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THE UNDERSTANDING OF PAIN

MUCH of the serious reading matter of the present is concerned with the nature, causes, and elimination of pain. This material can be divided into two vast categories—that devoted to the pain of individuals, now beginning to be recognized as including pain of non-specific origin resulting from the constant elements of the human situation; and examinations of the pain of the world, which has many forms and is assumed to have practical if exceedingly difficult remedies. It is obvious, of course, that the pain of individuals is compounded by circumstantial factors which seem to be the chief cause of the pain of the world, but it is also true that individuals are able to find relief *as* individuals, or at least to achieve some kind of independent balance which may be called "health," if not "happiness." Further, this alleviation of individual pain is not necessarily obtained at the cost of isolation from the sufferings of others.

Unlike many of the prescriptions of orthodox religion for individual suffering, the present-day accounts of the good individual life are descriptions of functions and attitudes rather than homilies and moral injunctions. Further, the ideas of health or wholeness are relational, not substantive, as anyone who has read the new psychologists is well aware. Of the relations of "healthy" or self-actualizing people with the world around them, A. H. Maslow observes: "They got along with the culture in various ways, but of all of them it could be said that in a profound and meaningful sense they . . . maintained a certain inner detachment from the culture in which they were immersed." As to their attitudes toward what we have called the "pain of the world," Dr. Maslow says:

> Although they were not a radical group of people in the ordinary sense, I think they easily *could* be. First of all this was primarily an intellectual group (it must be remembered who selected them), most of whom already had a "mission," and felt that they were doing something really important to improve the world. Secondly they were a "realistic" group and seemed to be unwilling to make great but useless sacrifices. In a more drastic situation it seems very likely that they would be willing to drop their work in favor of radical social action, e.g., the anti-Nazi underground in Germany or in France. My impression is that they were not against fighting but only against ineffectual fighting. *(Motivation and Personality.)*

What this seems to say, among other things, is that such people do not make reflex or "one-to-one" responses to political movements or revolutionary proposals which involve manipulative (coercive) remedies for the pain of the world, although they may be aroused by "extreme situations." It is as though the person of healthy mind and feelings has a kind of intuitive insight into the fact that the good human act is always an act with an individual growth-component in it, and that this requires independent creative response to circumstances. Ordinary political programs ignore this qualification of goodness and cannot, therefore, gain the blanket allegiance of such people. It might be said that the reconciliation of organized political or social action with creativity is a central problem of the age.

Meanwhile we are overtaken, today, by widespread intensification of the pain of the world, or by ever-increasing awareness of that pain, which amounts to the same thing. The pressure to take some kind of "action" tends to be overwhelming, but coupled with this compulsion is the dismay one feels when there are so *many* evils which cry out for attention. There is the horror of threatening war—in particular, nuclear war. There is the immediate shame of the bombing in Vietnam, and the tearing strain on the allegiances of people who long to be able to feel that their country and government stand for

something better than the ugliness of present policies. There are the tensions produced by the Civil Rights struggle, the lonely courage of those who practice non-violence, and the desperation of those who decide that violence is the only remaining way to stir the white community out of its half-conscious assent to routine injustice and exploitation of minority groups. And there is, to add to the bewilderment, the growing schism, not to say fragmentation, dividing the workers for peace and racial justice into various camps.

We have here a new kind of pain; not only the pain of the individual in trying to understand himself and his relationships with others; not only the pain of oppressions and deprivations in many parts of the world; but also the pain of the individual who finds it very nearly impossible to make a satisfying decision of what he ought to do. Inside, and in the abstract, he feels that there must be a way of mapping his life and distributing his energies that will put an end to the almost frantic pushes and pulls that now affect him, but he knows that any such course will have to result from deep conviction of what is right, and of how various activities will flow into a unity that serves the good. The question of where this conviction will come from remains unanswered.

One way of getting another light on this situation would be to say that the rapid pace of change in the world is exposing the extreme inadequacy of familiar institutional remedies for the things we think are wrong. It used to be that the shortcomings of institutions remained unknown except for those who had reason to go behind the façades and see in human terms what was happening; but now the breakdowns and discontinuities are coming out into the open, due to the severe tests of current events.

There is first the irony of the general malfunction, in human terms, of the "bigness" in business, government, and education. These are the institutions of which Americans have been most proud, yet they are also the foci of power and control which most bewilder us with their anti-human tendencies. The massive operations of these enormous complexes have grown so inaccessible to independent human decision that a large critical literature has grown up in analysis of them. The acquisitive ends of industry seemed reasonable enough throughout the long years of a scarcity economy and while there remained multiple opportunities for independent achievement by the resourceful individual, but today, the institutionalization of the acquisitive drive and the professionalization of its psychological requirements in marketing and motivation stimuli have accomplished an endless vulgarization of the common life. And so long as the stability of the national economy is hitched to these provocatives, there are all sorts of "practical" reasons for rejecting the barest suggestion of change. Meanwhile impartial study of governmental processes reveals the increasing incapacity of a system of parliamentary democracy designed for the needs of a small, decentralized, agrarian population, to function in a society transformed by industrial progress into an enormous technological network of delicately interdependent parts and functions. Popular principles meet in unresolvable ideological conflict. The "general welfare" principle, for example, on which public housing and other reclamation enterprises of government are based, are again and again compromised if not rendered humanly destructive by the traditional obligation to allow "free enterprise" a hand in the execution of such projects. As Scott Greer wrote in the *Nation* for Jan. 25:

> [The urge to give more Americans "a decent home and suitable environment"] moves within the political culture which prescribes so much autonomy that the true urban renewal effort results from a tug of war between local politicians and the federal agency. It moves within a culture which insists that nothing which can earn a buck should be left to the government—throwing the program to the mercy of real estate speculators and leaving the agency to deal with the local real estate market as best it can. Urban renewal as it exists dramatizes the schizoid character of our public purpose. . . .

The social failure of public relief and assistance programs in large cities is usually blamed on hard-working administrators and social workers, when the complaint is more than simply a generalized blast of political propaganda. But anyone who has studied this problem knows that the mechanical solutions for impoverishment due to unemployment and unemployability eventually become permanent institutional adjustments to permanent defects in the fabric of society. In the deep South, such situations are exacerbated by local prejudice and corruption in the power structure. A man on the scene in one of thesouthern states made this analysis of the group empowered to draw up plans for obtaining federal aid through the War on Poverty:

> This group is nothing more than a pre-existing set-up of the Chamber of Commerce to entice industry to this part of the State. Now the city commissions are very heavy Birch, reactionary. Their public position is WE DON'T NEED FEDERAL HELP" and a whole lot of nonsense on how there is no poverty here, and how free enterprise could cure it if there was any. But at the same time they don't want to pass up anything that is offered—so you create an agency (or rather, you utilize one already created for another purpose). They take the money and draw up the plans. The county commissioners can be "clean" of the whole deal and even issue statements scoffing at it—and still they are the people who decide where the money is to be put, etc. Very, very clever. This is done to avoid the whole embarrassing problem that Goldwater faced when people reminded him that he would vote for federal money to come into Arizona to build dams, etc. . . .

This kind of institutionalized ambivalence and hypocrisy has many counterparts in other slogan-protected situations involving manifest self-defeat—such as, for example, the failure of the public authorities in Los Angeles to take honest cognizance of the deep-rooted socio-economic factors behind the recent riot in the Watts area. The bland insistence on conformity to "law and order," with refusal to notice the systematic repressions and exclusions of the Negro population from the opportunities of ordinary American life, is itself a prime cause of such outbreaks, since it represents total neglect of the true identity and voice of the Negro protest. (An interesting footnote to accounts of the Los Angeles riot occurs in an article in the *New Leader* for Aug. 30, by a Stanford sociology professor who went into the Watts area during the trouble. "The astonishing element in the Los Angeles riot," he said, "is not the pillage and the passion, but the respect for decent white men.")

Add to these considerations the ominous, over-all predictions anticipating drastic technological unemployment as a result of the cybernetic revolution, and the internal institutional contradictions of "advanced" democratic society are seen to be approaching crisis proportions.

Another important class of contradictions appears in the raw break between traditional methods of achieving social progress—through legislative measures obtained by political and "rights" organizations—and the new radicals who are using the techniques of mass protest, boycotts, and civil disobedience. So far as the civil rights movement is concerned, the rift goes back to the break of militant Negroes with the spirit of Booker T. Washington and various leaders who, in behalf of the practical needs of the people they wanted to help, tolerated and adjusted to the white paternalism which was the price of getting funds for schools and other agencies; and this rift reaches, today, into the ranks of even radical groups. There is stark, uncompromising determination in the leadership of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNICK) and an unwillingness to accommodate to the political sagacity of friendly advisers. SNICK works on voter registration, it participated in and originated some Freedom rides and sit-ins, and played the major role in the Washington march last spring. Even radical leaders who have spent their lives exemplifying the non-violent approach to racial justice and charismatic figures such as Martin Luther King are seen as "conservative," or in some sense collaborators with the "Establishment," by the protagonists of more

spontaneous, "existential" demonstrations which have the high mandate of "revolutionary love," and are felt to be their own justification. It is as though these young men and women are saying: "Don't give me reasons of prudence and strategy that will keep me from doing what I know is right, *right now."* The institutional frameworks of the Negro movement are changing so rapidly that honest and devoted people find themselves agonized by challenge to time-honored allegiances, which are now seen as brakes on progress during a cycle of accelerated change.

