

THE DIRECTION OF WESTERN SOCIETY

ONE thing you can say about all human beings is that they are, and always have been, preoccupied with questions of good and evil and right and wrong. This applies equally to philosophers, religious moralists, and atheists and freethinkers. It is certainly true of Christian advocates, from St. Augustine to Billy Graham. And it is true of skeptics and agnostics from Lucretius to Bertrand Russell. Even those who deny any truth or substance to moral ideas are unable to avoid showing an interest in the liberation of the human mind from what they regard as theological deception or metaphysical chimera. Even those inveterate haters of "bourgeois morality," the Communists, have been plainly identified as moralists of another sort, with, as Bradley might have put it, "a rival theory of first principles." Notably enough, the most hostile critics of Christian moralizing, from Baron d'Holbach to Brock Chisholm, have been filled with their own brand of moral indignation.

Before we can go on to the matters we want to examine, it is necessary to clear the air of superficial claims that in the "real" world, morality has no place; or that, on the other hand, there is room only for the "true" morality, all others being frauds or false. At stake in these claims is the authority of the source from which the morality, or view of morality being championed, issued. Partisans in this field are not really opposed to morality; they oppose a morality which can be manipulated against them by some authority. The question of whether the offending authority is earthly or supernatural is of small importance. What men object to is the manipulation. They object to it because they desire the role of manipulator for themselves, or because they want to rid mankind of any sort of manipulation. Whether the latter is possible, or how it may be possible, is another question.

So then, we may repeat that all men are preoccupied with the problems of good and evil, and now add that this preoccupation is of a sort which leads them to say decisive things about the nature of the universe in defense or support of their views. What may be more important than these philosophies, however, is the implication of the philosophizing tendency. The latter tells us something about the nature of man: Man, or his mind (it is a question whether this distinction should be made), has an ineradicable tendency to generalize from his thought about good and evil. This may be a truth prior to Aristotle's dictum that man is a political animal. So many men, so many theories of good and evil, or systems of moral equilibrium. Politics is but one application of this system-building tendency.

What is the importance of proposing the priority of moral ideas? It lies in the fact that modern man, who once pledged his life, his fortune, and his sacred honor to certain political principles, now finds that the excesses of politics have circumscribed his life, laid siege to his fortune, and diminished his honor. Politics has absorbed the issues of morality to such an extent that human beings are hard put to imagine for themselves a non-political identity that has any worth or dignity. For human values, they rush back into the arena of political argument, feeling stripped and insignificant without the words they have learned so well, and now repeat to so little effect.

What seems forgotten or ignored is that politics got its moral content from human beings. But what is this precious substance in individual man? Was not man, man, before he became political? Or if this question falls into anthropological mystery, has he not a life of his own with values which are independent of and

prior to political values—and upon which, in very fact, all political values depend?

We might start answering this question as we have already begun, arguing from the fact of the generalizing or philosophizing tendency in all human beings. Man is a wonder in the universe because he is some sort of rival to whatever creative deities exist—he is continually building universes of his own. He builds moral universes, physical universes, and psychological universes. He designs tests and applies them to his models. He invented the idea of "truth" as the ideal toward which he presses his endless series of models. Since the beginning of time, men have been declaring, hopefully, "This is *it!*"

We might continue with this argument, but there are other ways to begin. It is safer, for example, to proceed in the accustomed scientific fashion—accustomed, so far as theory about man is concerned—and turn to pathology for clues. Until very recently, the theories we have had available about man's nature have been largely deductions and generalizations from the symptoms and phenomena of mental illness. A. H. Maslow's *Toward a Philosophy of Being* is one of the few recent serious attempts to found knowledge of the human being on man in normal life and health.

Let us look briefly at the Freudian revolution. We must acknowledge first that psychoanalysis did not create the disorders to which it gave attention. They were all there, swept under the carpets of the Victorian age, before Freud discovered them and began to give them names. In any event, it was not until the rise of the psychoanalytical movement that Western man began to recognize the reality of the stream of his inner, psychic life and that there was some sort of structure which gave form to this side of his existence. The impact of these discoveries brought a new kind of self-consciousness that has slowly diffused itself throughout modern culture. At the hands of Freud, psychoanalysis began as a mechanistic account of psychological processes. He defined his theory as "a dynamic conception

which reduces mental life to the interaction of reciprocally propelling and repelling forces." The use of this theory, in psychotherapy, involves the attempt to bring into the conscious mind attitudes, feelings, memories of events and fantasies which had been thrust aside and ostensibly forgotten because they were disagreeable, or caused pain, and in deliberately replacing them, as Freud said, "with acts of judgment which might result either in the acceptance or rejection of what had formerly been repudiated." The need of the individual to make such positive decisions took the therapy out of the mechanistic frame of psychoanalytical theory and made it rationally purposive.

