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THE EXTENDED VISION

IT used to be that a human being could work out his own salvation with a fairly clear conscience. He didn't have to load his back with the problems of the world. He had his own area of life, his own definable regions of personal and social responsibility. He could look at the world and see its wrongs, but, using common sense, he would realize that many of these wrongs were beyond the radius of his action.

Things seem to be different, now. By some moral geometry not entirely clear, the radius of individual morality has been extended. Possibly the imagination of a man like Gandhi extended it. Or it may be that the atom bomb and what has come after the atom bomb have made it impossible for us to recover the attitude of simpler days when you could see the difference between right and wrong and do, as well as you could, what was right.

Today, the minute you turn away from what people call "world problems," you begin to feel uncomfortable, as though something unclean were happening, and you should do something about stopping it. But *what?* As you think about this question, the problem grows into the kind of incommensurable difficulty which the medieval doctors of theology used to argue about—involving "sin" and its penalties and how a finite man can be held responsible for practically infinite offenses.

To get peace of mind, you have to scale your responsibilities to your capacities. If a man is doing all he can, he can hold up his head before anything or anybody in heaven or on earth. It is true, of course, that people have different theories about human capacities. And it is also plain that some men have much greater capacities than others. If this were not so, you could make up a formula for peace of mind. You could mark off some sort of course and say to people, "Run the course and you'll be all right." The fact is, however, that no man can tell another man when or how he'll be all right.

There is, however, a kind of "average" responsibility which seems generally appropriate for a given period of history. Back in the eighteenth century, there were some extraordinary men who wrote at length about the rights and responsibilities of human beings. In those days, they were called "radical." What they did was pioneer the concepts of individual and social responsibility for about two hundred years into the future. Today, boys and girls in high school are taught something of what Thomas Paine, Thomas Jefferson, John Locke, and others of similar vision said about the responsibilities of human beings.

We have to face it: a relatively small minority of people have kept those conceptions of responsibility alive. In the societies of our time which we call "free," the institutions representative of the vision of those pioneers have been maintained by men who took upon themselves obligations of public trust. They held the free communities of the world together by their distinguished behavior and example. Other men saw them, admired them, learned from them, and so the communities founded in the name of freedom and social responsibility grew into great societies that stood as examples to the rest of the world—examples marred by inconsistencies and failures, but fine and true enough to become models for other peoples readying themselves to throw off ancient wrongs.

Throughout that two hundred years, until only recently, there has been a place of dignity and a role of honor for men who undertook to fulfill the vision of the pioneers of the eighteenth century. Then, somewhere during the past fifty

years, a withering of opportunity occurred. It would be wrong to say that the vision paled or that it became irrelevant. It is just that men—even good men, our best men—could no longer make it work. It was as though the scale of human capacity and h u m a n responsibility had been changed, but without our being told. More was demanded of us, throughout years in which we were schooling ourselves to do less. Then, by the half-century mark, we were overtaken by terrible feelings of impotence, which we could displace only by frenzied posturings of power. We held to the words of the vision while its moral splendor drained away. And now we are betrayed. We sit sullenly, in attitudes of self-indulgent righteousness, with less moral justification than the defeated Hungarian revolutionists who did all they knew how, and then, like Nagy, died.

And so we sit, while some of our scientists busy themselves with making the heavens into a sort of Luna Park, complete with rocket rides and interplanetary Ferris Wheels. We sit, while all the king's men march up and down, dressed in the latest robot garb of mechanized war, until you wonder if there is really a man under all that insulation. We sit, while experimental thermo-nuclear blasts nibble away at the surface of the earth, in tests to see whether the mountains can be lowered and cities torn away from their foundations.

What will make men lift up their eyes? How many voices must be raised in horror and in loathing? Is there already a quiet wondering among the men and women "out there"—in the far cities, along the lakes, beside the seas, and spread out across the great plains? They are out there, millions and millions of people, united only by the pseudo-nervous system of modern communications, living in little caves of stucco and chrome, hearing only what the apologists of all this madness want them to hear, and reading only what publishers whose profits depend upon their timidity are willing to print.

But we can hardly blame our "leaders." A leader who fails to conform to the current fashion in fear or anxiety and in the noisy—or, it may be, the well-bred—bluster which balances the fear and anxiety, will no longer be heard, so how can he lead? Modern leaders gain their positions from giving the people what they want. But when the people want the impossible, they make a mockery of leadership. Who, in such circumstances, will dare to tell the people the truth—that they cannot have what they want? And if someone did dare, how many would listen?

The hope lies in the possibility that more would listen than we suspect.

