaning that is independent of ideological or political origins. The incapacity of ideas of political reality and action to contribute to this kind of meaning—except indirectly, or only incidentally—gives a distinct objectivity of externality to the once impressive claims of ideological systems, and this may be the subjective phase of what we spoke of earlier as the "maturation" of certain historical forces. The youthful energy of a dream of progress is no longer behind these forces. They are no longer

regarded by men as the chief means to human fulfillment. The forms they created still exist; they support our physical lives and pattern many or all of our routine undertakings, but they have no claim on our inventive capacities or vision. They are no longer *aspects of ourselves*; they are seen as something we once believed in, something we once used, and are now beginning to be suspected of using us.

An account of an earlier world view, one almost completely gone from our awareness, will illustrate how greatly conceptions of "reality," and therefore self, may change. The following is from the first chapter of Carl Becker's *The Heavenly City of the Eighteenth-Century Philosophers*, a description of the medieval state of mind:

It is well known that the medieval world pattern, deriving from Greek logic and the Christian story, was fashioned by the church which for centuries imposed its authority upon the isolated and anarchic society of western Europe. The modern mind, which curiously notes and carefully describes everything, can indeed describe this climate of opinion although it cannot live in it. In this climate of opinion it was an unquestioned fact that the world and man in it had been created in six days by God the Father, an omniscient and benevolent intelligence, for an ultimate if inscrutable purpose. Although created perfect, man had through disobedience fallen from grace into sin and error, thereby incurring the penalty of eternal damnation. Yet happily a way of atonement and salvation had been provided through the propitiatory sacrifice of God's only begotten son. Helpless in themselves to avert the just wrath of God, men were yet to be permitted, through his mercy, and by humility and obedience to his will, to obtain pardon for sin and error. Life on earth was but a means to this desired end, a temporary probation for the testing of God's children. . . .

Only a few centuries later, all this was radically changed. In the twentieth century, Carl Becker points out, man is regarded as—

little more than a chance deposit on the surface of the world carelessly thrown up between two ice ages by the same forces that rust iron and ripen corn, a sentient organism endowed by some happy or unhappy accident with intelligence indeed, but with an intelligence that is conditioned by the very forces

that it seeks to understand and to control. The ultimate cause of this cosmic process of which man is a part, whether God or electricity or a "stress in the ether," we know not. Whatever it may be, if indeed it be anything more than a necessary postulate of thought, it appears in its effects as neither benevolent nor malevolent, as neither kind nor unkind, but merely as indifferent to us. What is man that the electron should be mindful of him! Man is but a foundling in the cosmos, abandoned by the forces that created him.

. . . The fact is that we have no first premise. Since Whirl is king, we must start with the whirl, the mess of things as presented in experience. . . . The questions we ask are "What?" and "How?" What are the facts and how are they related? If sometimes, in a moment of absent-mindedness or idle diversion, we ask the question "Why?" the answer escapes us. Our supreme object is to measure and master the world rather than to understand it.

The intellectual distance from the medieval to the modern world is enormous, yet we accomplished this transition in little more than three hundred years. And today, when we read what Becker says about a time which is hardly more than thirty years ago (his book was first published in 1932), we listen with comparative indifference to his report on the cosmological barrens which are supposed to surround us. The "brave new world" temper of the 1920's neither threatens nor interests us: we have other problems. Bertrand Russell's gloomy rhetoric of fifty years ago, declaring (in *Mysticism and Logic*) that man's "origin, his growth, his hopes and fears, his loves and beliefs, are but the outcome of accidental collocations of atoms; that no fire, no intensity of thought can preserve an individual beyond the grave . . . and that the whole temple of man's achievement must inevitably be buried beneath the debris of a universe in ruins"—this tough-minded neo-stoicism moves us little if at all. We have no time for parlor arguments about cosmology; indeed, Lord Russell is himself exceedingly busy with other things.

We hardly have time to ask whether the bleak agnostic philosophy of the twenties—which became the operative frame of existentialist

negation in the forties—has had anything to do with the compulsive pursuit of "progress" in our own day—which may not be so much a pursuit as a nervous apology for the wild proliferation of electronic technology in all directions. We try to keep up with these explosive developments, feeling the need to justify them, and the explanation of "progress" has had until recently an acceptable sound.