Since early in the century, when Freud's thinking first began to gain attention, the pursuit of a species of self-knowledge in psychoanalytical terms has grown into a widespread and immeasurably influential activity. Freud, like Hegel (although with opposite effect), has been turned on his head and modern psychotherapy now gives evidence of a strong idealistic, and even a metaphysical and mystical trend. Academic psychology is losing its sterility as a result of the constant fertilization which comes from workers in practice and in clinical research, with the result that all the sciences of man are beginning to show signs of authentic life.

However, the most interesting thing about this entire development, for our purposes, is its failure to influence politics. This was not the case with the other branches of science, which had achieved full status and acceptance during the nineteenth century. The two great revolutions of the West, the democratic revolution of the eighteenth century and the communist revolution of the twentieth (the Nazi revolution was rather a political psychotic break than a revolution), were both nurtured and brought to a climax by heralds who declared them social fulfillments of the latest scientific knowledge. The democratic revolution was related to science and confirmed its promise through the Enlightenment conception that by science man was now raised to self-reliance and

the capacity for self-government. The communist doctrine was more pretentious, asserting that Marx's account of Socialism was "scientific," authenticated by the disciplines of research and therefore a practically infallible report on the true processes of social evolution.

But the findings of psychotherapy are either post-political or apolitical. No one has been able to find any clear directives in the psychoanalytical movement, so far as political theory is concerned, although it has become well known that mental disorder is related to its socio-political environment. Years ago Harry Stack Sullivan gave brief attention to this aspect of the problem of mental health:

Some of the problems which come to the psychiatrist arise primarily from the difficulties of gifted individuals in an unsuitable milieu, and these are sometimes insoluble because of factors inhering in the contemporary social and economic organization. Moreover it is often impossible to correct personality warp in the less gifted because there is nothing attractive to offer the sufferer. Therefore the psychiatrist, primarily concerned with needless wastage of human ability, cannot but envisage a changed social order under which these problems will no longer exist.

This is simply a statement of need, not a program for change implied by therapeutic insights. Erich Fromm has been attempting to give broad definition to the kind of society that will satisfy this need, but he is properly tentative in his suggestions, proposing the sort of attitudes and relationships among people that he feels would make for a "sane society," rather than outlining constitutional reforms or a revolutionary political program.

Actually, the incapacity of anyone to make direct politics out of the new knowledge of man's nature is probably a great blessing, since politics is vulgarized morality, and the main contribution of psychotherapy, so far as "normal" man is concerned, is likely to be an enrichment of the nonpolitical values of human life.

Now what are these values, to which we have been so long getting? If we take our cue from the therapist, they are all related to *integrity*. "The therapist is concerned, generally, with the failures of the person to achieve or to maintain integrity." His task is to throw what light he can "on the conditions, the motives, and the devices associated with *self-deceptive evasion* of the world in which one has one's being." (Herbert Fingarette.)

And what is Integrity? It used to mean a conscious conformity to the prevailing set or system of moral directives of the society in which one lived, its substance being defined by the typical relationships of that society. Today, the meaning of integrity is changing. It is now becoming more of a response to *inner* directives.

Consider this proposition: When the society is sick, the inner life thrives.

Various meanings are possible. It could mean that when the fruits of political good are exhausted, men try to renew their sense of purpose at other springs. They become disengaged in the political relationship, to undertake another sort of cycle of growth. The latter is not necessarily an other-worldly concern for private good. It may be rather a more intense concern with the deepest meaning of the good, spurred by the realization that the best of all possible politics may be no more than "permissive" in relation to this quest.

We often hear that the State—which is said to be Politics' noblest creation—is intended for the service of the individual, and not the other way around. But *why*? That is the question. If we have no better than a vague and wandering answer, we shall not preserve for long a State which has this subservient character.