It is a question of believing in the people, and believing in their capacity for a new moral vision. It is a question of being willing to turn your back on all the rules made by those who say they know how to *sell* the people. It is a question of finding the common denominator of the deep human longings of all those millions out there who want another kind of life, but are now beginning to wonder if there is any other kind of life than the one they know.

Who can do this? A question of this sort sounds like a preface to the announcement of the Second Coming. A man well may ask, will anything less than a Second Coming get us out of this terrible stalemate of the moral emotions?

The trouble with the idea of the Second Coming is that it suggests that you have to wait for it. If you look at history, you begin to see that there have been dozens of Comings, and that those within any kind of reach of our own time were begun by men who decided not to wait for them to happen. The man who just waits, according to this theology, is the man who will deny it thrice, when it finally does happen. And there have been many such men present at every real Coming.

Well, how do you get "practical" in relation to this matter? You get practical by thinking and acting *as if* what you wish were possible had

become possible. You do it according to your own light, and in your own way. You join with other people when you can, but you don't wait for the other people to ask you to work with them. You try to stop being afraid of being different. You show that it is possible to reject the shell of what is supposed to be popular opinion. People don't really *think* that way—most of them don't, that is. You work to disturb the "certainty" of this popular opinion. Your own dissent, even if inarticulate, will strengthen the dissent of those who are more articulate. Just a simple wondering about things will help your friends, your neighbors, your children, to do some wondering of their own.

For illustration, there is a paper published by the Fund for the Republic, called *Talk with a Stranger*, by Robert Redfield. Professor Redfield is an anthropologist who has taught at the University of Chicago since 1927. This paper, one of a series of "Occasional Papers" issued by the Fund for the Republic, employs an old device—the Visitor from Somewhere Else who tries to understand what on earth we are doing on our planet. Prof. Redfield uses no fireworks, nor is there anything especially "anthropological" in what he has to say. But the paper is filled with wondering of a sort that needs to get around. The good thing about this paper—besides the wondering—is that it doesn't exaggerate or push any argument or point of view. The Stranger just asks questions and Prof. Redfield tries to answer them.

The dialogue begins with the stranger asking if "mutual suicide" wouldn't be a better name for what we ordinarily call war—the kind of war the next war will be. Redfield had to agree. Then the stranger had another question:

> "I suppose you people want to go on living?"
>
> I said that most of us did.
>
> "Then," he said, "I suppose you people are doing what you can to prevent this thing that you call a war but would not be war but a kind of suicide?"
>
> "We are doing what we can," I replied. "In this country we are spending more money for missiles and maybe we can get the Europeans to put our missiles on their land nearer to the Russians and maybe we can build space-ships before the Russians do and so get the drop on them that way. We have been working pretty hard to make our weapons as big or bigger than the Russians' weapons. You know we were the first to kill people with atomic bombs and we were the first to make bombs one thousand times bigger than the little ones that killed only about seventy-five thousand people apiece in Japan. We had to make the very big bombs because if we hadn't the Russians would have made them first and then we wouldn't have had security. Neither side wants to start a war when it is clear that the starter would be destroyed also. Of course it is true that the Russians made the very big bombs too and now they are going after space and the moon and we have to go after these things too. Two-thirds of the national budget for next year will be used for military purposes of one kind or another. So we *are* trying to prevent it from happening."
>
> He made a gesture of interruption. "You go too fast," he said. "I can't quite follow. You say you Americans are doing these things for security? And you Russians are doing these things too?"
>
> You Russians! He addressed *me* as "you Russians" ! I took him up. "I can't speak for the Russians," I said. "We can't trust the Russians."
>
> "Why not?" he asked. "Don't they want to live too? And can't you trust their common interest with you in continuing to live? It seems to me quite a basis for getting together on some arrangement not to shoot one another. . . . But there is something else in what you just said that puzzles me. I think you told me that you went ahead with making more monstrous weapons in order to have security. Tell me, now that you have the thousand-times-bigger bombs, do you feel more secure?"

Prof. Redfield was obliged to admit that he did not feel "more secure." The stranger went on:

> "I shouldn't express an opinion. But I can say I am confused. You seem to be telling me that you are working hard to prevent this mutual suicide by making bigger and bigger weapons to shoot at each other, and that the more you make the more likely they will go off by themselves. . . . It seems a strange way to seek security. . . ."

The stranger kept on asking questions, learning, for example, that the United States, with about seven per cent of the world's population, is consuming about sixty per cent of the world's minerals, mostly irreplaceable. Further, Prof. Redfield pointed out—

> "It is estimated that with present technology this planet of ours could support, with the standard of living enjoyed by Americans, less than one-third of the people who are now on it. So some of us are doing pretty well. And we shall probably do better. Gunnar Myrdal says that on this earth the rich nations are getting richer. Of course he also says that the poor ones are getting poorer."
>
> "That does not sound like a very desirable arrangement," went on the stranger. "It must cause some hard feelings." . . .