Describing one aspect of this situation in *The Negro Revolt,* Louis Lomax speaks of the personal self-sacrifices and humiliations suffered by distinguished Negro educators who years ago founded colleges for their people:

> I have been told of another college executive who met with a group of potential donors at a white church. He made his presentation and asked if there were questions he could answer. To the educator's amazement, an elderly white woman stood and said: "Professor, before we talk about the money you want, would you please sing a few verses of 'Swing Low, Sweet Chariot'?"
>
> The president cleared his throat and sang; he also got a new library.
>
> It is often said that Negro colleges are inferior. This, of course, is true. It is also true that they would have been worse had it not been for these well-educated, determined men who braved insults and contempt to raise the money to keep these schools going.
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> Many of these men are still heads of Negro colleges, but now they find themselves caught in a cross fire. Today their students are involved in sit-ins and freedom rides, and the white donors are both amazed and angered to discover that schools supported by their money spawn "agitators" and "trouble-makers." The philanthropists and state boards of education turn on the college administrators and demand that they call a halt to the demonstrations; the students, on the other hand, expect their college executives to stand with them whatever the consequences. . . .

It is all too easy, in respect to such problems, to remark blithely that men must learn to change with the times. The point is that when politics, as "the art of the possible," achieves institutional adjustments in behalf of a limited good, the men who are responsible for these historic accomplishments, even if able personally to "change with the times," cannot suddenly reverse all their policies and destroy the basis of carefully erected relationships with the dominant forces of the social environment. There is sheer tragedy in such situations. You could in fact argue that the free-wheeling policies of SNICK represent an intuitive recognition of the trap of institutional compromises, and maintain their integrity by preserving a "take no thought of the morrow" spirit, doing at the time what seems unequivocally the right thing to do. The appropriate comment may be, not a worldly wise observation about the need to be "practical," but rather an appreciative recognition of the profound truth embodied in such decisions. (See Camus' *The Rebel.*) The need is not to compromise this truth with political sagacity, but rather to move heaven and earth to find ways and means of keeping it alive—to preserve it from the smothering embrace of conventional political action.

A deeply instructive if shocking lesson in the shortcomings of existing democratic institutions lies in a brief passage by Lomax on the Black Muslims, who may be regarded as a spontaneous growth to fill the vacuum in the lives of many Negroes in the United States. Despite the fact that this movement is avowedly anti-white (Muslims identify the serpent in Eden as a symbol of the white man), its effects on peoples' daily lives is probably the most important fact now to be noted. Lomax writes:

> . . . it is just here, in their work with Negro criminals, that the Muslims have won the respect of Negro and white social workers. Their rehabilitation program is nothing short of miraculous. They start out by convincing the ex-convict that he fell into crime because he was ashamed of being black, that the white man had so psychologically conditioned him that he was unable to respect himself. Then they convince the onetime prisoner that being black is a blessing, not a curse, and that in keeping with that

> blessing he, the ex-convict, must clean himself up and live a life of decency and respect. . . .
>
> You never see a Muslim lapse into crime. (A close friend of mine is a lawyer with Muslim clients and he tells me he has known of only four Muslims who have returned to crime in the past five years. . . . Parole officers and police have told me that the Black Muslims are the best rehabilitation agency at work among Negro criminals today.)
>
> The crucial issue is that these criminals are rehabilitated along with the other members of the group (most of the Muslims are not ex-convicts) in a faith that denies and condemns everything American. They do it simply by reciting the facts about life for the black man in America. And it is this recital that caused James Baldwin to remark that others among us have the faith but the Muslims have the facts.

Muslims, says Mr. Lomax, neither drink nor smoke. They never use narcotics. They always find some means of income, and, he adds, "You never see a Muslim without a clean shirt and tie and coat." These are outward evidences of a newborn self-respect and feeling of dignity. The Black Muslims, he says, are part of the Negro revolt, but they are not aimed in the same direction. Nonetheless "they stem from the same unrest" and are an expression of the "firm belief that the current Negro leadership organizations are not employing the proper methods." Instead of working to improve their condition within the framework of American society, "the Black Muslims react by turning their backs on that society entirely. . . . Their one positive aspect is that they work to make Negroes proud of being Negro."

There is a massive judgment of American society in the success of the Black Muslims—the judgment of *"Too little, and too late."* Similar judgments could be drawn up in relation to the recent Cuban revolution and to the attitude of Latin Americans generally, as reflected in Juan Arevelo's book, *The Shark and the Sardines* (Lyle Stuart, 1961). Experienced Latin American specialists point out that such recent diplomatic moves by the United States as the Organization of the American States have come *too late.* The alienating process has gone on too long, and the rejection of even "liberal" intentions is now emotionally fixed for the great majority of Latin American peoples. Meanwhile, American travelers to Europe and Asia return home to warn that a similar response is rapidly being engendered throughout the world by the ruthless military policies of this country. Whether we like it or not, and whether we "care" or not, and whether or not we feel it to be "just," the United States may before long find itself separated from even larger sections of the world community by an emotionally unshakeable moral quarantine. How then shall we regard all our wonderful weapons, which will have put us in the impoverished situation of having no choice except to use them or not?