Again, what is Integrity? What is it today? For an answer we borrow from a statement printed in an earlier (March 20) issue of MANAS. The writer is Clark Moustakas:

Genuine development of the self requires honesty of expression, creating meanings from one's own real experiences and taking a definite position consistent with these experiences. Honesty implies a willingness to assert what one sees and a fastidious allegiance to what one perceives. Perhaps this is the only requirement of the continued existence of a real self, being true to one's own experience. Every distortion of experience creates a false self. The self requires a rigid honesty which, if denied or violated leads to painful consequences pulling the person in a direction which is less than whole, less than complete, and forcing upon the self fragments of life, the eyes of another, the heart of another, the soul of another which one does not possess and by which one can never be possessed. When this happens the person loses touch with his own real nature and his own unique experience. . . .

A better account of integrity, we think, would be hard to find. (Dr. Moustakas has much more to say and readers might appreciate his full discussion in the Fall 1962 *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*.) What may be helpful to note here is the wholly generalized form of this passage, which continues in the same way for several paragraphs. The point is that the *criterion* of integrity is subjectively supplied. If you want to know who and what you are, and what you ought to do, you apply to yourself for an answer.

There is a kind of parable here for the age in which we live. The time has come to start generating those riches which human beings carry around inside themselves—the kind of wealth which increases by being shared or given away; and the kind that only fools will attempt to measure or put a price upon. We think of the present as a time of great international emergency, when the frightening growth of science and technology has put into human hands weapons which should be available—if to anyone—only to men of absolute moral responsibility, and statesmen, whatever their qualifications, are never that. We are told, also, that we have but lately reached the condition of "affluence" in the development of our wealth and power. The economy, in short, is "mature," while we as human beings are anything but. The situation is

such that the *Nation*, by all odds the most sagacious journal of socio-political opinion published in the United States, devoted the entirety of its May 11 issue to Robert Theobald's analysis of the economic consequences of automation. His title, "Abundance—Threat or Promise," can hardly convey the force of his conclusions; but neither will these, which seem inescapable, make palatable his solution, which "will require the concept of an absolute constitutional right to an income," in a manner and for reasons not inconsistent with the provisions of the ideal state described by Edward Bellamy in *Looking Backward*.

We have no quarrel with Mr. Theobald, who probably has more vision, certainly more courage, than most of his contemporaries in the field of economic studies. But we remain puzzled, in his case, as we were in the case of Bellamy's utopia, by the miraculous uplift in human character that was accomplished by means which remain obscure. Mr. Theobald gives some attention to this problem, but it seems mostly peripheral, having to do with the won't-works and the bums. And that, indeed, will probably be the chief area of objection to his plan from the habitual True Believers in the free enterprise economy, which is presumed by them to still exist.

It is natural enough, we suppose, to propose economic solutions for economic problems. But is the problem of our society "economic"? Early in his *Nation* article, Mr. Theobald says:

Between 1950 and 1961-62, the total cost of advertising as a percentage of total consumer expenditures for all ecofacts rose from 2.9 per cent to 3.6 per cent. Arno H. Johnson of the Walter Thompson advertising agency forecasts a further increase to about 5 per cent by 1972. Do we want to be exposed to twice as much advertising as at present? How much of existing advertising is informative and how much falls in the category of the analgesic commercial whose background music must make one suspect that it is designed to bring on the headache which the product would hopefully relieve? When are we entitled to privacy from the sales pitch? Ernest van der Haag, professor of social philosophy at

New York University has recently estimated: "On a weekday, a man and his wife engaged in an average number of normal activities—reading the newspaper, traveling to the office and back, reading a magazine, listening to the radio, viewing TV—are exposed to between 1,500-2,000 general advertisements, not counting those in business and professional magazines, or direct mail." When considering this extensive exposure to advertising, it is perhaps not irrelevant that a recent survey reported in *Advertising Age* revealed that only 8 per cent of American admen considered that others in the profession were "honest."

A second method for increasing sales proposes greater expenditures on packaging. U.S. Steel's executive vice president has estimated that "Packaging-industry sales amount to almost \$20,000,000,000 a year and may reach \$30,000,000,000 within five years. . . ." Already the package, narrowly defined as pack, box, etc., often costs more than the product it encloses. For example, it is now more expensive to repack soap powder, if a change in the design of the box should be decided, than to throw it away. . . . What effects can we anticipate if all these trends are allowed to develop? It seems only too reasonable to anticipate that we would come to regard the consumer of all ages as a buying machine, whose willingness to buy would measure his value.

