

THE LONGING FOR COMMUNITY

A LETTER from a MANAS reader puts in a few words much of the longing as well as the sense of defeat people feel these days. The letter reads in part:

Troubled people living in today's fragmented and alienated society have few opportunities for real intercourse. That fact is close to the heart of our dilemma.

I was greatly interested in the piece by Woody Ransom about communal living (MANAS, Dec. 21, 1966). Last summer I spent a week with my family at the American Friends Service Family Camp in the San Bernardino mountains. In that week I experienced for the first time in my life (forty-six years) an understanding of the word communal. Now that I have some understanding of it, I feel strongly that if I could with my husband and two children, incorporate an ongoing communal experience into our daily lives, this would be more valuable than any other single thing we might do. I also read with interest and sympathy Dorothy Samuel's essay, "The Creative Yea," in the last December issue of *Fellowship*. Mrs. Samuel argues that it is our task to begin to construct a humanist future now and to kind ways to "create small oases of decent living."

From what Mr. Ransom says, I cannot fathom what his group does that is communal, aside from forming a special kind of credit union. If I, hopefully with other interested persons, wish to follow this example as Mr. Ransom suggests, can we do this only by throwing some of our money into a communal pot? That worries me. I go round and round in my mind seeking a technique that could be offered for breaking down the artificiality of our lives. Can this be done in the social area? The recreational? Child care and development? I can come up with no recipe. Is there a recipe or a guidebook available as a starting point for discussion?

Our situation will not yield to lonely cerebral analysis. There must also be a touching of hands, and it is my feeling that the contact must take place here where the butterfly is pinned down. What do other MANAS readers think?

While it is true enough that the longing for communal values will not be satisfied by "lonely

cerebral analysis," the understanding of what, exactly, is longed for may just possibly be increased by discussion. What, shall we say, *are* the values experienced by this correspondent during that week in the San Bernardino mountains? They are of course in part intangible, but it seems certain that these were circumstances in which people found themselves free to do what they believed in doing, and able to do it with others of like mind. This, we might say, is community—the use of circumstances by people in which they are able to be self-fulfilled.

Two questions might be asked. One is, Why so small a sample? Why only a week, when so many people, conceivably, would be willing to work together to have this kind of life all the time? The other question is, Why did it happen at all? If such an experience is as rare as our correspondent suggests, then the special circumstances which made it possible need an explanation.

Let us look at the second question. An obvious answer is that the Quakers have been thinking about these values, more or less intensively, for several hundred years. We don't know if the Quakers have ever adopted as their principle, the Biblical saying, "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump," but it would certainly apply to a great many of the things they have accomplished. Out of their thought, the Quakers have been able to create various model institutions—work camps, family camps, international conferences, organized relief efforts, etc.—all of which have something of the quality of social organisms brought into being by deep human concern. The Quakers cannot do everything, but *they do what they can*. It hardly needs to be pointed out that the central faith of the members of the Society of Friends is in what they conceive to be a high spiritual presence in all human beings—lost and covered up in many, yet there—and it is this quiet confidence in the potentialities of that presence which sustains them through every vicissitude. Something of the entire history of Quakerism, its

vision, its struggles, and its martyrdoms, animates every Quaker undertaking. No doubt the Quakers have their problems. No doubt their work has its defects. We are not here engaged in an inventory of such matters, which is the business of the Quakers, but in noticing what they achieve in spite of all limitations—the development, from time to time, of foci of human converse and communal association where people are able to experience what our correspondent felt. The point is that this achievement did not spring, fully-armed, from the brain of George Fox. It did not result from one Great Idea or Single Inspiration. It grew from people asking themselves, over and over again, What are the most relevant concerns of human life, and how can people be helped to come together and share their longings, thought, feelings, and their efforts, in behalf of these concerns? The sum of the various commitments behind all the askings and the tentative answerings of these questions, and behind the practical activities ingeniously devised to implement those answers, is literally enormous.