The last, best hope of America has always been education. From the days of the Founding Fathers until the present, it has been the pride of the American people to provide the young with educational opportunity, both for their own future and in behalf of the nation's progress. The great state universities, staffed by scholars proudly drawn from all the world, are symbols of this faith. Yet now they gain our attention mainly with unmistakable signs of failure and disillusionment. Today many of the great campuses are scenes of anxiety and unrest, with the uncontrolled disturbance last fall at Berkeley—perhaps the most distinguished and prestigious of all the public institutions—representing the revolt of the brightest and most humanly aware of the students. Why did they do it? They did it in protest against the grain of their university life and, at the same time, against the moral lethargy of the entire social community. From being a "silent generation," the nation's students have become vociferous advocates of change. Critics of modern education such as Paul Goodman (*Growing Up Absurd*) are their heroes, not the skillful "explainers" of the status quo (Clark Kerr). As the painfully candid editor of *Transfer* (San Francisco State College's literary magazine, No. 5) said in 1958, a few years

before the civil rights issue began to fill the abyss in students' lives:

> Can we find ourselves in the midst of all the pressure to be "successful," "socially oriented," and "adjusted"? How long can we go on selling our pride and self-confidence for the gewgaws that society offers? Never mind. I know the answer. It is *all our lives.*
>
> We don't have the confidence in ourselves to test our own integrity. We are afraid we would let ourselves down. So we carefully arrange it so that our integrity is never tested. We do this in spite of our secret hope that some day we will be strong enough to stand for ourselves. We realize that at present our real needs are not being satisfied.
>
> We can't stand for ourselves unless we test our integrity. We can't test our integrity unless we first decide what we believe.
>
> But we must realize that it wouldn't really be a test if we knew in advance how it would come out. There is some excitement in this idea. Somebody once said that in order to be really free a man must risk his life once every thirty days.
>
> The "life" that we protect so tenaciously may be only our reputations or our careers. And these things may well be the chains that keep us from being free.

Here, indeed, is the pain of the individual who finds himself unable to make "a satisfying decision of what to do." It is the pain characteristic of an age of declining faiths, obsolete institutions, and betraying circumstances. One of two things may be done. It is possible to shut out the pain by choosing a narrow allegiance and losing oneself in its requirements. The other thing to do, which is much more difficult, is to recognize that this pain is a clue to the meaning of human life. In time, the pain may turn into a compensating joy of authenticity. There is one further possibility: people who "accept" this pain may find that they are the only ones who can survive the terrors and cope with the contradictions of a world being reborn.

REVIEW
THE ISSUE OF "REDUCTIONISM"

IN the New York *Times* for Aug. 30, Joseph Herzberg reports on the current attempt to counteract a merely physicalist interpretation of man's nature. A group representing many fields of inquiry, sponsored by a Ford Foundation grant and headed by Michael Polanyi, a physical chemist turned philosopher, met this summer at Bowdoin College to formulate what amounts to a philosophical manifesto. These philosophers, psychologists, biologists, linguists and political scientists united in opposing what Dr. Polanyi calls "reductionism." Their declaration said:

> Since the 17th century the kind of knowledge afforded by mathematical physics has come more and more to furnish mankind with an ideal for all knowledge. This ideal also carries with it a new conception of the nature of things: All things whatsoever are held to be intelligible ultimately in terms of the laws of inanimate nature.
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> In the light of such a reductionist program, the finalistic nature of living things, the sentience of animals and their intelligence, the responsible choices of man, his moral and aesthetic ideals, the fact of human greatness seem all of them anomalies that will be removed eventually by further progress.
>
> Their existence—even the existence of science itself—has no legitimate grounds; our deepest convictions lack all theoretical foundation.
>
> This movement claims to unify science and to comprehend in it all subjects of study. But, since its ideal is fundamentally mistaken, the result has been to debase the conception of man entertained by the psychological and social sciences and at the same time to isolate the humanistic core of history and criticism.
>
> It has displaced the traditional endeavor of philosophy to comprehend the whole domain of human thought and produced instead distortion and fragmentation.

The psychologists most often quoted in MANAS articulate similar criticism by pointing out the limitations of any world view which discourages the individual from thinking that *he* is responsible for finding a meaningful destiny. As Dr. William Glasser says, therapy for delinquents and other social deviants remains at a standstill so long as the cause of psychic maladjustment is laid at the door of traumatic events produced by the environment. And Erich Fromm, in "Man Is Not a Thing," pointed out that no therapist can "fix up" a distorted psyche in the same way that a surgeon can repair a damaged limb; a mysterious factor, Dr. Fromm insists, must be recognized at the core of human beinghood. Whether this X factor is called "free will," or the "soul," or a man's "potential for genuine creativity," matters very little—but it matters a great deal to recognize that self-fulfillment involves commitments beyond convenience.