Aldous Huxley sketched the results of a highly technological, over-producing, forced-consumption economy in his deeply prophetic book, *Brave New World*, although he suggested that centuries would elapse before the society he described would develop. His more recent writing, particularly *Brave New World Revisited*, shows why he now fears the development of just such an *ahuman* society within a very brief period of years. There is increasingly general concern among social scientists that Huxley's prophecies may indeed come true unless there is a change in the directional drives of Western society.

Mr. Theobald is reporting the truth as he sees it, which is more than a great many people are able or willing to do. He sees it as an economist and, in the above passages, as a human being. But for the life of us we can't see how his proposal of BES (Basic Economic Security) has any hope of changing "the directional drives of Western society."

Well, what would *we* do?

If we had the power or authority (and you don't *get* authority for doing what really needs to be done, ever, because this sort of thing comes by slow growth in cultural *esprit de corps* and has nothing to do with power, and almost nothing to do with authority) we would try to install in the public schools an educational program in serious thinking such as "Children . . . and Ourselves" has described during recent weeks. We would insist that the big magazines open their pages to people like Paul Goodman, Joseph Wood Krutch, Lewis Mumford, William O. Douglas, Robert M. Hutchins, W. H. Ferry, and some other people we haven't space to list, inviting these writers to discuss what is on their minds for as long as they felt like it. This would get a proper dialogue going. We would provide a wide-open debate on the philosophy of religion and have the Humanists, the Unitarians, the Self Psychologists, and other non-sectarians set the questions and the terms of debate, in which all could participate. We would stop all advertising except for a single, alphabetized classified directory available free, with listings free, and make the experienced quality of products and services offered the sole reason for buying what is bought. We would try these things and then see what to do next. Perhaps we wouldn't need to do anything, since other people more qualified would already be doing what was needed to be done in far better ways.

REVIEW

"THE ART SPIRIT"

AN acquaintance proved friendship the other day by introducing us to the book of this title, first published in 1993 and now available as a Lippincott (Keystone) paperback. *The Art Spirit* is a compilation of the writings and "lectures" of Robert Henri, an artist whose thought embodies a rare balance of philosophy and art, of the sort previously best known—to us—through Lafcadio Hearn and Leo Tolstoy. A text chosen by the compiler, Margery Ryerson, illustrates Henri's philosophy and mood:

There are moments in our lives, there are moments in a day, when we seem to see beyond the usual. Such are the moments of our greatest happiness. Such are the moments of our greatest wisdom. If one could but recall his vision by some sort of sign. It was in this hope that the arts were invented. Signposts on the way to what may be. Sign-posts toward greater knowledge.

This is perhaps another and even simpler way of stating the central thesis of A. H. Maslow's *Toward a Psychology of Being*: There are "peak-experiences" for everyone, moments when something transcendent of ordinary circumstance is perceived by the self, within the self. But these are not—and this is crucial—"egocentric" occasions. Rather, such moments have an impersonal elevation, and may be accompanied by deep feelings of compassion. The problem, of course, is to find means to link together these moments of intuitive perception, the "peak-experiences." Henri suggests that the arts, like the great myths and profound religious precepts, afford hope of such a framing unity. Some passages in an article Henri wrote for the *Craftsman* seem both a notable "defense" of the arts and a distinguished affirmation of philosophy:

I find as I go out, from one land to another seeking "my people," that I have none of that cruel, fearful possession known as patriotism; no blind, intense devotion for an institution that has stiffened in chains of its own making. My love of mankind is individual, not national, and always I find the race

expressed in the individual. And so I am "patriotic" only about what I admire, and my devotion to humanity burns up as brightly for Europe as for America; it flares up as swiftly for Mexico if I am painting the peon there; it warms toward the bullfighter in Spain, if, in spite of its cruelty, there is that element in his art which I find beautiful; it intensifies before the Irish peasant, whose love, poetry, simplicity and humor have enriched my existence, just as completely as though each of these people were of my own country and my own hearthstone. Everywhere I see at times this beautiful expression of the dignity of life, to which I respond with a wish to preserve this beauty of humanity for my friends to enjoy.

Every nation in the world, in spite of itself, produces the occasional individual that does express in some sense this beauty, with enough freedom for natural growth. It is this element in people which is the essence of life, which springs out away from the institution, which is the reformation upon which the institution is founded, which laughs at all boundaries and in every generation is the beginning, the birth of new greatness, which holds in solution all genius, all true progress, all significant beauty.