But in matter of cold fact, we are no longer sure. The very advances in wider distribution of goods and services, the dissolving of upper and lower classes into a single, enormous, homogenized middle class enjoying medium-to-fair material security, and the turning of bread labor into a vast white-collar peonage at tasks which often have little relation to a useful, productive life—all these changes have given people time to question the quality of their lives and the shallow fulfillments which come to even the most "successful" men. An artist might say that we have a statistical utopia and a society of faceless men. They do not like themselves very much, these people, and they easily grow suspicious of one another. It is only a little over ten years since a man rose suddenly to incredibly destructive power in the legislature of the United States, simply by making careless accusations.

We spoke, at the outset, of a double introspection. Involved in this process is a tired disenchantment with ideology, accompanied by the prickings of a conscience that cannot give up altogether on the dream of a just, peaceful, and free society of human beings. The old religions may have grown "liberal," to the point of becoming little more than a collection of generous sentiments, but the individual moral sense has been ethicized in the process, so that a good man, whatever his background, is simply unable to ignore the common welfare, however incompetent he may feel to do much about it. A selfish mysticism, a private agreement with the laws of life, is unacceptable today.

But a political identity in the terms now available—a self that gains its validity from distant admiration of the exploits of military technology, or cheering on our protoplasmic components of machines which compete in the hotrod events of outer space—is equally unacceptable to those who demand human meaning in themselves and their time. For this the thoughtful man of today is a man thrown upon his own resources. Fortunately, because of the very progress that has become so tasteless, and in some cases almost hateful, he is given the time to think. And because of the principles behind the political systems that have been the pride of the Western world, but seem now to be cracking under pressures their creators could not have imagined, he also is able to speak out what he thinks. He is seldom, it is true, heard by "the masses." But he is heard by those others who also try to think in behalf of the masses. Even if the political systems born in the eighteenth century have grown sluggish with age, the ethical vision that watched over their birth is as keen as ever. Thoughtful men still know what is right. And for all our cultural lag, our clumsiness in civic affairs, and the unwieldiness of democratic process in the monster nation-state, there are still men in public office, in roles of authority in the judiciary and administrative functions, who have an old Roman sense of public duty and obligation to the rule of law. If these men did not exist, our society would have collapsed long ago, from unutterable strain.

This is no Indian summer of gracious decline, no dignified withdrawal of an old order giving way to wiser principles. Rather it is a time of extreme transition when, superficially, nothing important seems to be happening mainly because nobody knows *what* is happening, although many, many people are profoundly convinced that far-reaching changes are going on.

So there is time to think. What do thinking men think about, these days? It is our great good fortune that there are many such men. And it is a measure of the sense of impending crisis that the

gamut of their thought includes every note on the scale of intensive questioning. There is however one note frequently struck in common—the query: What have we left out, denied, overlooked, in the plans and projects of the modern world, that makes our lives so empty, our future so without promise?

J. B. Priestley, the mellowest of men, has a page in the British weekly, *New Statesman*, which he often fills with the asking and sometimes the answering of such questions. One of his last summer's articles (for July 9) has so delicate a touch, so tender a solution, that he makes one think of the wily device invented by the gods of Asgard for binding up the Fenris wolf, that water-demon who had grown so large, so vicious in its depredations, that the gods themselves were afraid. Fenris broke one after the other the strongest chains the gods could forge, but then, resorting to magic, they devised a gossamer strand, made of the sound of a cat's footsteps, a fish's breath, a bird's spittle, the unseen roots of a mountain, and a woman's beard, which held the monster fast until the end of the world.

Mr. Priestley believes that hope lies in the quest for just such magical solutions. It is a matter of ends, and how they are gained. There is more than a hint of the theme of the *Gita's* unattached man, a glancing reflection of A. H. Maslow's peak experiences, and something of the independent assurance of Lao-tse in this article. Mr. Priestley begins:

All my life, I now realize, I have been nourished and secretly sustained by certain moments that have always seemed to me to be magical. If I have completed the tasks and shouldered the burdens all the way, finishing the marches without handing over my rifle and pack or dropping out, it is neither conscience nor energy that has kept me going but the memory and hope of this magic. Sooner or later I would taste the honey-dew once more. And if this is to have a romantic temperament, then I have a romantic temperament. If there is immaturity here, then I am still immature in my seventy-first year.