Yet what an individual may experience, as a result of the care and devotion of such people, is very much like what happens when a tourist walks through a big oil refinery. He sees—or feels—only the end-result. As Dr. Schumacher put it (in *MANAS* for Feb. 15):

As we walk around in its vastness, with all its fantastic complexity, we might well ask ourselves how is it possible that the human mind has conceived such a thing. What an immensity of knowledge, thought, ingenuity, experience is here incarnated in equipment! The answer is that it did not simply spring ready-made out of the human mind—it came by a process of evolution. . . . what we actually see in this refinery is only, as I would say, the tip of the iceberg. What you do not see on your visit is far greater than what you see. . . . Least of all do you immediately become conscious of the great educational background which is the pre-condition of all, extending from primary schools to universities and specialized technical establishments. . . . The whole modern tendency is to see only the visible and to forget all the invisible things that are really the pre-conditions.

What we are trying to suggest, here, is that the human qualities which emerge in "community"—

which we so prize and want to see given fuller scope—are not virtues which simply blossom when we are left to "do things naturally." Great effort is involved in being truly human. The innumerable intangible values of the Quaker enterprise across three centuries of history are inevitably present in the Quaker family camp and give form and substance to its excellences. The achievements of the Good Community, when they occur—even fleetingly—are the result of intricate evolutionary processes.

Is there a general analysis of the human situation which will exhibit our difficulties in finding a "communal" way of life in a way that enables us to understand them better? Well, it is generally agreed that in all high cultures there has been a distinction made between what *is*—the conventional, "acceptable" way of doing things—and what *ought* to be. The tension of human striving lies between these two poles, or norms. In the old days, before science, before the concept of political revolution, before even the ancient Greeks, there was the idea of the good, wise, and free individual who had to learn how to make himself independent of convention. The dichotomy was then expressed in religious terms. Great religious teachers declared that there existed an *inner* knowledge which could liberate the individual from the bonds of conformity. In the *Bhagavad-Gita*, Krishna explains to Arjuna that a time will come, in his progress, when he "will attain to high indifference as to those doctrines which are already taught or which are yet to be taught." He won't, that is, have to rely on "doctrines" at all, but will *know*. Something like this was also indicated by Jesus to his disciples when he distinguished between the parables he taught to the multitude and the "mysteries" he revealed to his intimates.

But in Western history—since, say, Socrates, in relation to education, and since, say, Vico, in relation to political theory—we have had both religious and secular-humanist and secular-political forms of differentiation within the larger society. Not just the individual, but the group, has sought a better way of life. The history of communitarian experiments in the United States alone—leaving aside the Cathari in Italy, and the Albigenses in the South of France—is enormously instructive reading for anyone who

wonders about "action" in this direction. Probably the most important book to read is Charles Nordhoff's classic, *The Communistic Societies of the United States*, first published in 1875 and restored to print in 1961 by Hillary House Publishers, New York. Perhaps the most interesting comment on the whole cycle of intentional communities in America was one made by John Humphrey Noyes, founder of the Oneida Community, who said that a community effort could not succeed without a religious inspiration. It is certainly true that the ones formed around the assumptions of economic theory usually fell apart. The problem of the religious communities was very different; these seemed to attain their cohesive power and longevity from the rigor of sectarian belief, which could be very powerful. Actually, the communities which lasted the longest of all were those of the Shakers, who were convinced that they had brought to earth a heavenly kind of order. Celibates all, they grew in number only by conversion, after having settled in New York state in 1794. Their founder, Ann Lee, believed herself to be an incarnation of Christ and the creed of the Shakers included the faith that their Church was the "beginning of Christ's kingdom on earth." The Shaker societies spread over New England and as far west as Ohio, and there were still some Shakers alive a few years ago. The Shaker communities did not fail; they simply died out. Of the success of these and other communities, Nordhoff gave the opinion:

All the communes under consideration have as their bond of union some form of religious belief. It is asserted by some writers who theorize about communism that a commune can not exist long without some fanatical religious thought as its cementing force; while others assert with equal positiveness that it is possible to maintain a commune in which the members have diverse and diverging beliefs in religious matters. It seems to me that both these theories are wrong; but that it is true that a commune to exist harmoniously, must be composed of persons who are of one mind upon some question which to them shall appear so important as to take the place of a religion, if it is not essentially religious; though it need not be fanatically held.