It seems to me that this very truth accounts for the death of religions. The institutionalized religion doubts humanity, whereas truth itself rests upon faith in humanity. The minute we shut people up we are proving our distrust in them; if we believe in them we give them freedom, and through freedom they accomplish, and nothing else matters in the world.

The thought that every nation, as every person, occasionally has "openings" to the true and the beautiful, in spite of itself, is the same genus of optimism that one encounters in Maslow's psychological views. In both instances it seems inchoately implied that there is a "Higher Self" in man which breaks through in everyone, at least upon occasion. Maslow writes suggestively along these lines in a chapter titled, "Cognition of Being in the Peak-Experiences":

The peak-experience is only good and desirable, and is never experienced as evil or undesirable. The experience is intrinsically valid; the experience is perfect, complete and needs nothing else. It is sufficient to itself. It is felt as being intrinsically necessary and inevitable. It is just as good as it *should* be. It is reacted to with awe, wonder, amazement, humility and even reverence, exaltation

and piety. The word sacred is occasionally used to describe the person's reaction to it.

The philosophical implications here are tremendous. If, for the sake of argument, we accept the thesis that in peak-experience the nature of reality itself may be seen more clearly and its essence penetrated more profoundly, then this is almost the same as saying what so many philosophers and theologians have affirmed, that the whole of Being is only neutral or good and that evil or pain or threat is only a partial phenomenon, a product of not seeing the world whole and unified, and of seeing it from a self-centered point of view.

Another way of saying this is to compare it with one aspect of the concept of "god" which is contained in many religions. The gods who can contemplate and encompass the whole of Being and who therefore understand it, must see it as good just, inevitable, and must see "evil" as a product of limited or selfish vision and understanding. If we could be godlike in this sense then we, too, out of universal understanding would never blame or condemn or be disappointed or shocked.

This reviewer knows far too little about art in most of its forms to find specific æsthetic illustrations of the principles Henri proposes, and nothing of Henri, the man. But we do know, or think we know, that a good deal of what he says manages to enrich the reader's mind. We close this brief review by quoting a few more passages:

I have no sympathy with the belief that art is the restricted province of those who paint, sculpt, make music and verse. I hope we will come to an understanding that the material used is only incidental, that there is artist in every man, and that to him the possibility of development and of expression and the happiness of creation is as much a right and as much a duty to himself, as to any of those who work in the especially ticketed ways.

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The great revolution in the world which is to equalize opportunity, bring peace and freedom, must be a spiritual revolution. A new *will* must come. This *will* is a very personal thing in each one. Our education has led away from the realization that the mystery of nature is in each man.

When we are wiser we will not assume to mould ourselves, but will make our ignorance stand aside—hands off—and we will watch our own development.

We will learn from ourselves. This habit of conducting nature is a bad one.

* * *

Art appears in many forms. To some degree every human being is an artist, dependent on the quality of his growth. Art need not be intended. It comes inevitably as the tree from the root, the branch from the trunk, the blossom from the twig. None of these forget the present in looking backward or forward. They are occupied wholly with the fulfillment of their own existence. The branch does not boast of the relation it bears to its great ancestor the trunk, and does not claim attention to itself for this honor, nor does it call your attention to the magnificent red apple it is about to bear. Because it is engaged in the full play of its existence, because it is full in its own growth, its fruit is inevitable.

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I am certain that we do deal in an unconscious way with another dimension than the well-known three. It does not matter much to me now if it is the fourth dimension or what its number is, but I know that deep in us there is always a grasp of proportions which exist over and through the obvious three, and it is by this power of super-proportioning that we reach the inner meaning of things.

A piece of sculpture, a painting or the gesture of a hand may have all the simple measurements, but the artist may have so handled these as to make us apprehend quite others. The Sphinx is a demonstration of this. The great Greek and Chinese art and in fact art everywhere and at all times has to greater or less degree demonstrated this.

COMMENTARY

TWENTIETH-CENTURY DILEMMA

THE resistance of socially concerned individuals to Herbert Spencer's arguments against State control (see *Frontiers*) is rooted in the moral conviction that people who have power or acquire power (by whatever means) must not be permitted to use it to the disadvantage of others who have less or no power.