These are Mr. Priestley's glimpses, through the everyday trees, of the Holy Grail. One knows what he means without extravagant language. It is the inner man's sense of seeing the rainbow, of experiencing basic content; it is the balance principle, one might think, of promethean unrest and the reward of the man who never really seeks rewards, although he dutifully learns his letters in the alphabet of human striving. The buying and selling world continually attempts to counterfeit these moments. It puts them up for sale, but they can never be delivered. It is the fierce certainty of men that they can *make* the good come to life by some kind of manufacturing process that finally turns their endeavors into a frantic production line of bitterness and self-defeat. Mr. Priestley has something to say to such men:

People who in their confident maturity reject this magic, who have instant "nothing-but" explanations of everything, are either kept going by their vanity—and the vanity of severely rational persons is astounding—or not sustained at all, existing hungrily in despair, seeking power at all costs, trying various brutal excesses, or stiffening into automata. I can imagine an age, in which this magic has been explained away, that would cover the world with zombies all manipulated and directed by power-maniacs. In such an age, power and organization and machinery would be everything, poetry would be nothing. How far off is it?

Sometimes I have wondered if the seemingly inexplicable *rages* of the young, violently destructive now in so many different countries, might not be explained by the non-arrival of these magical moments. Something expected, promised at birth, is missing. . . .

The contemporary scene is now so wide and complicated that anything can be proved from it. I must return to myself.

It is this candor and this courage that we need more of, and shall have, if we read the signs aright. The candor lies in admitting that the world is too wide, too complicated, too messed up by too many obscure causes, for it to be explained and repaired by a crew of skillful rationalists. The courage lies in returning to oneself. If all men would return to themselves, and refuse to betray

themselves, the world would get better over night. But to believe this is a great and difficult undertaking. For it means belief in oneself—respect for a self that is known to be worthy of respect.

Mr. Priestley continues:

It is my experience that these moments arrive as and when they choose. They cannot be summoned, nor even induced, beckoned. But of course some circumstances are more favorable than others. . . . I have found the arts most generous with these magical moments, and this is one good reason—there are several others, mark you—for hanging around with them. If this last phrase suggests an absence of painstaking study, anxious application, then it is doing what I intended it to do. I suspect—though I am writing within the limits of my own temperament—that you have to hold yourself a bit loosely, not bothering about cultural improvement, for the magic to work. . . .

There seems to me no difference in quality between the moments coming by way of the arts and those that arrive, unexpectedly, in our ordinary daily life. These are more remarkable than the immensely heightened moments of travel, of which most of us could furnish examples—and perhaps too often do. In my life I have suddenly known the greatest happiness always when *there was no apparent reason for it*—when out of nowhere there came floating up the great blue bubble. I shall never forget walking once, some years ago, along Piccadilly and across Leicester Square in a blinding snowstorm, which made walking difficult and did not seem to me at all picturesque and romantic, and yet I walked the whole way in a kind of ecstasy, as if in another world, magical and immortal. And there was no reason for it at all, not the tiniest scrap of any possible cause. . . .

The thing to do with this kind of writing is to recognize that it is pregnant with a principle, a way of looking at life and experience, and not make too much of it, as a literal communication—nor, on the other hand, too little. Such communications often gain their true impact from what remains unsaid, while a thoughtless reading of them leads to mockery.

What Mr. Priestley says is certainly more than a celebration of magic and mystery, although this may have its element of instruction. More than

anything, his essay says that the good life can never be reached by desperate pursuit, nor does it issue from those precise calculations by which we learn, increasingly, to manipulate first matter and energy, then one another. The good life will not come as the secretion of a tightly legislated social compact, spreading its flavors in response to the formula of planning engineers. It forever eludes angry and righteous men, and the artist, in whose presence Mr. Priestley finds much good, is himself more often its willing sacrifice than its beneficiary.

Most of all, this article has the mood of living in the present, and while it hardly advises a life without plan, such projects as a man ought to undertake will be without greedy expectation. The moral paralysis of self-praise for plainly acquisitive undertakings has already blinded us to the pain they bring to others, and the strident hedonism of the times is reaching excesses that almost make the puritans look good again.

There is this further meaning, that while we cannot do without plans, we can certainly do without the planning mania. A plan, a scheme of social relationships, a decision as to equity, a space where men are supposed to be free—none of these things is a life well lived. Nor will desperate claims and fraudulent demonstrations convert the form into the substance.

We are sick of our own propaganda, of our compulsive wars of self-justification. It is time, as Mr. Priestley says, to return to ourselves—and there, in the time that remains, to think.