There is this, however, to consider:

You look in vain for highly educated, refined, cultivated, or elegant men or women. They profess

no exalted views of humanity or destiny; they are not enthusiasts; they do not speak much of the Beautiful with a big B. They are utilitarians. Some do not even like flowers; some reject instrumental music. They build solidly, often of stone, but they care nothing for architectural effects. Art is not known among them; mere beauty and grace are undervalued, even despised. Amusements, too, they do not value; only a few communes have general libraries, and even these are of very limited extent, except perhaps the library at Oneida, which is well supplied with new books and newspapers. . . . They all live well, according to their different tastes. . . .

These are the successful communitarians of another generation, age, and ethos. Community is obviously thought of differently, today, by most of those who express themselves on the subject. For recent and contemporary thinking about community, the works of men like Henri Lasserre and Arthur E. Morgan should be consulted. In a thoughtful book telling the story of Lasserre's lifelong labors in behalf of communities all over the world, Watson Thomson (*Pioneer in Community*, Ryerson Press, Toronto, 1949) writes at some length of the qualities of the mass industrial society which tend to destroy the community spirit:

There is, for instance, the "size of unit" issue, involving as it does an interrelating of technological and human factors. Modern industrial plants tend to be too large for efficiency or for morality. Wherever face-to-face relationships between "boss" (manager or owner) and employee become impossible, demoralization—in the literal sense—ensues. And the family-size farm is too small, both for efficiency in an age of large agricultural machines and for the richest kind of social and cultural life.

Perhaps the most important comment by this author relates to what he sees as the only flaw in Lasserre. Speaking of the communities which Lasserre sought to establish, he says:

Only in one respect did these experiments, and Lasserre himself, tend to be unduly optimistic, and that was in regard to the extent to which the generality of men and women can transcend old patterns of behavior sufficiently to adjust themselves well to the radically new patterns of reaction demanded of them in a relationship of intimate and unqualified commitment to their fellows.

And this has nothing to do with any intrinsic defect in the human heart or the human head. Intimate human cooperation in industry or in communities breaks down frequently for the same reason that modern marriages so frequently fail: namely, that the dominant institutions of our society create fighting frightened, defensive-aggressive sub-human beings of us, rather than free, equal and confident men and women. A social order conducted on an opposite principle to cooperation not only brings sore pressure upon, and creates serious technical difficulties for projects which radically challenge it . . . but still more harmfully presses its unlovely signature on our very hearts, even with those of us who intellectually repudiate it.

What, then, do we conclude? That these experiments are hopeless and should not even be attempted? We think not. For to accept that is to accept the necessity of letting our finest vision die of disuse while we wait for an "inevitable" collapse in violence, disruption and misery.

No, the needful realization is, rather, that such radical experiments involve two things, neither of them easy or common. The first is a special kind of courage and the second is a scrupulous care as to technical skills and constitutional structure. . . . such a group should be psychologically knowledgeable and wise. This is perhaps not the whole story. Every successful experiment in intentional community suggests that there must be a strong, common faith and purpose. The old ways, it seems, can only be effectively dislodged from the human heart by the "expulsive power of a new affection," a high and noble affection.

It is fairly easy to illustrate the problems which Mr. Thomson is talking about. At least one agricultural community started in the San Joaquin Valley in California failed completely in a few short years partly because the members literally *did not know how to share*. The habit of buying everything they needed was too strong to be broken in the time they had to learn how to cooperate and work together. This and other defeats are described by Walter Goldschmidt in *As You Sow* (Harcourt, Brace, 1947), a book on the sad fate of the California idealists on the land. The habitual emphasis on "money" values, plus the exploitative psychology of the established economy, could not be overcome.

