

## HOW DIFFERENCES ARISE

THE differences of opinion among humans as to what is important in life, what they should do as individuals, and, in so-called "free societies," what the government should do, is a puzzle that has lasted for centuries. It is true enough that propagandists and salesmen have a great deal of influence in shaping opinion, and so do academic authorities and the popularizers of science, but there are also those who seem to have a natural immunity to clever persuasion and reach their conclusions with what seems genuine independence of mind. Where, one wonders, did they get this capacity for unbiased decision? How could it be spread around?

What, in other words, is the foundation for psychological independence, why is it so rare, and how can it be taught? A few educators have discussed this question, pointing out that most students seem to prefer to be told what to think instead of being obliged to think for themselves. Yet there have been those who have attempted to teach the art of independent thinking, and in addition have supplied what seemed to them the tools of such thinking, as the "first principles" with which to begin. We have in mind such teachers as the Buddha and Socrates and one or two others who lived in modern times, William James, for example. Another would be A. H. Maslow. This is not intended to suggest that they got everything right, but that their method of proceeding seemed to move those they influenced in the right direction.

Is this, one wonders, all that one human being can do for another? It certainly seems so. To try to do more might be a serious mistake—revealing either the lack of wisdom or the deep-lying egotism of the teacher.

But even the most accomplished of teachers—among them, say, Socrates—failed in many cases to get their students or hearers to adopt their method. Socrates was not sufficiently successful in Athens to prevent his countrymen from ordering his death, and there have been others who met a like fate.

What then do people start with, before they become subject to the influence of other people? It must be at once admitted that nobody really starts at scratch. We all set out, in addition to what we bring with us, with the intellectual and moral endowment of our families. We all live at a certain time in a certain place, so there is no such thing as an uninfluenced human being. Our effective environment is a collection of opinions, both good and bad no doubt, although some communities may be better than others. Yet there are individuals who rise to heights from a childhood in the slums; others who move up from narrow isolation in an uninspiring rural region, and still others who turn a rich environment's effect into a commonplace conformist existence. So we can say that in the final analysis, circumstances don't—or may not—count for much. We are what we are, whether or not we reveal it as admirable distinction.

What then are we? To the extent that the question has an answer, we may find it in biography and autobiography, coming out in some cases in extreme situations which sometimes have the power to strip us of all acquired qualities.

A good example might be Richard E. Byrd, an admiral in the U.S. Navy and an explorer of both arctic and antarctic regions. Early in 1934 Byrd set out toward the South Pole to establish an observation post for the collection of scientific data. He had planned for three to man the post, but practical considerations—equipment breakdowns for one thing—compelled him to limit the observers to one, himself. So there, in Little America, with the antarctic winter and its darkness coming on, he lodged himself and his supplies and instruments for more than four months in a little shack beneath the snow, under conditions that nearly caused his death. The typical temperature was 40° and sometimes 60° below zero. For various reasons he became seriously ill and could barely eat. Wracked by physical pain, haunted by the realization that

although his stove was poisoning him with carbon monoxide fumes, he would die in a day or two without its heat, he nevertheless was able to record in his diary the feeling which came over him:

The universe is not dead. Therefore, there is an Intelligence there, and it is all-pervading. At least one purpose, possibly the major purpose, of that Intelligence is the achievement of universal harmony. . . .

The human race, then, is not alone in the universe. Though I am cut off from human beings, I am not alone.

For untold ages man has felt an awareness of that Intelligence. Belief in it is the one point where all religions agree. It has been called by many names. Many call it God.

Even before gross misfortune overtook him, in his quiet loneliness Byrd felt the awesome rhythm of the cosmos. He wrote in his diary:

It was enough to catch that rhythm, momentarily to be myself a part of it. In that instant I could feel no doubt of man's oneness with the universe. The conviction came that that rhythm was too orderly, too harmonious, too perfect to be a product of blind chance—that, therefore, there must be purpose in the whole and that man was a part of that whole and not an accidental off-shoot. It was a feeling that transcended reason, that went to the heart of man's despair and found it groundless. The universe was a cosmos, not a chaos; man was as rightfully a part of that cosmos as were the day and night.

Later on, still alone, living increasingly a life of the mind, he set down further reflections:

The human race, my intuition tells me, is not outside the cosmic process, and is not an accident. It is as much a part of the universe as the trees, the mountains, the aurora, and the stars. My reason approves this; and the findings of science, as I see them, point in the same direction. And since man is a part of the cosmos and subject to its laws, I see no reason to doubt that these same natural laws operate in the psychological as well as in the physical sphere and that their operation is manifest in the workings of consciousness.