In *Human Nature and the Human Condition* (Random House, 1959) Joseph Wood Krutch conveys a parallel idea:

> Someday we may again discover that "the humanities" are something more than ornaments and graces. Sociology and psychology may again find man's consciousness more interesting than the mechanically determined aspects of his behavior and we may again be more concerned with what man is than with *what he has* and *what he can do.* We might again take more pride in his intellect than in his tools; might again think of him as pre-eminently *Homo sapiens* rather than *Homo faber*—man the thinker rather than man the maker. We might—at some distant day—come to realize again that the proper study of mankind is man.

Turning back nearly thirty years to a book remarkably prophetic of the standpoint of the Polanyi group, we find the following in Dixon's *The Human Situation:*

> You have heard of this curious doctrine, of this psychology which rejects the psyche and retains only the "ology," the science of the self without the self. Beyond doubt there are times in which the sense of self is in abeyance, dormant, latent or suspended. The human soul appears in sleep, in trance and it may well be similarly at death, to sink into its ground, to cease its activities, to leave the region where alone it can be by us observed and at work. Nevertheless, "Although a soul," as wrote Leibnitz, "may have a body composed of parts, each of which has a soul of its own, the soul or form of the whole is not composed of the souls or forms of the parts." Reflect for a

> moment, and you must allow that the whole whether it be a machine or a living creature, may enable you to understand the parts, but the parts will never enable you, however deeply studied, to understand the whole. The soul has knowledge of its successive states or phases, a knowledge not coincident with the states themselves; neither is it a member of the procession, nor yet the procession itself. . . .
>
> The "I" is the window through which every man that ever was born looks out upon the scene of existence. Flung open at his birth, shuttered at his death, at this window through which no one else can ever look, this untransferable viewpoint, each one of us sits all his life long. A body he may have, but a body without intelligence, without speculation in its eyes, is a mere zero, a thing which can be observed but cannot itself observe. This "I" of ours goes further than the observation of other existences, it can observe its own. And its association with a certain time in a certain place is an impenetrable mystery. That there should be a world is astonishing, but that "I" should belong to it, or to this particular portion of the world, my body, which is in some sense mine as against all others—who will go about to make this clear?

The Study Group on Foundations of Cultural Unity, as those who have joined with Dr. Polanyi are known, inclines to the view that our whole concept of education has been emasculated by a hundred-year concentration upon "reductionism," and that preceding centuries of Western history gave no clear basis for understanding man. A science which embraces all of man's potentialities, then, will pursue continual philosophic and psychological inquiry into matters of ontology and epistemology. And there is an interesting correlation to be drawn between the carefully-phrased formulations of the Bowdoin assembly and the spirit of rebellion against the prevailing intellectual climate, now so plain on many campuses. Paul Goodman speaks of this revolt in an essay titled "Gists and New Spirit":

> The essence of the new spirit in the colleges is simple. It is awakening from the mesmerized conviction that nothing can be done because the organized system is overwhelming. To a superficial observer, it seems that they are just bent on making trouble and that any issue will do, large or small. But that is not the tone of it.

A theory of learning which is hospitable to the spirit of philosophy will center around the lifelong opportunities for self-transformation. The societal task, and the task of the educator, is to help lessen those feelings of frustration and helplessness which appear in an environment insensitive to "free will" as both a philosophic and psychological idea and as a reality in human beings.

COMMENTARY
THE WAR SYSTEM

READERS who need further convincing of the insanity of war would do well to inspect *The War System*, by Bert Cochran (Macmillan, 1965, $5.95). We can think of no book equal to this one in pointing to the need for an influential body of independent thinking about policies of the United States—and by "independent" we mean not connected with either government or the paramilitary employees of government, or with any persons or interests beholden to government.

Mr. Cochran's book makes this need plain, but he also makes clear how difficult it will be to develop such a body of thought. The reason is that honest thinking about policy will almost certainly lead to devastating criticism of the sort Mr. Cochran has written. Pussyfooting and prudential restraint can have no part in such thinking. The task is not to introduce gentle modifications of policy, but to *change* it.

Mr. Cochran does not write as a pacifist, but as a well-informed, unattached individual, yet his analysis of the war system leads him to say, in his last chapter:

> Where the military and diplomatic plenipotentiaries are wracking their brains for ways to reduce armaments without upsetting existing power balances, the unilateralists dispose of the obsession by asking their own government to leave itself militarily naked and give the world a moral example and lead. Let us be done, the pacifists cry, with all the pharisaical disputations to which there is no end. Let us cut through the conundrums of the military gamesmen and the tangles of the political gamesmen and offer a clear and straightforward answer which can be understood by all and which does not require the agreement of any other government to be put into effect.
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> A modicum of thought, they say, will immediately demonstrate to all and sundry the compelling logic as well as the sound morality of the proposition. Since we are arming and risking a nuclear war to preserve our free and democratic institutions, and since these most certainly cannot survive a nuclear war, we will have lost the very things we have gone to war to save—not a very sensible procedure. If we disarmed, there would be no war, and thus the extreme calamity would be averted in any case. At the worst, even if the opponent were to impose his tyranny upon us, we would still be able to fight back, and as time went on, to regain our free institutions; whereas if civilization were destroyed in a nuclear war, it would be the end for all time of free institutions. Though Communism is an abhorrent system, it is, like all social systems, transitory, but life, once wiped off this planet, will not return. The case for unilateralism is thus clinched on practical as well as on moral grounds.