## *REVIEW*

### THE TASKS OF INTELLECTUALS

WITH some few exceptions, the contributions to *Foreign Affairs*, a quarterly published by the Council on Foreign Relations, seem to fit within the framework of the strategy of the cold war. Critical evaluations of United States policy abroad, therefore, have been "practical" and situational, with little attention to larger ethical perspectives which consider national issues in the light of global concerns. The tone of the October 1965 issue, however, is set by the lead article by Charles Frankel, "The Scribblers and International Relations," a discussion of the responsibility of intellectuals in developing public opinion and improving communications. Prof. Frankel, on leave from Columbia University as newly appointed Assistant Secretary of State for Educational and Cultural Affairs, begins by pointing to the relatively recent entrance of the United States into the field of international cultural relations.

Since World War II there has been a growing tendency to draft the help of intellectuals for the achievement of foreign policy objectives. Yet, as Frankel puts it, there has been "relatively little discussion of cultural relations that has attempted to cut beneath the widely accepted conventions that it is good for people in different countries to know one another personally, and good for the United States if other nations realize that we do indeed have a culture." Prof. Frankel continues:

One special purpose of cultural relations and one peculiar and troublesome set of problems which they present, have been given less attention than they merit. These have to do with the role of intellectuals in international affairs, and with some of the special characteristics of the relation between American intellectuals and intellectuals elsewhere.

It would hopelessly simplify the harsh complexity of most international conflicts, and it would ascribe more influence to intellectuals than they have, to say that international conflict has its source in the quarrels of intellectuals. Nevertheless there is a kind of devious truth in this statement.

There are a number of ways in which this influence is exercised. One of the most obvious is the relation of intellectuals to the language of international conflict and accommodation. International affairs are peculiarly susceptible to galloping abstractions—"Communism," "Africa," "Imperialism," "the Free World." Nowhere else do massive stereotypes and personified ideas play a larger role; nowhere do they do more to rigidify disagreement, to give it a quality of necessity and higher nobility, and to turn otherwise manageable conflicts into unmanageable ones. And intellectuals, more than most other groups have the power to create, dignify, inflate, criticize, moderate or puncture these abstractions. The character of international life is influenced by the language that comes to be used in public to explain what is going on, to justify the positions that are taken, or to negotiate disputes. The quality of this language is something which intellectuals do much to affect.

The importance of this comment invites a return to Marshall Windmiller's Pacifica Radio address (noticed in *MANAS* for Dec. 29), titled "Myth Maintenance." Dr. Windmiller begins disarmingly:

Myth systems must have some truthful content, or they do not last very long. And this is true of the American mythology about Communism. Communism does have many evil aspects. Reasonable men must acknowledge and deplore the injustice of the Moscow trials, the tyranny of Stalin and the refusal of Communists for so long to admit it, the censorship of news and regimentation of literature and the arts, the persecution of the Jews, and the repression of Hungary. The crimes of Communist regimes and Communist parties make a long list. But to view only the negative aspects of an ideology and a bloc of nation states does not give a true picture. The positive side must be considered also, and that is rarely done in American public life. Instead we have repeated over and over again that Communism is totally evil, that it is a force which is out to destroy us, and that we must stamp out Communism or anything that looks like Communism wherever in the world we encounter it.

When intellectuals lend support to abstractions which ascribe unqualified evil intentions to all Communism and all Communists, they cut off communication between cultures and peoples and add strength to the language of the demagogues, both Communist and anti-

Communist. As Windmiller directly suggests, the first responsibility of the intellectual is to challenge mythologies which are based upon unjustifiable assumptions, *i.e.*, to show that a prevalent myth *is* a myth. Dr. Windmiller points to two roles played by American intellectuals, one leading to dangerous confusion, the other toward the rejection of the myth system. The confusion caused by the first has led to serious consequences both at home and abroad:

While the liberals were entangling themselves in expeditious distortions of their own ideas and muddying up the public image of liberalism, the right-wing extremists emerged on the scene with proposals that flowed clearly and logically from the premises which the liberals had granted. If Communism was totally evil, then why shouldn't it be totally destroyed? How could we possibly send economic and even military assistance to the Communist regime in Yugoslavia? Or trade with Poland? Or send wheat to the Soviet Union? Given the premise that Communism is totally evil, these policies make no sense at all and can be justified only by the clever manipulation of words. But such manipulation has no lasting persuasiveness.