Therefore, it seems to me that convictions of right and wrong, being, as they are, products of that consciousness, must also be formed in accordance with these laws. I look upon the conscience as the mechanism which makes us directly aware of them and their significance and serves as a link with the

universal intelligence which gives them form and harmoniousness.

This was the realm of awareness that opened up for Richard Byrd during his adventure in the Antarctic. The extracts from his diary are taken from his book, *Alone*, published by Putnam in 1938. They represent the core of his conscious being, an attitude which may well have governed his deliberated thinking from that time on.

What can we say about such an inward vision? Readers of the books of A. H. Maslow will have no difficulty in deciding that Byrd was privileged to have what Maslow named a "peak experience," an uplifting psychological awareness that one never forgets since it comes from the roots of one's being. Maslow made this experience the ground of his psychology of health, the inspiration lying behind self-actualization, which was for him the realization of inner well-being. In one of the later chapters of *The Farther Reaches of Human Nature* (Viking, 1971), he discussed the level of consciousness "in which the whole of the cosmos is perceived and everything in it is seen in relationship with everything else, including the perceiver." He goes on:

This has been described by my subjects in such words as "I could see that I belonged in the universe and I could see where I belonged in it; I could see how important I was and yet, also how unimportant I was, so at the same time that it made me humble, it made me feel important." "I was very definitely a necessary part of the world, I was in the family, so to speak, and not outside looking in, not separate from the world, not on a cliff looking across at another cliff, but rather I was in the heart of things, I was in the family, in this very big family and belonged in it instead of being like an orphan, or an adopted child, or like somebody looking in from the outside through the window, from the outside looking into the house."

Maslow now goes on to make a crucial distinction between the levels of the peak experience—the high and the low, the innocent and the mature, the childlike and the wise. We commonly ignore this distinction and as a consequence are unable to comprehend the endless complexities of human opinion and why so many differences should exist among the ways in which people reach their conclusions, or jump to them.

There is, he says, a clear polarity which characterizes peak experiences: on the one hand, the uninhibited delight in the world felt by the innocent child, on the other, the serene wonder of the mature adult who has gone through a life exposed to all the imperfection, weakness, compromise, selfishness and criminality of the people in the world yet has preserved his recognition of the underlying unity, which is beyond good and evil, which defines the meaning beyond meaning of both the Being and the Becoming of the world. Both the child and the man have their peak experiences; both bring delight, but the one brings only ecstasy, the other acceptance and philosophic calm. Maslow comments:

The Christian fear of knowledge, as in the Garden of Eden fable in which knowledge was the cause of the downfall of Adam and Eve, has remained in Christianity ever since as a kind of anti-intellectualism, a fear of the knower, the scientist, etc., along with the feeling that faith, or piety, or simplicity, of the St. Francis of Assisi kind of innocence is somehow better than the intellectual kind of knowledge. And in some aspects of the Christian tradition there is even a feeling that these two are mutually exclusive, that is, if you know too much, you can't have a simple, innocent faith and certainly since faith is better than knowledge, it is better not to study too much or to go to school too much, or be a scientist or the like. And it is certainly true in all the "primitive" sects I know, that they are uniformly anti-intellectual and mistrust learning and knowledge as if this was something "belonging only to God and not to man."

But ignorant innocence is not the same as wise or sophisticated innocence. Furthermore, the concrete perception of the child and his ability to perceive suchness is definitely not the same as the concrete perception and the suchness perception of the self-actualizing adult. These are quite different in at least this sense. The child has not been reduced to the concrete; he hasn't even grown up to the abstract yet. He is innocent because he is ignorant. This is very, very different from the "second innocence" or the "second naïveté," as I have called it, of the wise, self-actualizing, old adult who knows the whole of the Deficiency-realm, the whole of the world, all its vices, its contentions, poverties, quarrels, and tears, and yet is able to rise above them, and to have the unitive consciousness in which he is able to see the Being realm to see the beauty of the whole cosmos, in the midst of all the vices, contentions, tears, and quarrels.

Through defects, or in defects, he is able to see perfection. This is a very different kind of thing from the childish innocence of the ignorant child. . . . This state of innocence is definitely not the same as that which is achieved by saintly men, or by sages by men who have gone through the Deficiency realm and who have worked with it and fought with it, have been made unhappy by it and yet who are fully able to transcend it.