This motivation on the part of the defenders of the Welfare State seems quite obvious. Equally clear is a similar explanation of the transfer of the glamor of kingly authority to legislatures. Since parliaments, instead of monarchs, are now the makers and sustainers of the moral order, why should they not inherit "the divinity which cloth hedge a king"?

We have here, at any rate, a clear insight into the cause, if not the justification, of the righteous passion of revolutionary ideologists. They serve the paramount morality of the common good, and what shall be permitted to stand in their way? Thus the logic which empowers "the political superstition that governmental power is subject to no restraints."

The latest example of the operation of this "superstition" in human affairs is provided by Premier Khrushchev's recent speech in which he returned with vigor to an earlier Communist policy—that of the political canons of Socialist Realism. (See the *New Leader*' April 15, for Daniel Bell's critical review of this speech, with details on the various punishments and reprovals applied to the offending artists, who are named.)

For Westerners schooled in the realities of modern psychological knowledge concerning creative expression, the naivete of attempting to regulate the practice of the arts by ideological dogma is absolutely ridiculous. Yet here is a great and powerful State overtly throttling culture in the name of Culture.

Such inconsistencies are more tactfully handled in the United States. Our Petronius Arbiters are licensed by Private Enterprise and they conduct their trials and condemnations without official sanction in the pages of those great shrines of Masscult opinion—*Life* and *Time*. Blacklisting, in America, is at least more devious in its attempt to regiment the arts.

We can of course exhibit Olympian disdain by noting the ambivalence of modern man in relation to these questions, but this only obscures an all-important fact: The dilemma is *real*.

The moral conviction behind the demand for social control is valid and needs an honest response. The æsthetic (and spiritual?) conviction behind the demand for freedom in expression (and in education) is valid and needs an honest response.

Meanwhile, the loose forms of compromise between these two demands that were at least possible in a rural, non-technological society will no longer work.

At what level of socio-human relationships and values should this dilemma be argued out? Does modern knowledge have a discipline which is capable of clarifying and defining the priorities which are candidates for control in such decisions?

CHILDREN ... and Ourselves CORRESPONDENCE

EDITORS, MANAS: I am concerned as to how we can apply the Gandhian concept of nonviolence to life in this society. At the same time I am troubled that we tend to hear only Gandhi's words on nonviolence and fail to read the next line or page which says that it is only one part in a complex of things, that there can be no nonviolent society without bread-labor, decentralization, voluntary poverty and the development of the whole person. We tend to talk at others—to want to change them—forgetting that if we can significantly move toward a better way of life in our own lives and communities, that movement will speak for itself louder than all our words. In other words, if we could bring about changes in our economic and educational philosophies and practices that would make a happier more fruitful life for those involved, we would not have to sell the idea to others. It would sell itself.

In this country we have a tremendous responsibility to the rest of the world, for whether we like it or not, and whether loved or hated, as the case may be, the world at large is following our lead toward greater industrialization, urbanization and mobility with the increased impersonalization of life that these bring. We are obliged to find a way of life worth following, a way that encourages the best in man to unfold.

One area that appears to have been neglected in plans for the nonviolent society is the need for excitement, physical challenge, danger and the feeling of *camaraderie* or *esprit de corps* that these bring when experienced as a part of a group. In the past, war has provided this, as has the imminence of natural disaster in the form of storms, floods, etc., and to some degree sports such as football, boxing or mountain climbing. Those who are searching for a nonviolent life tend to move toward the elimination of all of these

(with the exception of sports that do not involve bodily contact) and put little in their place.

We are failing to meet the needs of the teenager in our society, often putting the blame for delinquency on the youth rather than looking within ourselves and our society to see what is wrong. We have to begin taking the blame. The active adolescent animal has a relatively short attention-span, and learns rapidly. We have tended to ignore this aspect of the nature of the young and have tried to fit them into our mold of what we would like them to be. We have failed—as a society—miserably. We put them behind a desk and make them stay quiet and inactive for long periods of time from very early years insisting that they learn material that is unrelated, for the most part, to their lives in any way they can see. As a result they explode when released from the pressure. We must find a way to make their lives more challenging, exciting and meaningful.

I want to learn more about these problems and how they can be approached through a school on the land with a community base. This school will take as sound advice from Gandhi that the more money involved the less development there will be. If we think of education as the right of every child in the world, we must find ways of schooling that cost little or nothing, where those who are willing to labor can have the opportunity. Otherwise we are saying that schooling is the privilege of the few. Such a school would try to provide for excitement and physical challenge through work and through living closer to the natural forces of wind and sea.