Today, however, there is growing protest against the assumptions on which these attitudes are based—a protest coming mainly from the colleges and universities. Dr. Windmiller sees great value in the peace aspects of campus protests, because, as he puts it, only by recognizing the false elements in current political mythology can we free ourselves from control by a system that favors and protects demagogues. He continues:

The first signs of the disintegration of a myth system of any society are always found among that society's intellectuals. The crumbling begins at the centers of learning, for it is there that people first get access to the information which undermines myths. The mythology of anti-Communism is now under full attack in American colleges and universities, for too much contradictory information is available there for the myths to be sustained. The bright students of today are not buying them. They are rejecting them. Moreover, they are rebelling against those who are trying to keep the myths alive.

In his *Foreign Affairs* article, Prof. Frankel calls our attention to the way in which the state-endorsed American intellectual invites criticism abroad:

Relatively few foreigners find fault with American institutions on the ground of their inefficiency. The more usual denunciation is that America is "materialistic." In other words, the stability and strength of social and political institutions depend not only on their practical performance but on their symbolic *legitimacy*. And to a considerable extent, the secular intellectuals of modern nations have supplanted the clergy as the principal suppliers and endorsers of the symbols of legitimacy. "Capitalism," "socialism," "freedom," "justice," "exploitation," "alienation," etc., with the special reverberations they now carry, are intellectuals' terms.

The significance of this for foreign policy is as great as it is for domestic affairs. Over the long run, a major nation's foreign policy is unlikely to succeed, or will, at any rate, become more costly and more completely dependent on violence and the threat of violence, if it loses the understanding and sympathy of intellectuals in other countries and at home.

Another impression which foreign intellectuals have of American culture is based upon a typical American willingness to accept the "leveling down" approach to public communication. To the independent thinker of France or Great Britain, for example, their American counterparts seem too compliant, or, in Frankel's words, "too supinely afloat on the wave of the future." He adds:

This difference between American intellectuals and intellectuals abroad runs parallel to another. By and large foreign intellectuals think of themselves as performing their special functions precisely when they keep their distance from the centers of power governing their society. They are prepared to identify themselves with the powers-that-be only when, in turn, they can identify these powers-that-be with themselves—only when they believe, that is to say, that government, the economy and the social structure are being systematically rebuilt in accordance with the principles which they hold.

A further enrichment of the analysis pursued by Dr. Windmiller and Prof. Frankel may be

obtained from passages in Richard Hofstadter's *The Paranoid Style in American Politics*. Dr. Windmiller has pointed out the paranoid dangers in the anti-Communist mythology, and Dr. Hofstadter characterizes them:

The distinguishing thing about the paranoid style is not that its exponents see conspiracies or plots here and there in history, but that they regard a "vast" or "gigantic" conspiracy as the motive force in historical events. History is a conspiracy set in motion by demonic forces of almost transcendent power. . . . The paranoid spokesman sees the fate of this conspiracy in apocalyptic terms—he traffics in the birth and death of whole worlds, whole political orders, whole systems of human values. He is always manning the barricades of civilization.

Prof. Frankel concludes his lengthy article by suggesting how "intellectuals" can assist the vast processes of global education—an education which will lead to sure, if slow, breakdown of rigidities of thought and the wearing away of fearful prejudices:

The process of international communication among intellectuals needs to be enlarged. The character and moral significance of the radical changes taking place in twentieth-century civilizations are any civilized man's concern. Given a reasonable effort on the part of intellectuals to listen to each other and to try to make sense to each other, direct intellectual confrontations may contribute to a kind of international discourse that exists now only fitfully and precariously. If there is a point in avoiding angry forms of high ideological recrimination, there is no point in avoiding the discussion of high intellectual themes. It is particularly important for American intellectuals, with their sophisticated methodologies, their love of concrete problems and their suspicion of broad abstractions to remember this. What the much used and much abused word "democracy" means, what the relation is between individual freedom and the emergence of massive forms of social organization, what the function of intellect itself is in a technical and specialized society—these are questions with roots that go far back in the history of intellectual discussion. It is clear that even men of thorough reasonableness and good will will not come to the

same conclusions about them. But it is equally clear that if men do not talk to each other about such questions at all, they are not likely to understand each other very well. And this causes trouble when they turn to the more practical matters on which international accommodation depends.

## *COMMENTARY* ON CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE

SOCRATES was the first great advocate of disregarding the prejudices of the community in which one lives. He refused to retreat, even though his enemies, who smarted under Socratic questioning, found a way to give their prejudices the force of law. He refused to retreat, and he refused to escape from the penalties of the law, and so he died at the hands of the citizens of Athens, who, according to reports, have been ashamed of themselves ever since.