And, here, perhaps, we have part of the explanation for what seems to our correspondent the

extreme modesty of Woody Ransom's "special kind of credit union." When you know something of the complex problems involved in forming a cooperative group, you are likely to go slowly at first. Indeed, the editor's note which introduced this article pointed out that the undertaking was "far less ambitious" than other experiments in community. Yet even on the limited scale of the Sharing Plan, certain important values emerged, as Mr. Ransom shows.

As for a "guidebook" of the sort spoken of by our correspondent, something along these lines can probably be obtained by writing to Community Service, Yellow Springs, Ohio, founded years ago by Arthur E. Morgan. In a book which might well become a *vade mecum* for all dreamers and planners of the good community life, Dr. Morgan set down what seemed to him the essentials of the task. The book is *The Long Road* (National Home Library Foundation, 1936). In a section titled "Islands of Brotherhood"—which now recalls Mrs. Samuel's expression, "oases of decent living"—Dr. Morgan has this passage:

Keeping in mind all the dangers and difficulties involved, for many reasons it would be desirable for persons who are committed to actually achieving what I have called the universal expedients of a good social order, to begin to build their own economic and social world. If such men are to escape the constant dilution of their purposes by society at large, it is desirable that there be *islands of brotherhood* where men of like purposes can strengthen each other and can create a milieu in accordance with the universal expedients of a good life.

REVIEW

THIS CENTURY'S DISHONORS

THE study of war, as Randolph Bourne pointed out years ago, is the study of how men make their narrow, finite aims into moral absolutes, and then go blindly on in a course of mutual destruction. A recent novel about a phase of the war in Vietnam—Smith Hempstone's *A Tract of Time* (Fawcett)—illustrates this well. An American officer engaged in the "advisor" role which still prevailed in 1963 is ordered to work with the Montagnards, gain their confidence, and to persuade them that their interest lies in cooperating with the Diem government. Being a tough, competent, and committed man, the officer succeeds for a time. But the hill people ask him to obtain, as a sign of good faith, certain promises from the Vietnamese government. They want to be let alone in certain specific ways. The officer gets the promises—that is, he *thinks* he gets them. What he really gets is the promises of his superior who sent him into the hills and who knows that Diem's promises will not be kept. "Integrity," like ordnance, is for this American commander no more than a weapon in the war. You use it, just as you use everything else, and when it is used up—well, there are other weapons, and the "integrity" has bought some time. The man who pretended to make the promises to the Montagnards honestly believed that he had no choice. After all, the conduct of the war required the help of the hill tribes. And getting the help required the deception. So the blazing personal honesty of the officer who had come to love the hill tribes is used to deceive them. And then, after the betrayal is plain, he is left with his rotting conscience, like thousands of other honest soldiers made cynical by the corruption of their profession by civilian policies.

There are endless uses of this equation in modern fiction. In James Ramsay Ullman's novel, *River of the Sun* (Lippincott and Cardinal, 1951), the casting is a little different but the basic elements are the same—the drive of modern

progress is set against backward peoples and "sentimental" forms of idealism. Mr. Ullman tells his story against the luring background of unknown reaches of the headwaters of the Amazon river. A mysterious El Dorado beckons from behind a range of hills that no white man has ever reached, and of which only fleeting glimpses have been obtained by an American flyer. What treasure lies beyond the hills, in the valley of the river of the sun? Gold? Oil? It does not matter. The idea is to get there and see.

The struggle in the story is between the tough field man of a corporation which has exploitation rights to this back country of Brazil, and a half-wild tribe of Indians who have been betrayed one too many times and can no longer be dealt with except on the basis of fear. But these Indians are pretty hard to frighten, and they have the help of a European scientist who no longer *believes* in modern progress.