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I would like to draw together all who respond to this challenge for a week-long discussion of such a school and community during the last week in August. The land for such a venture is available on the coast of Maine at Machias and it is there that a meeting will take place. These questions, I think, serve to suggest a basic orientation for discussion of such a project:

1. Would you like to see a self-supporting secondary school—enough to work with your hands and back as well as your heart and brain to build it?
2. Do you believe that schooling should be free to all who want to learn and are willing to work for the opportunity?
3. Do you want to work for social change through the betterment of education—enough to serve without financial gain?
4. Do you feel that the adolescent is an active, not a sedentary, creature: Would you like to make his education more challenging, enjoyable and exciting while providing more opportunity for contemplation and solitude in his life?
5. Do you look upon beauty in man's life as his birthright—seeing the lack of beauty in our present lives as a sign of great danger?
6. Do you believe that feeling useful and needed are essential to sound emotional growth?
7. Do you find joy in hard physical labor?
8. Do you look with pleasure toward life in an agricultural community by the sea?
9. Are you challenged by the Gandhian concepts of nonviolence and bread-labor?
10. Do you feel that a close personal relationship with the natural world is of primary importance in the development of the individual?
11. Do you believe that every person has creative potential which should be nourished and helped to flower?
12. Do you find joy in learning and feel that students should be invited to learn and not compelled, that learning at its best stems from the request of the student not the demand of an authority?
13. Do you believe that development of skill with the hands is of primary importance to full emotional and intellectual growth?

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How well Americans will be able to adapt Gandhian ideas to the Western environment and student must remain to be seen. What seems certain, now, is that efforts to create nuclei of this sort are often immeasurably rewarding to the

participants. The specter of an ever more-mechanized education, natural result of overpopulation and the hurry-up tempo in contemporary life, looms more ominously with each passing year. Meanwhile, there are innumerable good teachers who are not teaching, many of them because they did not decide to make teaching their profession when they were young men and women. But the ironic fact, here, is that few people are able to tell whether or not they are really inclined to teaching above all else until they have passed beyond the usual degree-getting time of life.

However, in the next two decades, we are told, the shortage of formally accredited teachers will compel a relaxation of technical barriers to otherwise qualified applicants. Those who are interested in doing the sort of thing described by our correspondent, or who wish to join with such a project for "non-accredited" discussion, may have something original, as well as suitable, to offer if they later turn to instruction either in private or public schools.

FRONTIERS The Invisible Term

A BRIEF note of comment from Harry Zitzler concerning *Frontiers* for May 15 (in which a letter from Mr. Zitzler was discussed) should prove of interest to readers who are concerned with the problems and possibilities of social betterment. He writes:

The scientism and scientific setting of goals for which John Dewey argued have not worked out and probably cannot be worked out. There is no scientific or logical demonstration of the Good Life. Which means that what we need is more *human beings*, not more science, in order to meet and resolve the crisis of our time.

At least two regions of difficulty seem involved here. First is the variation in opinion as to what is, or would be, the Good Life. It was this side of the question which prompted the May 15 letter of our correspondent. Such differences in ideals or objectives always get the most attention in debate concerning desirable social change, and they are at the root of ideological conflict. Since material self-interest, intellectual egotism, and the ruthless ardors of fanaticism, as well as honest altruism and the stubborn defenses of hard common sense are all initial ingredients of partisan ideologies, one wonders if these differences can ever be resolved, or even fairly contrasted, by direct theoretical attack.

The other aspect of the problem grows out of the often unpredictable results of very nearly any major step in public policy toward social betterment or change. A useful historical illustration of the failure of legislatures to foresee the far-reaching effects of their decisions in law-making is provided by Herbert Spencer in his essay, *Man and the State* (Caxton, 1945). Discussing the results of the revolutions of the eighteenth century, Spencer shows that the English Liberal movement first busied itself with the removal of restraints upon human behavior—the restraints which had been applied to the masses for the benefit of the classes. The liberal

goal, at the outset, was simple Equality, to be obtained by eliminating laws and practices which denied equal rights to all. Then, along toward the middle of the nineteenth century (see Spencer for dates and evidence from the history of social legislation in Britain), the liberals began to attempt to *guarantee* equality by enacting a new kind of repressive or regulatory legislation. In detailing the effects of these measures, which in the instances cited were plainly disastrous, Spencer is of course making his argument against what we now call the Welfare State.