If you say this argument is "visionary," then it is necessary to read Mr. Cochran's book for evidence that the existing policies and justifications of those policies are far more fanciful and unrealistic, in some instances wildly so. The book examines, chapter by chapter, the destructive power of modern armament, the impracticability of nuclear weapons for defense, the various theories of defense such as "containment," "massive retaliation," and "counterforce," with ample documentary support and sharp critical exposure of follies, past and present. The author looks at the proliferating role of the military establishment in the United States, demonstrates the progressive militarization of American life, reveals the shocking unreliability of information supplied by government spokesmen, discusses the ambivalence in American policy, and reviews the failures of both the League of Nations and the United Nations to accomplish anything significant in behalf of world peace. Mr. Cochran pursues these tasks with clear factual command of all that he writes about, and with the urbane skill of an educated, civilized human being who can no longer stomach the euphemisms of government hand-outs or the bewilderments (more than the hypocrisy) of modern diplomacy. The book shows the thorough-going competence of an informed individual to make a citizen's judgment of what his country is doing and has done. After pages of unequivocal facts and unemotional analysis, he has summarizing passages such as the following:

> The military doctrinaires and fanatics have thrust us into a labor of Sisyphus—an endless arms race, a mystic hunt for a ghostly security that is unattainable in nuclear terror. An arms race does not lead to the eventual Eden of stable deterrence or a position of strength, for it merely raises the threshold of violence without altering the terror balance. Such a race will be finished only when the world has exploded into armed conflict.

Peace, Mr. Cochran makes plain, will come only through far-reaching changes in human attitudes, leading to the establishment of new institutions which displace the motives and mechanisms of war. This can result only from enlightened public opinion, which must be generated in various ways, not the least of which is by more books of the sort Mr. Cochran has written. Only an informed and increasingly responsible independent public opinion—most of all independent of government—can take the initiative away from the war system and compel national politics to turn to genuine alternatives.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves
NOTES ON MORAL ISSUES

RECENTLY MANAS has cited the short, summarizing introductions of Dr. Harry Girvetz to articles on matters of current ethical decision in the paperback volume, *Contemporary Moral Issues.* This compilation was provided for University of California seminar use, and a ten-week exposure of interested members of a Southern California community to its diverse contents prompts the following account of the response from this group.

While it was clearly the intent of Dr. Girvetz to suggest that many attitudes respecting "morality" could be reached only by individual decision—without help from statistical data arranged to compel the acceptance of a particular conclusion—a majority of the participants seemed to desire a "scientifically" derived resolution. But to state that there are significant "moral" *issues* still painfully present in our science-dominated world at least implies the importance of independent thought by open-minded individuals, whatever their previous persuasions. Moral issues are not, on this view, matters to be resolved by statistical determination followed by the contractual arrangements of legal codes.

Unless this elementary recognition of the fact that moral *issues* are matters of individual decision reaches home, the participants in discussion tend to become moralistic, believing, it appears, that people "should" do or not do what the numerical consensus dictates. Curiously enough, the more scientifically minded of the participants tended to identify with the position of the Catholic theologian, John Courtney Murray, even though they were ostensibly the least sympathic to conventional religion. This curious alliance was unsuspected until it was pointed out by the discussion leader. The fact is that both church members and nonreligious "realists" who look for morality from the enforcement of the standards of the group defended the use of coercion to obtain a workable moral conformity. It was apparent that those who professed progressive political views identified with much of the logic supporting authoritarian control, which argues that the deviant individual should sacrifice himself to an established morality.

It is at this point that we must consider the claims of the Far Right, especially those social and political stances which favor loyalty oaths and enforced conformity, and which also deny the value of conscientious dissent. What then do we make of the fiery insistence of Henry David Thoreau on the moral priority of individual conscience, and of similar declarations by such men as Whitman, Gandhi, and Martin Luther King—and for that matter, the venerable Bertrand Russell? Is there then no validity in the numerous decisions of the U.S. Supreme Court upholding the rights of the "minority of one"? Is the Bill of Rights to be no longer taken as a philosophical cornerstone of the American democracy?