In a few lines Mr. Ullman sketches the character of the corporation field man:

He was a compactly built man of about forty, with a broad, flat-planed face, cropped sandy hair and a fair skin that the tropical sun was in process of baking into a hectic brick-red. His eyes were gray and cool and I liked them, but I wasn't too sure about the heavy forward-thrust chin and the thin, almost lipless line of the mouth. Everything about him gave the impression of—well—*direction*. If you were going his way, fine. If you weren't, there might be difficulties. . . . He was in fact, a charter member of that cool-eyed and steady-handed fraternity of men who get things done in the world—as positive and integrated an organism as a radar range-finder or a Diesel engine. . . . In theory—and by original profession—he was a construction engineer; in practice, a sort of non-political global trouble-shooter, whose work carried him back and forth across the earth from Minnesota to Manchuria and British Columbia to Peru. Through more than three years of the war he had been an operations officer in the Navy's Seabees, bushwhacking through jungle, coral and mud across some three thousand miles of Pacific islands. And I'll make my guess that he had done a first-class job. It took all kinds to fight a war, of course, and in my day I think I had run into most of them. But McHugh's kind were the ones who won it.

The scientist, a sophisticated European who has been missing in the back country for a year or so, turns out to be a man interested only in restoring what he can of the lost culture of the Indians. The Tupari, of whom he has become the friend, have forgotten how to make the deadly *curare* essential to their skill in hunting, and he is using his knowledge of chemistry to recover the formula. His only faithfulness is now to the Indians. This mood becomes evident as Barna, the scientist, tells how a determined Protestant missionary met his death:

"The Reverend Lassiter was a bit of what you Americans call a high-pressure salesman. He went about his work in a very businesslike fashion. The Indians, however, had apparently had somewhat the same experience once before and were not inclined to repeat it. They were really quite patient about the whole thing; I recall no less than three occasions when their chief, Pombal, asked him to leave. But the Reverend Lassiter, unfortunately, was a stubborn man. And at last the Tupari found it necessary to take direct action."

"Good God," said McHugh. "And what did *you* do?"

"I gave the poor fellow as decent a burial as I could. The Indians helped too. Ironically enough, they were better acquainted than I with the "Christian funeral ceremonial."

"Didn't you try to escape?"

"Escape? No. For one thing, there was no way to, because the Indians had also burned Mr. Lassiter's launch. Also, there was no reason to. The Indians, you see, are not hostile toward me."

"Not hostile—?"

"No—why should they have been? I wanted nothing of them. I was not interfering with their lives."

"You mean you've simply gone on living here?"

"Yes, I have gone on living here." There was another pause, and Barna, watching us, seemed again to be smiling. "Come gentlemen," he went on, "there is really no need to look so shocked. It was an unfortunate thing for Mr. Lassiter, yes; but one cannot blame the Tupari. After all, we from the civilized world are scarcely innocent of violence, would you say?"

"But—"

"But this is different? I am afraid I shall have to disagree with you. The Tupari, you see, acted neither from bloodlust nor for conquest, but simply to preserve their way of life. And that, if I recall my modern political philosophy, is the most highly respectable of motives."

McHugh's first encounter with the same Indians, a little later, strikes a similar note:

Were we rubber men? asked Pombal.

No, not rubber men.

Or God-men?

Nor God-men either.

What then? Why had we come? Today we had come only to make friends, said McHugh. And to bring gifts. Look—he reached into one of the sacks we had brought with us and pulled out a handful of knives, matches and fishhooks. The circle of Indians around us closed in tightly to see, but their chief held them back with a gesture.

"And for these gifts, senhor," he asked implacably,— "what is it that you want in return?"

"We want nothing in return."

Pombal shook his mutilated head. "I am only a poor forest Indian, perhaps, but I am not a fool. When the white man comes up the rivers, it is not for nothing."