Spencer is hardly a popular social philosopher today, but it would be foolish to ignore the force of his analysis simply on the ground that, whatever he says, certain features of government regulation and control have been found to be necessary by modern society. The point to be taken from Spencer is that doing these things well and with good fruit for a would-be free people is *extremely difficult*. His general argument against state control is filled with sagacious comment:

When asserting the sacredness of property against private transgressors, we do not ask whether the benefit to a hungry man who takes bread from a baker's shop is or is not greater than the injury inflicted on the baker: we consider, not the special effects, but the general effects which arise if property is insecure. But when the State exacts further amounts from citizens, or further restrains their liberties, we consider only the direct and proximate effects. We do not see that by accumulated small infractions of them, the conditions vital to life individual and social, come to be so imperfectly fulfilled that life decays.

Yet the decay thus caused becomes manifest where the policy is pushed to an extreme. Any one who studies, in the writings of M. M. Taine and de Tocqueville, the state of things which preceded the French Revolution, will see that that tremendous catastrophe came about from so excessive a regulation of men's actions in all their details, and such an enormous drafting away of the products of their actions to maintain the regulating organization, that life was fast becoming impracticable. The empirical utilitarianism of that day, like the empirical utilitarianism of our day, differed from rational utilitarianism in this, that in each successive case it

contemplated only the effects of particular interferences on the actions of particular classes of men, and ignored the effects produced by a multiplicity of such interferences on the lives of men at large. And if we ask what then made, and what now makes, this error possible, we find it to be the political superstition that governmental power is subject to no restraints.

When that "divinity" which "cloth hedge a king" and which has left a glamour around the body inheriting his power, has died away—when it begins to be seen clearly that, in a popularly governed nation, the government is simply a committee of management; it will also be seen that this committee of management has no intrinsic authority. The inevitable conclusion will be that its authority is given by those appointing it; and has just such bounds as they choose to impose. Along with this will go the further conclusion that the laws it passes are not themselves sacred, but that whatever sacredness they have, it is entirely due to the ethical sanction—an ethical sanction which, as we find, is derivable from the laws of human life as carried on under social conditions. And there will come the corollary that when they have not this ethical sanction they have no sacredness, and may rightly be challenged.

The function of Liberalism in the past was that of putting a limit to the power of kings. The function of true Liberalism in the future will be that of putting a limit to the powers of Parliaments.

It will be easier, perhaps, for some readers to appreciate what is valid in Spencer's analysis, if we prove ourselves not unaware of his service to the special pleading of the Social Darwinists. As Richard Hofstadter remarks in *The American Political Tradition*,

If Spencer's abiding impact on American thought seems impalpable to later generations, it is perhaps only because it has been so thoroughly absorbed. His language has become a standard feature of the folklore of individualism. "You can't make the world all planned and soft," says the businessman of Middletown. "The strongest and the best survive—that's the law of nature after all—always has been and always will be."

Yet Spencer, it seems fair to say, was at least *trying* to be scientific; his book, at any rate, is founded on facts, from which he draws his critical conclusions. And while his *laissez faire* position

has turned him into little more than an arsenal for slogan-makers who couldn't care less about "ethical sanctions," an impartial study of his work lends considerable force to the claim that social science, as presently constituted, is ill-equipped to plan the Good Society. This is true of planners on either side of the line which divides the political Right from the political Left. Neither the non-planning planners of Economic Individualism nor the advocates of a further development of the services of the Welfare State, for example, have anything constructive to offer for the conditions which are portrayed by Julius Horwitz in *The Inhabitants*, a book which describes the extreme inadequacy of public welfare in behalf of New York City's large depressed population, yet shows at the same time the absolute necessity for a public effort to help these people. The obvious conclusion concerning such *abject* misery and degradation, apart from the fact that it represents long accumulated error and irresponsibility, is that the solution should not be formulated in economic terms, regardless of the "economic" measures which may be necessary to support whatever else is done. The real answer is no doubt included in a general observation made by Sartre:

. . . historical action can never be reduced to a choice between raw data. . . . it has always been characterized by the invention of new solutions on the basis of a definite situation. The historical agent is almost always the man who, in the face of a dilemma, suddenly causes a third term to appear, one which up to that time had been invisible.

"Which means that what we need is more *human beings*, not more science, in order to meet and resolve the crisis of our time."