Prof. Redfield got to thinking that the stranger ought to visit some of the colleges and talk to young Americans, and he said so:

> I thought I could see him looking through the pages of a notebook.
>
> "Young people," he said. "I do have some notes on the topic. I have been looking into some of the authorities you have on young people, at least young people who are Americans. The matter has been investigated by the *Nation*, David Riesman, William Whyte, Alan Harrington, and others. I have heard a summary of the results of research on this subject. Yes, here it is: 'American young people are uncommitted and other directed; they have no heroes and few illusions; they seek security and togetherness, they want only to find places in the slots of employment and safe advancement; after comfortable years in college they become organization men and succumb slowly to creeping contentment'."

There is much more to this paper, but these quotations indicate the mood of Prof. Redfield's wondering, and its direction. Best of all, perhaps, are his reflections after the stranger had gone away:

> I had resented his calling me "you Russians." I should not have resented it; I should have thought about how I can and do speak also for Russians, and yet cannot and do not always speak for them. I am one with them because they and I are human, because we live and love and work and laugh and feel tender or unhappy as do all men. They and I share this earth and whatever annexes to it come about in outer space, and we share the responsibility for making it a decent place to live for us all. Further, Americans are like Russians in particular respects in which others—say the people of India or the South Sea Islanders—are not like Russians or Americans. We both like to make big things; both look for material results and probably make too much of technology; both have a class of managers to run most of their affairs. In these respects we join in a common effort to give the growth of mankind a bias, a bent toward one side that may not, in the very long judgment of human kind, prove to be a wise deflection.
>
> On the other hand, we who are Americans are different from Russians in ways that place upon us special responsibilities, that give us, in these respects, the larger share of power and duty to extricate us all from the predicament. We mean this difference when we say that we are free, and they are not. We are a people all of whom have some power and responsibility to think and act as to what ought to be changed, as to what measures to take, as to what new lines of effort to pursue to avoid the mutual suicide and to work upon the good life. The Russians today, the common, ordinary, on-the-street Russians, cannot stand up and say, "This we do is wrong. The right lies there." But we, in America, can. In this we *are* different; here I can speak only for a Russian who is silenced and perhaps waiting, but we in America have made a society in which differences and dissensions are the very stuff of public life. Every one of us can, if he will, speak, strive, persuade, decry, and insist. So, though we on this earth are, in the stranger's words, "we people," we are a diversity within our unity, and to each kind falls the responsibility to make strong, to put to work for all on earth the virtue and the power special to his own kind.

So, we come back to the question of vision. The vision of the eighteenth century led to many good things. As a beginning, however, it led to the American war against George III, as the Declaration of Independence makes quite clear; while, in France, it led to chopping off the head of Louis XVI.

We in America have quite a complex on this aspect of the achievement of freedom. We habitually suppose that it has to begin with some kind of bloodshed—that redcoats have to be shot at, or that heads must fall. You'd think that the

freedom isn't really authentic unless some people get killed in winning it.

But in those days, we had an Enemy. That is, we had an enemy who was an oppressor. So, today, in order to fight for our freedom—which we haven't, after all, lost, except as we've spoiled it for ourselves—we keep looking around for an oppressor to fight with. Some kind of reflex action seems to be involved: To be free, you have to fight, and to fight, you have to have an enemy, so pick an enemy, quickly, before we lose our freedom!

This, unhappily, is the part of the vision of the eighteenth century we feel at home with, and when you look at it closely, it is the part of the vision that we can't use.

But in Prof. Redfield's mind, the vision grows. Now, for him, it means speaking for a silenced Russian: saying for ourselves what he cannot say for himself: "This we do is wrong. The right lies there."

That is where his wondering leads him. In the rich diversity of our society and time, the wonderings of Americans could lead to wealth of ideas and inspiration such as would beggar the dreams of past visioning. We have only to begin, while there is time, while we are yet free.

REVIEW
ANVIL WRITERS

WE don't know how representative of the opinions of American "students" the magazine *Anvil* is, nor does this seem especially important. This periodical, however—apparently a sporadically issued "quarterly"—is certainly important, and we are very glad that a reader has sent us a copy of the Winter 1958 issue. The full name of the paper is *Anvil & Student Partisan.* It is published at 95 cents a copy at 36 East Tenth Street, New York 3, N.Y. The first paragraph of its editorial identification reads:

> *Anvil and Student Partisan* wishes to express the ideas criticisms and proposals of students who believe in democratic socialism. We address ourselves to those who seek the preservation and extension of democratic values to all forms of political and economic life. We firmly contend that this end must be pursued without deference to the status quo of private property interests, social inequality and human oppression which are characteristic of Western capitalism. At the same time, we are fully aware that totalitarian collectivism which presently dominates much of the Eastern world with its new exploitation and oppression, is the very antithesis of the democratic and equalitarian society which we seek.