The entire spread of human attitudes, all "idealistic" hopes as well as pessimistic doubts, can, one may think, be traced to these decisive states of subjective experience—to the kind of "wholeness" one reaches in those brief intervals known as peak experiences. Maslow elaborates:

What this amounts to is differentiating and discriminating the high nirvana from the low nirvana, union upward from union downward, the high regression from the low regression, the healthy regression from the unhealthy regression. The temptation for some religious people is to make the perception of heaven, or the perception of the Being-world a regression to childhood or to this ignorant-innocence, or else a return to the Garden of Eden before the fruit of knowledge was eaten, which is practically the same thing. It is like saying that it is only knowledge that makes you miserable. Which then implies—"Then be stupid and ignorant and you will never be miserable." "Then you will be in heaven, then you will be in the Garden of Eden, then you won't know anything about the world of tears and quarrels."

But it is a general principle that "you can't go home again," you can't really regress, the adult cannot become a child in the strict sense. You can't "undo" knowledge, you can't really become innocent again; once you have seen something, you can't undo the seeing. Knowledge is irreversible, perceiving is irreversible, knowing is irreversible; in this sense you can't go home again. You can't really regress, not even by giving up your sanity or strength altogether. You can't long for some mythological Garden of Eden, and if you are an adult you can't long for childhood because you just can't get it. The only possible alternative for the human being is to understand the possibility of going on ahead, growing older, going on to the second naïveté, to the sophisticated innocence, to the unitive consciousness, to an understanding of B-cognition so that it is possible in the midst of the Deficiency-world. Only in this way can the D-world be transcended, only by

real knowledge and only by growth, only by the fullest adulthood.

But there is another kind of peak experience—call it a depth-of-darkness experience—which Maslow notes the possibility of but does not discuss. Another psychologist—the English psychiatrist, Alan McGlashan—gives it attention in his book, *The Savage and Beautiful Country* (Houghton Mifflin, 1967). He does not use Maslow's terminology but the correspondence in meaning is quite plain. He is speaking of the peak experience:

In theological terms such an experience is a *theophany*—an intersection of Time and the Timeless. It therefore contains an aspect which belongs to the world of polarities, as well as an aspect which lies outside it.

What is the essence of this experience? To try to put it into words is manifest folly. But at least one can say it has an intense immediacy and vividness; every object holds a sudden blinding significance; "the doors of perception are cleansed and everything appears, as it is, infinite." And with it comes a feeling of complete release from the bounds of the everyday, from morality however lofty, from all human goals however spiritual. . . . Dare one say that even this must not be lifted up beyond the realm of opposites? If so, then there must be an equal and opposite pole to this state of fullness and significance and bright immediacy.

For illustration he gives Sartre's sense of intolerable "dread"—the dread of "finding oneself poised on the edge of absolute Nothingness," the polar opposite of the experience of "illumination." Two of his patients, Dr. McGlashan says, suffered this "annihilating, all-cancelling experience."

One of these cases was a Surrey cowman, an illiterate farmhand, who came to me many years ago, hesitantly, and said—"It isn't that I'm *ill*, doctor, but I get the queerest, damndest feeling sometimes, for no cause at all. Last time was in the middle of the Guildford Cattle Market. Suddenly the notion came over me that all this—the animals, the farmers and their dogs, the smells, the noise, the sunshine—was just silly, empty, made no sense. My life, and everyone's life, somehow went blank. There was no point in going on. There wasn't no point in going on. . . . It didn't seem hardly right, doctor, to feel that way, so I thought I'd pop in and see you. Mind you, it doesn't last long—in a few minutes I'm meself again. . . . I suppose it's nothing, really.

He gives something of another case history, much more obsessive and gruesome, saying that these experiences are called in psychiatry "Recurrent Depressions" and doctors treat them, not thinking about their "tremendous implications." He suggests:

By the principle of "honoring the opposites" we may regard them as valid glimpses of one aspect of Reality, not merely as distortions of a sick mind.

What would follow from this? Could it be that the state of illumination, momentarily experienced by many, lived in by the mystic, *is not an ultimate*—as it so convincingly appears to be—but one pole only of a total experience? An ultimate experience of this kind, unimaginable at our present level of awareness, would include and transcend both the state of illumination with its brilliant immediacy and overflowing significance and the annihilating abyss of the Void. Such an experience demands nothing less than an increase in the range of human consciousness. . . .

Archimedes once said that if he could reach a point completely outside the world's influences, he could construct a system of levers to move the whole earth to a new position. What is needed to lift man to a new level of consciousness is an Archimedean Point lying outside and independent of the world of which we are normally aware.