Thoreau, if not the first, was surely among the greatest of the advocates of disobeying laws which give force to prejudice. We call this civil disobedience, a form of action intended by Thoreau, and by Gandhi after him, who made it into a technique of mass resistance, as a means of challenging laws which support prejudice instead of justice.

In the light of Socrates' argument for accepting the rule of law, even though manifestly unjust, the civil disobedient takes upon himself great responsibility. He appeals from the law of his community to a higher law.

Speaking recently before a meeting of the Peace Center and Faculty Committee for the Study of Nonviolence, at the University of California in Berkeley, Bayard Rustin, lifelong pacifist and civil rights leader, offered what he described as a five-point test to distinguish justifiable breaking of the law from criminal, revolutionary, or frivolous acts. The test is in the form of five questions, each of which requires the answer, Yes. The questions are:

1. Is the objective to improve society, rather than disrupt it?
2. Is the motive something besides attracting personal publicity?
3. Have all legislative, judicial and executive channels of government been exhausted in seeking change?

4. Has the state been notified of the time and the place where the law will be broken, without any attempted cunning avoidance of enforcement?

5. Is the person deliberately breaking the law prepared to accept the penalty without rancor or resistance to sentencing?

While affirming these principles as the necessary ground for civil disobedience, and observing that they are not always honored in the protests going on today, Rustin declared his sympathy with demonstrators who are less exacting of themselves in such acts of resistance. Too often, when quoting such remarks by pacifist leaders, the commercial press turns them against the cause itself, instead of presenting them as a critical evaluation of means.

# CHILDREN

## ... and Ourselves

### EDUCATION FOR PEACE

DR. RUDOLPH DREIKURS, pioneer in applications of Adlerian psychology to the education of the young, speaking before the teachers and counselors of a Los Angeles School District, recently challenged the assumption that a measure of conflict in the home is inevitable, and that the ethos of democracy is somehow served by accepting family bickering and contention as a "normal" release from imperfect adjustments within the "family unit." Dr. Dreikurs thinks that a complacent view of such conflicts—on the assumption that they cannot be avoided—is no better than "tolerance" for the hostility and violence manifested by nations during conflicts of interests. Dr. Dreikurs remarks:

To show the extent of the abnormal condition which has been taken for granted—when I get medical students to one of my child guidance centers, I usually get a rather surprised raising of the eyebrows when we tell mothers what to do when brothers and sisters fight. They always say, "Now what's wrong with that? Isn't it normal that brothers and sisters fight?" We take it for granted; we forget that the term brotherly love was once used to describe the most closely unselfish human relationship possible. The devotion to each other—brotherly love. Today I wouldn't wish my worst enemy to be treated by his fellow men the way brothers treat each other. Each is afraid that the other one gets a little bit more—constantly fighting and arguing, thinking that he will get more than the other one. We take it for granted that children have to fight. And that is only one of the many abnormalities in our family lives which we take for granted.

Behind the assumption that "fighting" is necessary and inevitable, and that brothers and sisters who carve away at each other emotionally can then join hands against a common enemy, is a notion of "equality." Equality within the family, like the equality within a nation, is conventionally represented by the right to "stand up" for one's rights. Yet true equality flourishes best in a pattern of living which denies that conflicts are the

means by which equality is established. And we don't, really, treat our children as "equals," although we often allow their conflicts to dominate the pattern of living in the home. Dr. Dreikurs comments:

Before we can treat our children as equals, we have to recognize their tremendous potential as human beings—by taking care of themselves. We have to stop coddling them—to stop treating them like little idiots who don't know anything. Our children become irresponsible only when we don't let them take on any responsibility. Let me tell you a little story which has two endings, two highlights. It happened a few years ago when a psychology professor from Europe came to visit us. He just came on the day when I had in our institute a class for child guidance workers. He was quite interested and came to see what we were doing. It just happened without any premeditation. I had no idea that it would come up, but during this class I told of an example which occurred to me several years back in Vienna. We took a walk through the Vienna woods up a hill—mountain—it was summer, became noon and we were thirsty. We went to a farm house in order to find some milk or water. As we came in, there were three children playing there and no farmer so we asked them., "Where are your parents?" "They are out in the fields working." And so we asked, "Who is taking care of you?" And the oldest of the three said, "I am taking care of them." "What do you do?" In the morning she dresses them, gets breakfast, prepares lunch for them, until in the afternoon when the parents come home. So I asked the girl, "How old are you?" How old do you think? The girl was four years old. And now comes the second part of my story. My students reacted exactly as you did. And Professor Behrs told me that this was one of the most impressive lessons he learned about America. He said, "Don't these people really know that a four-year-old child can do that?" They don't. A judge in Chicago threatened a woman with arrest because she left a ten-year-old child at home without a baby sitter. Honestly, that is how we treat our children.