The practical questions are: How far does "loyalty" to an existing government require that we obey its laws? Are we obligated to obey laws we are personally convinced are morally wrong, or even to pay taxes supporting policies we feel bound to oppose? These questions are not, of course, new. Classical scholars show ancient Greek awareness of this dilemma in Sophocles' *Antigone* and in Plato's *Apol*ogy and *Crito.* Antigone refused to obey the law of Creon, while Socrates, though unflinching in response to individual conscience, refused opportunity to escape Athens and was executed for his integrity. Thoreau, whose essay on civil disobedience contributed to Gandhi's development of the idea of nonviolent resistance, was unequivocal on this point:

> I think we should be men first and subjects afterward. It is not desirable to cultivate a respect for the law, so much as for the right. . . . Unjust laws exist: shall we be content to obey them, or shall we endeavor to amend them, and obey them until we have succeeded, or shall we transgress at once? Men

> generally under such a government as this, think they ought to wait until they have persuaded the majority to alter them. They think that, if they should resist, the remedy would be worse than the evil. But it is the fault of the government itself that the remedy is worse than the evil. It makes it worse. . . . As for adopting the ways the state has provided for remedying the evil, I know not of such ways. They take too much time, and a man's life will be gone. I have other affairs to attend to.

Further relevance of this basic question is disclosed by David Riesman's definition of the mature human being as an "autonomous" man who will as a rule join his fellows in matters of policy and lawful behavior, but is wholly unwilling to compromise on matters of principle. The increasing use of the term "self-actualization," as a pivotal concept in humanistic psychology, similarly tends to give new voice to the internal demand of the individual to reach optimum creative expression by separating himself from "the lonely crowd."

"Problems" of the world as they relate to issues of church and state, to the enthronement of the profit motive in business, to matters of internal security and foreign policy, to education and to more constructive approaches in relation to crime and punishment all seem to call for attitudinal transformation. Certainly, if we have learned anything from the more dispassionate observations of philosophically minded psychologists, it is clear that both Buddha and Freud expressed a fundamental truth: No man can reach maturity without transcending adolescent fear, hate, suspicion and the drive for status and an impossible "security."

FRONTIERS

The Trouble in Tibet

AN editorial in the June 16 MANAS spoke of "the ruthless practices of the occupying Chinese who over-ran Tibet," going on to comment that such behavior must be attributed to "the frenzied self-righteousness of a people in the grip of an infallible political theory and brutalized by long years of dehumanizing war and revolution." These observations brought an objection from a reader to our quotation from the Newsletter of the Dalai Lama, who is characterized as "a former oppressive ruler of a feudal theocracy in a remote part of China, who circulates from exile his distorted views." Contending that the reports in this newsletter have "no relation to the facts," this critic remarks that there are many books "which describe a completely different way of dealing with backward minorities, not only in China but in newly-formed socialist states throughout the world with their own primitive peoples." Recommended by this correspondent is *The Truth about Tibet,* by Stuart and Roma Gelder, and the *Far East Reporter,* P.O. Box 1536, Grand Central Station, New York 17, N.Y.

It is a little surprising that this reader, who implies the importance of impartial sources of information, casts no shadow of a doubt on the claim that Tibet is a part of China. Nor is there any indication that she has read the Dalai Lama's book. True, the British at one time, for reasons of political self-interest, allowed the expression "Chinese suzerainty" to gain currency as describing the status of Tibet, but the Tibetans did not accept this definition, which resulted from a treaty following Britain's military expedition to Lhasa under the command of Sir Francis Younghusband in 1906. China invaded Tibet in 1910, and the Dalai Lama and his Government took refuge in India, where they were hospitably received. But when the disorders of their Revolution in 1911 weakened the military power of the Chinese, the Tibetans rose and drove them from Lhasa, recapturing most of their country. And, as the *Encyclopædia Britannica* puts it, when, in 1917, the Chinese attacked again, "the Tibetans pushed them back more or less to the positions which had been held since 1720."

It is certainly true, in the terms of Western politics, that the Dalai Lama is the "ruler of a feudal theocracy," but this expression does little to convey the quality of life of the Tibetan people under the government of the lamas, nor does it in any way reflect the judgment of traveler after traveler as to the influence of Buddhism on these people across many centuries. While the Gelders rejoice in their book that Tibetan children now being educated under Chinese control will "learn that they are not born rich or poor, strong or weak, because of their virtues or vices in preceding lives," they do not mention the testimony of scholars, as for example, in *Hastings Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics:* "This widespread belief in metempsychosis also influences the people in their treatment of cattle and other dumb animals. They treat these exceptionally humanely, and life is seldom wantonly taken." The same writer remarks that Buddhism has leavened the primitive Bon religion of Tibet in countless ways, lifting the Tibetan "above a life of semi-barbarism by setting before him higher hopes and aims, by giving milder meanings to his demonist mythology, by discountenancing sacrifice of animal lives, and by inculcating universal charity and tenderness to all living things." Sir Basil Gould, who was the representative of the British Government in Lhasa during the 1940's, remarked in the *Geographical Magazine* for October, 1946, that Tibet is one of the few stable societies in an unstable world. The Tibetans, he said, "have more clothes, eat more food and live in larger houses than most communities." (Famine now prevails, under the Chinese.) To readers who wish to get behind the stereotypes of political criticism, a reading of *Peaks and Lamas* (Cassell, 1939), by Marco Pallis, is recommended. In one place this writer observes:

> Intellectual honesty is one of the traits most noticeable in the better Tibetan clergy, who shine like highlights against the duller surface of kindly mediocrity which characterizes the multitude of ordinary lamas. This sincerity is evinced in their fearless facing of facts and in a readiness to expose their most cherished beliefs to criticism.
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> To show how little favour sentimental appeals enjoy—a preacher is not specially admired for the power of sweeping his audience off their feet by his eloquence; rather is praise bestowed upon the man who, speaking in even, unimpassioned tone, expounds the Doctrine without having recourse to aids which might conceivably sway his listeners for irrelevant reasons. An unsound motive is enough to vitiate the merit of embracing any truth: its value is strictly proportional to the clear understanding of the issues. A true proposition, accepted for an improper reason, is equivalent to a lie: the inquisitorial person finds himself at a loss under a Tradition where the value of outward conformity is thus discounted.
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> It is perhaps needless to harp on the fact that popular piety in Tibet, as elsewhere, does not reach these high ideals. Men in their degree of spiritual discernment, show a widely varying range of capability. Yet nothing has struck me so much, in my life among the Tibetans, as the way in which the Buddhist ideal, much diluted no doubt, still permeates the outlook of the common people with its gentle and humanizing influence, and to some extent with its metaphysical conceptions, even though these may have been heard as the faintest of echoes. Yet this has been accomplished without quelling the naturally high spirits of the race. One meets in Tibet much superstition, much fear of demons and of ill-luck, and a widespread belief in charms and magic; but all this is comparatively harmless, for it does not tempt people to cruelties. If their superstitions were of a type that led to the burning of witches or to the throwing of live kittens into the pit, it would be a much more serious matter. Some writers have alleged that real Buddhism is almost unknown in Tibet, and that superstition has entirely superseded it; I, on the contrary, was surprised to find how deeply the Doctrine had left its mark on simple, inarticulate souls.

We have no desire, here, to stir a great wrath against China for invading Tibet and assuming repressive authority over those whom they claim to be a "backward" people, nor even to deny that Tibet is in need of internal reforms. What country, "backward" or modern, is not? But it was certainly nonsense to excuse this military action on the pretext that Tibet must be liberated from the "Imperialists," when there were no more than five or six Europeans on Tibetan soil at the time. And it is equally nonsense to claim a desire to free the Tibetans from "superstition" and theocratic rule, when the Chinese were quite willing to manipulate the Panchen Lama, as a puppet symbol of Tibetan spiritual authority, for as long as they could, and then to punish him publicly when he declared his solidarity with the Dalai Lama, as happened recently. Nor can it be claimed that the Tibetan people are in favor of Chinese rule, whatever "spokesmen" are found to urge this view. The eighty thousand Tibetans who followed the Dalai Lama into exile, and the refugees who are heard from now and then, give very different testimony. How can honest reports from Tibet be obtained when the Chinese are proceeding with their usual indoctrinating techniques, in the pattern familiar to those who have read about the treatment of American P.O.W.'s in the Korean war?

It is common practice in the United States, as Louis Horowitz has pointed out, to "satanize" Communism and the possibility of co-existence with it. Nothing is to be gained by this. But by a parity of reasoning nothing is to be gained by ignoring or excusing the injustice and ideological arrogance of the Chinese in their seizure of power over Tibet. The useful comment is rather one which takes into consideration what the West can do to help all such situations. In the *Saturday Evening Post* for July 17, Arnold Toynbee makes such a comment when he points out that the West has given direction to the aggressive policies of the Chinese:

> What has led the West into defeating its own purpose in this fantastic way? We have been led into this, I believe, by a false value that is common to the Communist and the bourgeois Western attitude to life. Both these ideologies assume that force is the one thing that ultimately counts in human affairs, . . . When we Westerners first came across the traditional China, we despised her for being defenseless, and we

took advantage of this in order to bully her. Well, now we are reaping the whirlwind.

China's present militancy is the West's fault. To acknowledge one's faults is the first step toward correcting them, and if one wants to bring about a change in one's adversary's attitude, it is best to begin by changing one's attitude toward him, for this, at least, is within one's power, and a change on one's own part may perhaps produce a change on his. China's behavior is truculent, but the cause is reasonable. China is therefore likely to go on behaving truculently until the cause is removed. Fortunately, it is within our power to remove it; for the cause is the West's attitude toward China.

Our correspondent points out that we must "make sure that we know what we are dealing with in our relations with six hundred million of the population of the world." On this point we can wholeheartedly agree. And we agree also with Mr. Toynbee, who makes some practical recommendations for reconciliation with China, concluding: "America cannot afford to be impatient; she is going to have to coexist with continental China to the end of her and China's days."