What probably happens is that each peak experience comes when, by some strange juxtaposition in our psychic nature, the experiencer reaches a point of awareness along a line which goes "out of the world," toward, by hypothesis, some ultimate stance which would enable us to know all by being all. But each of the points along the line—which, indeed, are infinite—supplies what is a complete sense of wholeness *for that point*, making the experience unforgettable and providing a foundation for our thinking, thereafter. This, at any rate, would explain in theory our countless differences of opinion.

## *REVIEW*

### POLITICS . . . AND OTHER THINGS

AMONG the books that have come in recently are two related to politics—the speeches given in the Senate by Huey P. Long, edited by Henry M. Christman (Schocken, 1985, \$14.95) and *The Liberal Mind in a Conservative Age* by Richard H. Pells (Harper & Row, 1985, paperbound, \$8.95). We don't ordinarily write much about politics in MANAS reviews, but after looking at Christman's introduction, which tells something about the kind of a man Long was, in contrast with what people said about him in the thirties—demagogue was the kindest thing they called him—it seemed well to repeat a little of what this book informs us. Huey Long was born in 1893. He campaigned for governor and was elected; then ran for the Senate and won, and was killed in 1935 "by a quiet young physician, Dr. Carl Weiss, acting alone." That is all that is said about his death, except that he made many enemies as well as devoted friends.

What did Long do for the people of Louisiana? Mr. Christman says:

In certain key respects, Long was an updated William Jennings Bryan. Indeed, it was from Bryan that Long acquired his famous slogan, "Every Man a King!" . . . Long's Bible-brandishing, country-drummer style, with intentionally bad grammar, rustic anecdotes, simplistic examples and explanations, presented in coarse, vulgar, and frequently obscene language, appalled and repelled cultured persons.

It is noteworthy that Long's speaking style was developed not through traditional education and/or conventional communications training and experience, but rather through his observation of and experience with country people as a traveling salesman. What we today would term Long's public relations "image" problem was compounded by his simultaneous roles in Louisiana as both a political insurgent and a social outsider. Long rejected Southern ante-bellum traditions and manners, either ignoring or dismissing outright the Confederate culture and heritage. And he meanwhile battled

powerful and entrenched economic special interests, led by Standard Oil.

Consequently, Long carried to Washington a reputation already smeared by his enemies, and much of the press, as a wild, ignorant, uncouth, ruthless, communistic, demented Southern redneck.

But Long was by no means ignorant. He was a lawyer with a good vocabulary, and very careful in his assemblage of facts. What, then, did he do for Louisiana?

As Governor, Long transformed Louisiana through a reform of state services unprecedented and unique in American history: A vast public works program of new highways roads, and bridges; increased appropriations for education from primary school through university, with the introduction of free textbooks for all schoolchildren, and free night schools for adults; upgraded public health care, including free hospital service; and reform of state public services across the board.

What did he do for the rest of the country? He didn't live long enough to do much, but he established a record of integrity with some very good men who became his friends. What he said commanded attention in Washington.

On April 4, 1932, Long stunned the Senate and the Washington press corps with a sensational expose, "The Doom of America's Dream," which was described at the time as the most radical, most bitter address ever delivered in the United States Senate. . .

By early 1934, Long not only had distanced himself from Roosevelt politically and personally, but moved to challenge Roosevelt with a rival program. On February 5, 1934, he specified the principles and goals of his Share Our Wealth program in his statement, "Carry Out the Command of the Lord." . . . Share Our Wealth would guarantee every American family a "homestead"—"a home, an automobile, a radio, and the ordinary conveniences"—and a basic annual income. In addition, there would be pensions for the aged, benefits for veterans, and assistance for college students. . . .

He was a consistent and faithful friend of organized labor. . . . He was a pioneering defender of both civil liberties and civil rights. Long rejected loyalty oaths for all Louisiana public employees—civil servants, teachers, and professors alike. . . . Even

more courageous was his unrelenting opposition to the Ku Klux Klan.

He held Roosevelt to his promises, expanding the scope of the New Deal and hastening its enactment. This is the record that Christman wants to be part of American history about Huey P. Long. It is good that such a book has been published. The speeches make good reading as well as confirming what the editor has said. The latter recommends a reading of Long's biography by T. Harry Williams, who documents everything that has been said.

The other "political" book—Pells' *The Liberal Mind in a Conservative Age*—is much more difficult to describe. The author focuses on the 1940s and 1950s, and even if one is old enough to have been a wide reader in those days, the number of writers named and discussed is formidable. Anyone who has read all those people could hardly have much time left to think! But actually, Mr. Pells does very well.

The best thing to do with a book like this, filled with comment and judgments, is to look up one or two people you happen to know of well through their work, which is what we did.