We have at hand the brochure of a summer camp based upon the idea that children will respond naturally to nonacquisitive, non-competitive approaches to experiences in personal interrelationships—including athletics. Camp Ahimsa, located in Voluntown, Conn., is directed by Richard King, a physical education instructor

who regards athletics as based upon a striving for improvement over one's own previous abilities, a rounding out of his total physical capacity, rather than upon triumph over rivals. In other words, Camp Ahimsa will seek to call forth neglected potentialities for cooperation. The brochure states: "Camp Ahimsa is a pioneering venture based upon new concepts in camping. It will combine the principles of nonviolence with the values of creative action and democratic participation in a setting which will include all the benefits of simple living in a beautiful summer camp. We invite children to join us next summer to share this exciting and stimulating experience." Inquiries may be addressed to the Camp Director at Box 197B, RFD 1, Voluntown, Connecticut.

"Camp Ahimsa derives its name from the Sanskrit word *ahimsa*, which is defined as 'the practice of love,' or 'reverence for life,' and is the concept which pervaded the life of Mahatma Gandhi and illuminates his teachings on nonviolence." The description continues:

Athletics are designed to provide ample opportunity for vigorous play as well as qualified instruction in basic skills. Competition will be kept within wholesome limits. With spirited encouragement and assistance each child will tend to gain confidence in his or her own abilities. The boy or girl already skilled will find challenges in new and different activities. Each child should leave camp with increased strength and endurance—and competence.

Whether it be sweating it out on a work project or later in the glow of the evening campfire, children from various social, economic and ethnic groups will discover their mutual interests and be helped to find ways of working out differences through nonviolent solutions. This is Camp Ahimsa's main goal. In a free environment with an atmosphere of trust and confidence, children will gain new insights into themselves and others. Through living in such a community and through frequent discussions, forums and dramatic acting-out of situations (role-playing), each individual becomes important and his responsibilities to himself and society can be examined freely.

In such statements of purpose, as in the views of Dr. Dreikurs, there is forthright challenge to the

familiar claim that the human being is *basically* aggressive. We have rationalized *laissez-faire* capitalism and the acquisitive society as the least harmful way of channeling the inevitable drive to aggression, but the assumption that aggressive tendencies are primary—the modern psychological version of the doctrine of original sin—is one which many educators have never adopted.

## *FRONTIERS*

### Dissent in the Community of Scholars

IN *Franny and Zooey*, J. D. Salinger has Zooey speak of one of his professors as "a great and modest scholar" who said nothing "either in or out of a classroom, that didn't seem to have a little bit of real wisdom in it—and sometimes a lot of it." The context is Zooey's reaction to the distress which his sister, Franny, feels because of the shallowness of her intellectual opportunities in college. "I agree with you about ninety-eight per cent on the issue," he tells her. "But the other two per cent scares me half to death." In similar terms, I react to the opening paragraphs of your article, "The Life of Civilization" (MANAS, Nov. 24, 1965). I hardly desire to quarrel with your indictment of the deplorable state of most of our mass media and the shallowness of the opinions of most of the conforming majority of our citizen body. But your attack on the intellectual community and its universities ("little more than immobilized Gullivers") is surely too severe.

It is difficult to understand how the intellectual community can be culpable of homogenization and lack of dissent regarding U.S. policies in Viet Nam. For the dissent has been loud and constant. The problem which intellectual dissenters have faced increasingly during the past year rather seems to consist in the small degree to which they have been given respect, trust, and particularly a hearing by a national administration led quite commandingly, not to say arrogantly, by our president. A secondary, though important, issue is the minimal tolerance for dissent and minimal understanding of the importance of dissent among citizens in general. As a consequence, public respect for intellectual dissenters leaves much to be desired. The correlation between an impervious plebiscitory leader and an intolerant citizen body gives cause for concern.

Under these circumstances, the sounder approach might be to view with amazement the *strength* of dissent in the intellectual community. Curiously enough, this dissent has been most noteworthy on the campuses of our largest *public* universities: in Ann Arbor, Michigan; Madison,

Wisconsin; and, of course, Berkeley, where, notwithstanding the measure of accuracy in the charges of students there, dissent is supported by at least some members of the faculty. Even at UCLA, not always notable for its nonconformity, distinguished and respectable members of the faculty have questioned the administration's Viet Nam policies.