MANAS is essentially non-political—not, we trust, from any "timidity," but from the conviction that the causes of the good in human life lie deeper than the levels affected by political action. Yet MANAS writers continually find themselves drawn to read and review the writings of socialists. *Anvil*, which we strongly urge upon our readers, is a good illustration of the attractions to be found in socialist thought. First, the motives of its writers are profoundly concerned with the miseries and injustices suffered by the great majority of human beings in the world. We take the view that writers insensitive to these things are seldom worth reading. Unattached socialist writers usually reflect such concerns.

Second, the socialist movement, today, as a labeled political movement, has almost no hope of political power. This frees socialist writers from the temptations of practical compromise in the struggle for power. The result is analysis of world affairs which is transparently honest in intentions and armed by the sagacity of long experience in observation and criticism. From reading the thirty-two pages of this Winter number of *Anvil*, your reviewer, for one, feels considerably better informed concerning current events. No other magazine inspected during recent months has been able to produce this effect, and we read a lot of them.

This issue contains a study of Mao's China, entitled "The New Illusion," by Michael Harrington. If you want to know some of the major happenings of China's Revolution, Harrington will tell you, with facts, figures, and what seems a wholly unbiased interpretation. In a word, the Chinese peasant is paying the price of a too-rapid industrialization of China:

> China is changing, yes. But the price of change is a terrible exploitation of the workers and peasants, the mechanism of change (which is inseparable from it) is a totalitarian state; and the direction of the change is not toward socialism, but rather toward a new form of class society, more dynamic by far than the corrupt regime of Chiang, more efficient by far in its oppression of the great mass of the Chinese. . . . Mao's China is totalitarian anti-socialism, that is the terrible actuality.

If you are interested in what seems a just account of Adlai Stevenson, to whom is attributed "an outlook of intelligent and responsible conservatism," Sam Bottone contributes two illuminating pages on this subject. Then there is the examination of the role of scientists as citizens during the years of the atomic-thermo-nuclear Revolution, by Oscar Fine, a graduate student in theoretical physics. Mr. Fine notes that the scientists, as a group, have exhibited more courage in opposing political irresponsibility than any other body of citizens:

> A significant number of scientists have refused to do any weapons work; a larger number are active in the campaign to stop the testing of H-bombs . . . and there is enough political interest and understanding about the meaning of the crash H-bomb proposal to cause a significant group of the nation's top scientists to oppose the program.

In a more general analysis, Fine shows that both American and Soviet achievements in science have been in the *developmental* side rather than the inventive or creative. He contends that the furor about the Russian advances in science misses the point. The Russian advances have been technological—the same sort of advances that have taken place in the United States. The Russians, however, are able to mobilize more money and brains for this work because of the absolute power of State authority.

Meanwhile, both the United States and Russia are weak in the creative aspects of science:

> What the United States has excelled in is "knowhow," with its unique contribution of the assembly line and other mass production techniques. The world has been forced to follow its lead in this, and Russia has done so most enthusiastically. In fact, in the United States, both in the popular imagination and in the actual scientific work, technique is almost equated with science.
>
> But there is a wide distinction between an atmosphere that glorifies the *use* of science and one that encourages its creation. The United States *developed* the atomic bomb through a massive technical onslaught, the Europeans, however, discovered and gave theoretical explanations for the fission of atoms. We have never achieved the kind of balance achieved by Germany, England, and France. In the cultural areas we are backward.
>
> And if we are backward, the Russians are positively archaic; almost everything that hinders scientific thought in America is present in exaggerated form in Russia. That tremendous developmental programs are possible in America and Russia does not contradict this statement, for it is precisely to such programs that the cultures are geared. The emergence of important scientific discoveries and outstanding men should not be startling, for this was almost as true in Russia in the days of the Czar and in America before government contracts. Remember, for example, Mendeleeff and Pavlov, Benjamin Franklin and Willard Gibbs.

Of the contemporary situation in the United States, Mr. Fine says:

> With the pressures that the industrial bureaucracy exerts, there is an unmistakable tendency to make over the scientist into the image of the Organization Man, reducing the number of "live" scientists in America, converting many into quasi-engineers. Indeed, those in science and engineering who are on the financial make soon get drawn into administration or sales, where high salaries and power are to be found. The few good men who enter industry do so with the clear understanding that they are prostituting themselves, that they will be lucky if ten per cent of their time can be spent on pet private ideas. The idea that managerial techniques of group dynamics will produce creative ideas could only come from people lost in a Kafkaesque maze.