We looked up first Dwight Macdonald, whom we have read carefully for years. (Actually, the MANAS editors published one of Macdonald's books—*The Root Is Man*—in 1953.) Pells says just the right things:

Dwight Macdonald was temperamentally incapable of pursuing a strategy or following anyone's example. That may be why so many of his colleagues thought him "unserious," apolitical, inconsistent, and generally irritating. No doubt Macdonald was a nuisance because he continually questioned what everyone else believed. Moreover, his own positions kept changing at a time when a number of writers were again busy taking "stands." In effect, Macdonald was an eccentric subject to no ideological classification, a dissident unconcerned about influencing those in power, an agnostic who ultimately denied the claims of all political systems. Yet these were precisely the attitudes that made him not only a more interesting but also a more "radical" intellectual than most of his counterparts. .

As a result of World War II and the unremitting tensions of the Cold War, he declared, Western (no less than Soviet) society had grown so "rationalized and routinized" that it seemed a "mechanism which grinds on without human consciousness or control." . . .

The thrust of Macdonald's argument forced him ultimately to abandon politics altogether. Having lost faith in the working class as an agent of social change, no longer inspired by the theories of Marx, yet equally dubious about the glories of capitalism, hostile to every government which spoke in the name but ignored the opinions of its citizens, Macdonald fell back on the principle that the solitary individual must at least part of the time refuse to cooperate with the state, the corporations, and the military machine. "It is not the lawbreaker we must fear today," he remarked at the close of World War II with the menace of totalitarianism and the manufacture of the atom bomb obviously in mind, "so much as he who obeys the law." . . . a significant number of writers began to emulate Dwight Macdonald, losing interest in political and economic theory, and turning instead to those issues which affected the very quality of American life. That intellectuals might follow the example of Macdonald, when he had no wish to lead anyone anywhere, seemed the ultimate irony in an ironic age.

The writer of this book obviously likes to quote Macdonald, who is cited all through its some 450 pages. The other thinker we looked up is Hannah Arendt, and again Mr. Pells says, in our view, the right things. So, we feel able to say that his book is really good, if, that is, you care something about his subject. Of Hannah Arendt, who has had a great influence on recent American thought, the author says:

Arendt's experience was typical of many emigre intellectuals. Trained in philosophy under Martin Heidegger and Karl Jaspers during the springtime of the Weimar Republic, she fled Hitler's Germany in 1933, lived in Paris (where, as a social worker, she helped German Jewish children migrate to Palestine), escaped to the south of France after the Nazi occupation in 1940, and finally arrived in New York in 1941 bearing impressive academic credentials but faced with all the other formidable problems of adapting to a new language, new customs, and a new culture. . . . She became a powerful intellectual presence in the lives of Robert Lowell, Randall Jarrel, Alfred Kazin, Mary McCarthy—and when her essays

began to appear in American journals like *Partisan Review*, she grew in influence as a diagnostician of contemporary political ills.

In 1951 she published her first book in English, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*.

Majestic in its scope, astonishing in its control over a vast array of ideas and issues, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* is one of those books whose grandeur and brilliance are undiminished even when a battalion of revisionists later "prove" the author wrong. For all its historical and philosophical erudition, it is in addition a personal statement about the requirements for survival in the modern world. In most of the ways that count, Arendt's work remains the political masterpiece of the postwar era.

It does not seem needful to add anything more as the basis for speaking well of this book—the book by Mr. Pells.

## *COMMENTARY*

### **ACT OF BROTHERHOOD**

LAST month, on May 21, the first installment of shipment by air of five thousand young fruit and nut trees began its travel to Kenya in a Pan Am jet—a total of 650 trees. This gift of food-bearing trees to Africa was carried out, after much planning and the overcoming of many practical difficulties, by TreePeople, the California group headed by Andy Lipkis which has been planting trees in and around Los Angeles for some fifteen years. There will of course be other shipments to complete the gift to Kenya, and similar shipments of trees—apples, plums, pears, almonds, pomegranates, and prunes—will be delivered to Senegal, Tanzania, Cameroun, and possibly Ethiopia.

The idea for this project grew out of an activity carried on for several years in the Los Angeles area. Learning that thousands of young trees intended for sale by California nurseries were destroyed by the nurseries at the end of the bare-root season, if they had not been sold, Andy persuaded the nurseries to give the unsold trees to TreePeople, where they were pruned and carefully cared for by the staff and eventually given away to low-income families in this area—to those who gave assurance that they would be properly cared for. The trees, by that time five years old, when planted and nourished would leaf out within weeks of planting and produce fruit within one or two years.