Any admiration extended to dissenting members of the academic community can hardly be given without bestowing a measure of credit to the system which stands behind them. These scholars are not "pure mind." In most cases they have wives, families, homes, and futures about which they are also concerned. A great many lack job security. Unless we are prepared to believe that they are willing to martyr themselves, we must admit that norms permitting criticism, dissent, and sometimes dialogue, are more solidly based, at the "immobilized Gullivers," than MANAS editors seem to think.

The first "teach-in" was held at the University of Michigan. In the city in which that university is located, a small group of dissenting students recently committed civil disobedience at the local office of the Selective Service System. Selective Service officials, especially in Michigan, have attempted to retaliate by changing the draft classifications of some of the demonstrators. This implies that orders for induction may soon follow. Currently, The American Civil Liberties Union has entered these cases to prevent draft boards from using selective service legislation to punish demonstrators.

To be sure, these student dissenters and their supporters on the faculty and in the community are outnumbered by far by an apathetic multitude as well as by groups of unthinking, hostile opponents, especially among their peers. On the day of the demonstrations, many of their fellow-students were busily preoccupied with the university's "Homecoming Weekend." But a float entered in the homecoming day parade by opponents of the Viet Nam war was repeatedly booed and finally attacked and destroyed. Probably, many members of the faculty were unaware of this series of events until they read about it in the newspaper. Probably, many didn't care.

But some did, and that is the point. Some honestly and thoughtfully disagree, in principle, with the dissenters, and they cannot be regarded merely as apologists for any establishment. Others are among the dissenters. Such teachers exist even at state universities, and they are not persecuted, especially if they have repute as scholars.

From one point of view, the strength of dissent within the intellectual community has a surprising, even a fundamentally surprising, character. Because of the so-called educational explosion, more students than ever before are attending colleges and universities, and in a greater proportion relative to their age group than ever before. The society's purpose, among others, in encouraging their education is, as has often been observed, to pass on its prevailing values to the new generation. To be sure, this purpose, as embodied in a university, is at best rather limited and at worst fundamentally defective. But is this not to be expected? For the whole problem of modernity and in particular of the movement that has come to be known as the Enlightenment (so mistakenly dear to the hearts of present-day social critics), consists precisely in this: that the dissemination of knowledge in a form accessible to large numbers of people becomes knowledge corrupted—public opinion or ideology in defense of an existing social order. Yet most critics of our educational establishment advocate, as much or even more, the dissemination of knowledge in a form accessible to large numbers. They desire to pass on to the new generation some values that do not seem to have prevailed—values which, when properly understood, form a crucial part of a truly human life. But is this not the root of the difficulty? For the desire to pass on to a multitude values which must be diluted in order to be understood indeed seems to lead to the development of ideology, not to say blind faith. As one of my former teachers has put it, perhaps the Enlightenment has in fact led to an obfuscation.

Yet despite the defects of the explicitly stated purposes of even our great universities, despite the fraternity parties and the noise in the library, despite the "value relativism" of some of our best known social "scientists," despite the survey course and the

bureaucratic maze, despite all the irrelevance on almost every campus, sparks of dissent and of dialogue glow and occasionally burst into flame—sparks which tend to be nourished by the brightest members of the academic community, with only passive though sometimes more visible assistance from members of the so-called "fringe" groups. Across the entire country, notable participants in some form of "the system" find that they have lost neither the will nor the freedom to attack, without fear, the policies of our government. There are others who thoughtfully *and independently* disagree, and who are enriched to enter into the dialogue. To be sure, the dissenters in particular will not obtain, nor do they expect, bouquets from *Time* magazine. But their opposition to the Viet Nam war has been well publicized, and most of them are still opposing and still teaching. However, genuine dissent as well as genuine dialogue are neither easily communicated nor easily understood in the large and heterogeneous societies of modernity: based, as they are, on technology and ideology, on public opinion and popular sovereignty.

Perhaps the problems we face can be understood, then, only by a scholarly effort: by returning in thought to that "critical moment," as it has been called, when antiquity was left behind in favor of modernity. For a price was paid for antiquity, and perhaps a somewhat different price is being paid, and must be paid, for modernity. We can hope for refunds as little by naïve attempts to return to antiquity as by ill-informed, if nobly inspired, efforts to reform modernity.

ALAN SELTZER

Oakland University,  
Rochester, Michigan