Other matters dealt with in *Anvil* include the editorial psychology of the scandal magazines, *Confidential* and *Whisper*, the career and views of Dwight Macdonald, the insane militarism of certain circles in Washington, Britain's "angry young men," and the film, *No Down Payment*, which receives high praise. One impressive thing about this paper is that it doesn't call any names, and seems totally uninterested in arousing anger or resentment. If we had a son of college age, we'd certainly try to get him to read it. Failing this, we are going to read it ourselves.

COMMENTARY
ON GETTING "PRACTICAL"

A LETTER from a reader who comments on the MANAS article, "The Press Does Not Disturb Us" (June 19), has equal application to a question raised in this week's lead article. How do you get "practical" regarding the things you think ought to be stopped—nuclear tests, for example?

> Editors: In "The Press does not disturb us," you list several ways that different people have used to protest the testing and manufacture of atomic weapons, and you seem to be seeking for further means to that end.
>
> In other words, how can ordinary, run-of-the-mill men and women voice a protest?
>
> The writer knows of a case where one man quit his job in an airplane factory because this company was building planes for carrying atomic bombs; in another case, a man who owned stock in a mining company which had originally mined gold, but went into uranium, sold his stock and invested his money in a company which did not deal in uranium. Any ordinary investor can refuse to own stock in a company that manufactures, produces or trades in atomic substances, unless he is positive that these will be used for peaceful purposes.

Recent events supply some more suggestions along this line. In Hanover, N. J., for example, a young woman teacher of English in Hanover Park Regional High School assigned to her students the task of writing papers on John Hersey's book, *Hiroshima.* Three of the papers, all critical of the use of the bomb, were printed in the local newspaper.

Veterans' groups claimed the teacher, Miss Le Moyne Goodman, had influenced her students to be "disrespectful to every loyal American." They complained that other students had written favorably on the dropping of the bomb. Miss Goodman said that she had exerted no pressure, that she had presented *Hiroshima* for comment in order "to provoke thoughtful consideration of the nuclear age." According to a New York *Times* (June 12) report, Miss Goodman offered her resignation, but the Hanover board of education withheld action, and after investigation completely vindicated the teacher, declaring that the essays "represented the independent thinking of the students."

Eminent men should not be debarred from providing examples of forthright utterance. Supreme Court Justice Douglas last month told a graduating class at Haverford College that the two essentials of our time are abolition of nuclear war and the building of a world community. He spoke of the need for "fresh minds, boundless energy, an inventive genius, and great patience." He continued:

> The supplanting of war with law is essential to survival. Placing the revolutions of the world under democratic influence and leadership will make the voices of Jefferson and Lincoln heard once more in the farthest reaches of the earth.
>
> Unless we democrats take the initiative in this respect, America will become more and more isolated, more and more helpless against the tide of events. We must accept our traditional role of revolutionaries if communism is not to win by default.

An editorial writer in the New York *Times*, America's most respected newspaper, recently condemned a statement made by a member of the House Un-American Activities Committee as "so much nonsense." At the close of hearings intended to uncover alleged communist activity in the TV industry, the presiding Representative, Morgan Moulder, of Missouri, declared that Communist activities in the United States are now "a greater menace than ever before," bringing this retort from the *Times.* The *Times* went on to point out that the nation's security is hardly affected if "a violinist in *The Music Man* should turn out to have been a communist, or if the guest conductor for the Moiseyev Ballet is one, or if the director of entertainment shows on a TV network is one. . . ."

To what end, the *Times* editorial writer asks, does this committee seek to find a few communists or communist sympathizers in the TV industry? Is it—

> To make the United States, most powerful nation on earth, look ridiculous? To undermine this country's well-earned reputation for liberalism in thought and freedom in speech? To emulate Communist and other kinds of totalitarian societies by persecuting people for holding radical beliefs? . . . The menace of Soviet Russia is far too serious for the American people to be distracted in this manner by such senseless diversions.

These examples of outspoken intelligence are in no case "extreme." They represent simply a sanity and a balance to which millions might easily subscribe.

CORRECTION

Unfortunate typographic confusion invaded the quoted matter in last week's editorial, due to mistakes in the tenth line, which should have read:

> values we've lost, strengthen the values we need, discard values we . . .

Then, in the fourteenth line, replace "man" with "may," in order to make sense!