Mention should be made of the special care and preparation of these trees for shipment to various parts of Africa. First of all, contacts were made in the designated countries with people who could be depended upon to see that they are properly planted and cared for. The shipment dates have been chosen to correspond with the planting season in the country where they will arrive. The species are appropriate to the climate and soil where they are being shipped. Before shipping they are treated to keep them in

dormancy until they reach their destination. Proper packing boxes were donated by Louisiana Pacific, and half the air freighting cost and two seats free for two TreePeople personnel who went on the plane to help with planting, were provided by PAN AM. The nurseries contributing the trees are L. E. Cook, Agrisun, and Dave Wilson.

Judging by the past performance of TreePeople in California, this project will prove an outstanding success, despite the elaborate planning required and the numerous donors and collaborators who helped to make it possible.

People talk a great deal about helping to make peace, but this project, which is a real step toward making people self-sufficient, might be about the most effective thing that individuals, joining their energies, could actually do. It may be regarded as one of the "functional means to peace" spoken of by David Mitrany years ago. What is more winning of hearts and minds than concrete acts of brotherhood, performed with no thought of reward? More and more, perhaps, we should begin to think of peace-making in this light.

TreePeople are at 12601 Mulholland Drive, Beverly Hills, Calif. 90210.

# CHILDREN

## . . . and Ourselves

### FINISHING THE SENTENCE

MOST readers assume that E. F. Schumacher's classic work, *Small Is Beautiful*, which came out in 1973 (Harper Torchbook), is a criticism of conventional economics, advocating small-scale enterprise and labor-intensive production. They are right, of course; it is exactly such a book. But it is also much more: an examination of the major institutions of our society. Fundamental to his proposal for needed change is his criticism of present-day education, to which he devotes a chapter. He regards education as our "greatest resource," but not the education we endeavor to give both the young and ourselves today. Early in this chapter he says:

If western civilization is in a state of permanent crisis, it is not far-fetched to suggest that there may be something wrong with its education. No civilization, I am sure, has ever devoted more energy and resources to organized education, and if we believe in nothing else, we certainly believe that education is, or should be, the key to everything. In fact the belief in education is so strong that we treat it as the residual legatee of all our problems. If the nuclear age brings new dangers; if the advance of genetic engineering opens the door to new abuses; if commercialism brings new temptations—the answer must be more and better education. The modern way of life is becoming ever more complex: this means that everybody must become more highly educated. "By 1984," it was said recently, "it will be desirable that the most ordinary of men is not embarrassed by the use of a logarithm table, the elementary concepts of the calculus, and by the definitions and uses of such words as electron, coulomb, and volt. He should further have become able not only to handle a pen, pencil, and ruler but also a magnetic tape, valve, and transistor. The improvement of communications between individuals and groups depend on it." Most of all, it appears, the international situation calls for prodigious educational efforts. The classical statement on this point was delivered by Sir Charles (now Lord) Snow in his "Rede Lecture" some years ago: "To say that we must educate ourselves or perish, is a little more melodramatic than the facts warrant. To say, we have to educate ourselves or watch a steep decline in our lifetime, is about right." According to

Lord Snow, the Russians are apparently doing "much better than anyone else and will 'have a clear edge,' unless and until the Americans and we educate ourselves both sensibly and imaginatively."

Lord Snow advocated more and better-trained scientists, with people at large educated sufficiently to "have a sense of what the scientists are talking about." He wants common folk to obtain an elementary grasp of what scientific "know-how" is and how it works, but, Schumacher says, this is far from enough.

Science and engineering produce "know-how"; but "know-how" is nothing by itself; it is a means without an end, a mere potentiality, an unfinished sentence. "Know-how" is no more a culture than a piano is music. Can education help us to finish the sentence, to turn the potentiality into a reality to the benefit of man?

A proud father of an ambitious son may not care a great deal about the "benefit of man," or be much concerned about the future uses of a know-how that will get the youth a well-paying job, and neither one will listen closely to what someone else says about problems being created for the future through misapplied know-how. Get the job or appointment, and let others worry about future mismanagement; anyhow, science is "neutral"; if people do foolish things with it, that will be their fault, not ours.

In short, some arguments with some people cannot be won, even by the most skilled and devoted of advocates. Socrates lost in his attempt to persuade the Athenians to interest themselves in his ideas about education, although he went on arguing to his dying breath. So with his imitators and followers, of whom Schumacher was one. He said:

There is no doubt . . . the need to transmit know-how, but this must take second place, for it is obviously somewhat foolhardy to put great powers into the hands of people without making sure that they have a reasonable idea of what to do with them. At present, there can be little doubt that the whole of mankind is in mortal danger, not because we are short of scientific and technological know-how, but because we tend to use it destructively, without wisdom. More education can help us only if it produces more wisdom.