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves

HUTCHINS AND MEIKLEJOHN

A FEW weeks ago, in our comparison of Russian and American education, it was suggested that two men could be depended upon for enlightened opinions on this subject—Alexander Meiklejohn and Robert M. Hutchins. Both these educators know—and know far better than most—what constitutes Basic Education.

In an article in the June *Esquire*, Mr. Hutchins uses the controversy over Russian versus American education as a basis for examining what is wrong with America's higher education. He quotes a press release issued by the University of Illinois revealing that the inadequacy of high school English instruction had caused, during a ten-year period, a thirty per cent increase in failures of qualifying examinations among freshmen. As an example of the lengths to which many high schools go in taking education out of schooling, Hutchins cites the case of a new high school in Schenectady, New York. This elaborate plant has two regular gymnasiums, and two auxiliary gymnasiums, an auditorium, a band and orchestra room, a cafeteria with stage, a retail store, a faculty-student lounge, shops for various building trades, automobiles, general industry, graphic arts, etc. Of the total teaching area no more than twenty-five per cent is devoted to anything related to serious education in language, mathematics or history.

Only one out of four graduates in American high schools has encountered a year of physics, one out of three has undertaken a year of chemistry, and only every other pupil has studied mathematics for a year. Only one out of five has taken a year of foreign language.

Since Dr. Hutchins believes that the purpose of education is to develop intellectual power, he grows somewhat caustic at this evidence of American disrespect for learning:

If you tried a free-association test on Americans and said "university" to the first hundred people you met, most of them would reply "football." If you said "high school," most of them would reply "band practice." If you said "education" to the first hundred Russians you met, my guess is that most of them would answer "work."

We do not take education seriously. We do not value those who are charged with responsibility for it. We pay them atrocious salaries. In Darien, Connecticut, one of the richest communities in America, it was found last year that a young man three years out of college, with a wife and one child, teaching in the public school would receive $8.80 more as take-home pay than he would get if he were unemployed. In Chicago the maximum for school teachers is $181 less a year than the maximum for school janitors. The college and university professors of the United States average $100 a week. The whole faculties of many colleges could be bought for the annual income of a single General Motors executive.

In other countries teachers may not get much money, but their prestige is high. Here they have about the position that nursemaids used to have. They are treated as second-class citizens when somebody like McCarthy goes on the rampage. Their social and political standing is on a par with their financial standing.

We talk a great deal about our dedication to education. And we do spend a lot of money on it. We actually spend a little more on our colleges and universities than we do on parimutual betting, and that is a lot of money. We want our children to go through school and college. A larger and larger proportion of them goes further and further in education every year. But we don't take education seriously. We don't really care what they study, or whether they study at all. We want them to have the social advantages that educational institutions can supply. We want them to have the vocational opportunities that would be closed to them if they did not have diplomas and degrees. But we know that their vocational success and their social position will not be attended one way or another by their failure to work seriously when they are in high school and college.

Therefore, American education is characterized by waste of money, waste of time, and waste of talent. Since we do not take education seriously, we do not bother to try to figure out what it is. We confuse it with schooling and conclude that if we have everybody in school our responsibility is discharged

> and our task accomplished. Hence the purpose of education in the United States would seem to be the accommodation of the young from the time at which they become a nuisance around the house to the time at which we are ready to have them go to work.

Dr. Hutchins is willing, along with some others, to be "grateful" to the Russians for reminding us of our appalling lack of serious learning in the United States. But, as he points out, our greatest need is not to be able to surpass the Russians in technical proficiency. Our need is to surpass *ourselves* in the acquisition of the sort of education that will enable us to understand the relationships of human beings:

> Suppose the Russians did not exist. After a country has got beyond the point at which it can rely on natural barriers for its defense and natural resources for its standard of living, its progress will depend on its intellectual power. Then it has problems. These problems, if they can be solved, can be solved only by taking thought.
>
> I am convinced that the happiness of an individual human being depends on his ability and willingness to use his mind, which is, after all, what distinguishes him from the brutes and makes him human. The sense of futility and boredom that overcomes many "successful" men in America originates in the fact that after they have devoted a lifetime to achieving success they don't know what to do with it or with themselves.
>
> Democracy rests on the theory, which is obvious enough, that everybody has intellectual power. America's greatest contribution to democracy may well be the idea of education for all. We set out to make it possible for everybody to develop his mind.
>
> I deny absolutely that the waste of time, talent, and money that characterizes American education is the necessary consequence of the decision to open education to all. The indubitable fact that people differ in native ability and in capacity to learn does not mean that an educational system that sets out to educate everybody must fail to educate anybody. It means that those who cannot or will not make a serious effort to learn or who, after making such an effort, cannot learn must drop out of the educational system and take to other forms of endeavor. There is no reason why a young man of twenty should be in college if he will not study. There is no reason why he should be there if in the years preceding he has demonstrated that he cannot profit by what education has to offer.
>
> We can be certain of one thing, and that is that if it were understood that serious work was expected in our schools, colleges, and universities, if these institutions refused to admit students who did not work and refused to retain, promote, or graduate them, these actions alone would revolutionize the attitude of innumerable young people toward serious learning.