The only real difficulty with spreading wisdom around lies in persuading people that it is worth having. This is the problem of the serious educator. One good illustration of it comes in the comment of an observer in Washington, D.C., who said: "If you think the mere prospect of the end of the world is enough to change policy in Washington and Moscow, you clearly haven't spent much time there."

As Schumacher says:

The essence of education, I suggested, is the transmission of values, but values do not help us to pick our way through life unless they have become our own, a part, so to say, of our mental make-up. This means that they are more than mere formulae or dogmatic assertions: that we think and feel with them, that they are the very instruments through which we look at, interpret, and experience the world. When we think, we do not just think: we think with ideas. Our mind is not a blank, a *tabula rasa*. When we begin to think we do so only because our mind is already filled with all sorts of ideas *with which* to think. All through our youth and adolescence, before the conscious and critical mind begins to act as a sort of censor and guardian at the threshold, ideas sleep in our mind, vast hosts and multitudes of them. These years are, one might say, our Dark Ages during which we are nothing but inheritors; it is only in later years that we can gradually learn to sort out our inheritance.

This "sorting out" is part of the process of education, although it usually comes after we have been to school. A great many of our ideas have never been examined, either critically or uncritically. They are part of our intellectual apparatus, tools we seem to be born with or acquired without noticing at an early age. People who have achieved self-education made a studied attempt to examine *all* such ideas, along with others which have been adopted—to weigh them, test them against experience, then keep or get rid of them. Schumacher understands this well, although he does not remark the rarity of the conscious critical process, as illustrated, say, by Socrates among the Greeks, by Ortega in Europe in modern times, and in America by Thoreau, John Muir, and Arthur Morgan. Schumacher goes on:

I say, therefore, that we think *with* or *through* ideas and that what we call thinking is generally the

application of pre-existing ideas to a given situation or set of facts. When we think about, say, the political situation we apply to that situation our political ideas, more or less systematically, and attempt to make that situation "intelligible" to ourselves by means of these ideas. Similarly everywhere else. Some of the ideas are of value, that is to say, we evaluate the situation in the light of our value-ideas.

The way in which we experience and interpret the world obviously depends very much indeed on the kind of ideas that fill our minds. If they are mainly small, weak, superficial, and incoherent, life will appear insipid, uninteresting, petty and chaotic. It is difficult to bear the resultant feeling of emptiness, and the vacuum of our minds may only too easily be filled by some big, fantastic notion—political or otherwise—which suddenly seems to illumine everything and to give meaning and purpose to our existence. It needs no emphasis that herein lies one of the great dangers of our time. . . . All traditional philosophy is an attempt to create an orderly system of ideas by which to live and to interpret the world.

The goal of education, in short, is to find and establish for oneself the values by which one will endeavor to live. But this means work—*real* work. It is difficult and tiring, however important. So it is that, commonly speaking, public or any sort of organized education avoids trying to teach decision concerning values instead of just "transmitting" them as what one should take for granted. By comparison, learning facts, which involves only vocabulary and memory, is easy. The examination of values requires imagination and the freedom of interchange possible in only small classes. But small classes cost money and need unusual teachers who have gone through the process of determining values for themselves. Education, then, is not a project that is likely to be successful in a mass society. Education requires vision, while the mass society can survive—for a time—on the transmission of habits, of which many may be bad. Those who are really interested in education feel the necessity to point this out.

## FRONTIERS

### On Peace Education—Two People

A READER with a watchful eye has sent us copies of recent reports on peace-making, some of which seem very good. The press is increasingly inclined to give space to efforts to spread the idea of non-violence, to explain what it means, and how much of both life and wealth would be saved if people generally began applying non-violence to the problems of the world. A writer, Michael Paskevitch, in the *Marin Independent Journal* (Calif.) for Jan. 16 gives review attention to an essay by Michael Nagler, professor of classic and comparative literature in the University of California in Berkeley, which won a place in a recent book, *How Peace Came to the World*. The heart of Nagler's theory, the writer says, is in his effort to change the "mind-set" of the people of our time by explaining the power of non-violent civilian resistance. The Marin writer says about non-violence:

It worked in 1968 when Soviet troops invaded Czechoslovakia to crush a growing liberalism. "The Soviet military postulated that the takeover would take four days. They were totally wrong. It took eight months. Some 500,000 Soviet troops were totally demoralized and had to be rotated.

What the Czechs did was a perfect example of non-violent resistance. They fraternized with the invaders but refused to obey them.

It worked remarkably well. It's sort of like a carrot and a stick," Nagler said. "The stick is non-compliance, even to the death, with the invaders' wishes. That requires the same, but no more, courage and sacrifice than military resistance. The carrot is complete fraternization with the invading troops. You're saying, We accept you as people, but not your views."

Nagler's essay looks back from the year 2010 at how the people of the world—in his dream of peace—realized that arms build-ups and saber-rattling could only end in disaster. He says:

For most people today, peace is a negative state—the absence of strife. Why do they see violence working well and not backfiring? Mainly it's the

mass media, particularly TV, that provides violence as entertainment and truth.

Public education is crucial. People have to decide not to watch *Rambo* and *The A Team*. . . .

According to Nagler, from antiquity to the present there have been 1065 arms races and all but sixteen ended in war. The U.S. has been involved in 245 military actions since World War II. Only one president, Gerald Ford, refused to threaten the use of nuclear weapons. People, Nagler said, need to come out of the fog. He told of a Tennessee woman who, confronted by an escaped convict who was armed, said: "Put that gun down, young man. We don't allow no violence around here." A chastened youth, he put down the gun. Moral authority often works when people, individuals, deal with people. That is the power of non-violence as a cultural attitude. When people are gathered into masses and told what to do, they have lost not only their moral power but their individuality as well. Nagler remarks that "If you keep a handgun in your home, you are five times more likely to hurt someone in your home. That's a statistical fact."

Another report that our reader sent in was an article by Colman McCarthy, well-known columnist, published last summer in the *Notre Dame Magazine*. He tells about a course, "The Politics of Nonviolence," that he gave at American University in Washington, D.C.—his first attempt at college teaching. Ten students took it. In the next semester, he hoped for fifteen, but nearly a hundred signed up.

Astonished, he wondered what was going on.

The peace movement, I learned, is what's going on. Despite reports about a shift to the Right among the young, colleges and universities across the country are offering courses on the philosophy and theology of pacifism, and these courses are attracting students. . . . About 35 colleges and universities now offer degree programs and about 100 more offer courses. . . .

At American University, the three-credit course I teach meets once a week for two and a half hours. I delight in the company of the students, and I'm

thrilled to share with them my life-long interest in pacifism. As a journalist, I have interviewed some of the planet's most passionate peace makers: Martin Luther King, Dorothy Day, Mother Teresa, Adolfo Perez Esquivel of Argentina, Helder Camara and Paulo Arns of Brazil. An entire course could be devoted to any of these great figures, or to Gandhi and the many other peace makers of the past. My students are amazed by the diversity of the men and women throughout history who committed their lives to the cause of peace.

Their amazement is understandable. Most schools teach the history of wars but not of resistance or alternatives to them. We saturate our children's minds with the details of violence in the lives of people like Caesar, Napoleon, Grant, Patton and Westmoreland. Seldom is heard a syllable about the heroes who advocated resistance to militarism. A 14-week course can be only a dabbling in the immense subject of pacifism.

At the end of his course, he asked his students for an evaluation of it. One said: "I wish that I had had the opportunity to have taken this course earlier; it was as if I were learning a new language." Another said: "I learned to question some old beliefs and start forming new ones. That's a hard thing to do." But not all the students are like that. Some of them argue with him, repeating familiar contentions. McCarthy gives them an "unrequired reading list"—he doesn't believe in compelled or forced learning, for him a "contradiction in terms"—but the books are good. One of them is Michael Nagler's *America Without Violence*, another is Gandhi's *All Men Are Brothers*. But McCarthy knows what peace education is up against:

Most students came into my course conditioned to accept violence. They are children of television, after all, many of them born around 1964, a year when 500 "killings" a week were committed on the tube. They were raised in a culture that tolerates hand guns, which in one recent year were used to kill more than 11,500 Americans (versus only 18 Swedes and 4 Australians). They will be required some day to support a Pentagon that currently has the bombing capacity to create the equivalent of more than a million and a half explosions the size of Hiroshima.

Against all this, college may well be too late to expect to teach people about the option and

effectiveness of non-violence. To have half a chance, the subject should be taught in the earliest grades, perhaps as a substitute for the glamorization of, say, the pioneers who went west with guns to seize the land and kill the natives who resisted.

We could also use a few more writers like Colman McCarthy, who knows how to start out making a change in the "mind-set" of a civilization. This is a big job, but we should remember that it hardly began until Gandhi began to be known and what he believed began to be thought about. The progress, in short, has been very rapid. Colman McCarthy writes for the *Washington Post*.