Dr. Alexander Meiklejohn, in an address delivered last October before the American Civil Liberties Union, suggested some important distinctions between "liberty" and "freedom." "Liberties," he said, are established and guaranteed by the Constitution and may, on grounds of public welfare, be abridged by Congressional action. *Freedoms,* however, according to the fundamental purpose of the Constitution, are intended to be entirely beyond the reach of congressional control. It is possible, then, for individuals or groups of individuals to exercise ingenuity in extending and defending their Liberties, while remaining entirely unconcerned about the right, or duty, to form and express original opinions.

The Russian challenge may not be an unmixed blessing, if it is assumed that the purpose of learning is to compete. According to Dr. Meiklejohn, our colleges have already gone a long way in this unfortunate direction, which Russia's technical success should not betray us into following further. Meiklejohn suggests that "our colleges are, in large measure, deserting the teaching of Freedom in order that they may meet the clamorous demands that they equip their students with the techniques and devices of Industrial and Business and Military Efficiency. Among the professors the search for specialized knowledge is replacing the search for liberal understanding. Our institutions of learning are becoming less and less self-governing and independent. Under the pressures of a multiplicity of alien forces, scholars and teachers protect their Liberties but lose sight of the Intellectual Freedom by which alone their work can be justified."

Dr. Meiklejohn also contributes to the debate between "new educationalists" and "reactionaries" on the subject of responsibility for present educational weaknesses. Our concept of education, he says, is less "a conspiracy of professional theorists than it is a general misreading of the relationship between culture and intelligence." He continues:

> During the past twenty-five years, new forms of mass communication have been devised which, if used for purposes of education, might bring the body-politic of the United States, and even of the world, into forms of acquaintance and mutual understanding which would serve us well in the creating of a society of Freedom. But, instead of that, radio and television, being handed over to the Liberties of private enterprise, have become mighty forces for the breaking down both of our morals and our intelligence. They have again made dominant in our society the mental trickeries which, long ago, Plato saw corrupting the mind and spirit of Athens. I do not deny that good men are at work in the industries or that good work is done. But on the whole, a great chance for the cultivation of Freedom has been lost. In my opinion, Madison Avenue is, today, more powerful and more dangerous than the Hydrogen bomb.

FRONTIERS

Objections and Notes

FRONTIERS (June 4 and 11) has elicited some protest from readers. In the June 4 issue, J. W. Gray proposed that sectarianism in religion involves considerably more than a fulfillment of individual preference in belief; according to Mr. Gray, and according to the supporting MANAS editorial, the sectarian spirit is dangerous and destructive, never a genuine fulfillment of individual needs.

Our editorial quoted from Dr. Karl Menninger the view that many religions have nothing to do with spiritual inspiration, and may be, in respect to some of their tenets, the core of a group neurosis. On this point, a correspondent writes:

> Dr. Menninger makes a statement of what he *believes* to be bad religion and good religion. He then proceeds to label what he considers bad religion as neurotic! Now in this particular instance I agree with his values, but I anticipate the instance *when I cannot agree with the religion he accepts and I will be labeled a neurotic!* Since when does a psychological specialist have the right to scrutinize the philosophical world with the narrow terminology of the consulting room? This specialist is taking a *medical* term and using it to evaluate moral and philosophical positions. MANAS stands silent while a medical man links religion to "psychological mechanisms." How long will it be before psychology replaces epistemology if these "psychological mechanisms" become the province primarily of psychologists whose metaphysics I may not be able to accept? and if I should openly debate these metaphysical assumptions, how do I know the "great psychologist" may not label me "neurotic" and replace dialectic with psychoanalysis? Only a sensitive human being and not the profession of psychology (however sincere) will have the breadth of soul to refrain from hiding behind a specialty in making a subjective value judgment on religion.

Apart from the fact that Dr. Menninger is himself a sincere if undoctrinaire Christian, we feel that his book *The Human Mind,* from which our quotation was taken, offers full justification for what he says. As he put it:

> From the standpoint of the psychiatrist a religion which merely ministers to the unconscious cravings for self-punishment, the relief of a sense of guilt, the repudiation of unpleasant reality, or the feeling of a necessity for atonement to some unseen power, by the repeating of phrases and ceremonials, cannot be regarded as anything other than a neurotic or psychotic system.
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> This is not said in any effort to disparage or ridicule anyone's religion, but rather to point out that religion may mean different things to different people and that psychological mechanisms determine what type of religion will satisfy a particular individual. The manner in which a man utilizes his religion—whether it be to enrich and ennoble his life or to excuse his selfishness and cruelty, or to rationalize his delusions and hallucinations, or to clothe himself in a comforting illusion of omnipotence—is a commentary on the state of his mental health.

Dr. Menninger, it should be made plain, has never attempted to suggest precisely what religion should be embraced; needless to say, he does not proselytize for his own. As Erich Fromm has likewise shown, a man may find in various symbols or specific beliefs a focus to help him formulate his ideas of the spiritual life. But when certain psychological attitudes are connected with various symbols and beliefs, the development of an arrogant, authoritarian mind-set may result. On this point Basil King, in his *Conquest of Fear*, put the matter simply—with special emphasis on the possessive, combative feelings which so many Westerners associate with their religious doctrines. Mr. King writes:

> I wish it were possible to speak of God without the implication of dealing with religion. The minute you touch on religion, as commonly understood, you reach the sectarian. The minute you reach the sectarian you start enmities, get mental discords, when no stand against fear is possible. But I mean a little more than this. Man, as at present developed, has shown that he hardly knows what to do with religion, or where to put it in his life. This is especially true of the Caucasian, the least spiritually intelligent of all the great types of our race. Fundamentally the white man is hostile to religion. He attacks it as a bull a red cloak, goring it, stamping on it, tearing it to shreds. With the Caucasian as he is this fury is instinctive. Recognizing religion as the

foe of the materialistic ideal he had made his own, he does his best to render it ineffective.

In Frontiers for June 11, a MANAS writer had the temerity to discuss Vegetarianism, by way of an address on the topic by the President of India, Dr. Rajendra Prasad. We suggested that, whatever one's diet, it should be recognized that belief in vegetarian practice "poses a number of philosophical and psychological questions." We then assembled other quotations, one from Aldous Huxley, and one from Fairfield Osborn, President of the New York Zoological Society, to indicate that the vegetarians may have some ground for relating extensive meat-eating to an all-too-easy resort, among Westerners, to violence and killing. This is as far as we took the matter, but one correspondent seems to feel that we may stand suspected of actively advocating the vegetarian cause. He offers a passage from *The Eternal Companion* (Brahmananda—His Life and Teachings) which provides the following dialogue:

> Disciple: Should we avoid eating meat, since it entails killing?
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> Maharaj: Nonsense! The Buddhists say, "Harmlessness is the highest virtue." What does this mean? You understand its significance only when you have attained samadhi when you have reached enlightenment and have seen God in all creatures. Until then no amount of talk helps us. When you can see the same God in the ant as in yourself with no difference at all, only then can you practice this virtue. You may talk of not killing any creature but can you possibly avoid killing? What would you eat? Potatoes? Plant that potato underground, it shoots forth young sprouts. Has the potato no life? Would you eat rice? Plant the paddy grain in the earth. It grows into a rice plant. You want to drink water? Examine a drop of water under a microscope and see how many millions of tiny lives are there. You must live to breathe. Yet with each breath you kill millions of creatures. Do you see any harm in that? Yet you are surely killing. You think you lose your religion if you take a little fish. Such arguments against meat diet are foolish. The ancient Hindus held no such ideas. These are later Buddhist and Vaishnavite interpolations.

This is an argument with which all vegetarians must by now be familiar, but it is difficult to agree with our correspondent that "it doesn't seem that to let animals live in peace while devouring vegetables without thought would bring us closer to an understanding of Nature and ourselves." From this it would follow that as long as we eat radishes, we might as well eat human beings, provided we have acquired this particular taste. "Maharaj" has, in our opinion, no business to say that the determination to avoid eating meat is "Nonsense!"—especially with an exclamation point. Many Hindus, as well as nearly all the Buddhists that we have heard of, feel that while one may not be perfect, and still a long way from *samadhi,* he can endeavor to let his actions speak for an intention to spiritualize his own nature at whatever rate he can manage. No one moves from one sort of practice to another, or from one inner attitude to another, in one grand jump—unless through some kind of Vicarious Atonement. Neither Hindus nor Buddhists, so far as we know, believe in salvation by miracle, but they do believe in a constant scrutiny of one's personal habits and thoughts, to serve a gradual and beneficial transformation of self.

So, we are glad to see the vegetarians raise the issues they cannot help but raise. Perhaps, for all we presently know, we should join them. But whether we or anyone else has made or will make this personal decision is quite beside the point of such a discussion—which is simply intended to raise questions and to provoke thought.