Basically, this story, for all its high romance, thrills, and adventure, is concerned with how one man, Barna the scientist, recovered from the Western delusion of endless scientific progress, but found little to take its place as the motivating force in his life. As a highly educated man, he had participated in this delusion at an élitist level. His commitment was shaped by the humanitarian drive behind research. At the outbreak of the second world war he had been stranded in Borneo, where he was looking for oil, and while hiding from the Japanese with some Dyak tribesmen he discovered that the Dyaks prevented wounds from infecting with some organic material which looked like mud. He tried it himself again and again, and it always worked. He was overwhelmed by this discovery:

"As far as I could see, it was more effective, even in its crudest form, than all the then-known antibiotics put together. . . . I felt sure that from my precious sample it would be possible for the

laboratories to synthesize the drug and distribute it widely and cheaply. Oh, I tell you I was a possessed man in those days! A fugitive Ehrlich. A jungle Pasteur. If it was the last thing I did in my life, I had to get off that island—to reach my own people—to give what I had found to the world.

"The point I am making is that all this was not incidental to my escape. It was the essence of it. All I thought of during that long struggle across Borneo were those few ounces of crystals that I carried in a pouch against my chest. I no longer conceived of myself as an individual, but as a messenger, a torch-bearer, a part of a whole infinitely greater and more important than myself. In the best scientific sense, the best patriotic sense, the best Christian sense—I was selfless. Bear that in mind. . . . In it lies the whole meaning of what I did."

What he did—or thought he did—was to betray a comrade to the Japanese to assure his own escape. He did it not from "selfishness," but from "devotion to humanity"—for Science and Human Welfare. "And in doing it I renounced my humanity."

So, now, in the Amazon jungle, Barna was doing the little, immediate, practical things he knew how to do for the Indians, and he was refusing to help Western civilization to penetrate the jungle in order to find oil or gold. This was the only option that human integrity now left open to him. Barna was "cured."

But in the last analysis, it is not the very bright men, the scientists, but the tough, do-business characters—the men who, as Ullman says, *win* the wars—who will have to see the futility of both war and the nonsense about "progress" which makes war inevitable. And this, as Richard Gregg suggested two weeks ago, is going to take some time.

COMMENTARY

THE VISION OF AN AGE

AN obscure book, *Secret Societies and the French Revolution*, by Una Birch, published by John Lane in 1911, recounts in considerable detail the role of the eighteenth-century Masonic revival and the lodges of the Illuminati in preparing the way for the French Revolution. These groups, filled with humanitarian idealism and the ardor for learning of the Enlightenment, became the cadres of political action. As Miss Birch relates:

From the time of the inoculation of the Grand Orient of France with the German doctrines [of Adam Weishaupt] masonry, from being a simple instrument of tolerance, humanity, and fraternity, acting in a vague and general manner on the sentiments of its adherents, became a direct instrument of social transformation. . . . Nearly all the masonic and illuminist lodges shrank to their smallest esoteric dimensions in 1789, and expanded exoterically as clubs and popular societies. La Loge des Neuf Sœurs, for example, became "La Société National des Neuf Sœurs," a club admitting women. The Grand Orient ceased its direction of affairs. The old theoretical discussions within the lodges as to how the Revolution should be conducted, produced in action the widest divergences, and Jacobins, Girondins, Hébertists, Dantonists, Robespierrists, in consequence destroyed each other.

It has been the habit for so long to regard the Revolution as an undefined catastrophe that it is hardly possible to persuade men that at least some foreknowledge of its course and destination existed in the minds of the Illuminists. When Cagliostro wrote his celebrated letter from England in 1787 predicting for the French people the realisation of the schemes of the secret societies; foretelling the Revolution and the destruction of the Bastille and monarchy; the advent of a Prince Égalité, who would abolish *lettres de cachet*; the convocation of the States-General, the destruction of ecclesiasticism and the substitution of the religion of Reason; he probably wrote of the things he had heard debated in the lodges of Paris. . . . Two volumes of addresses, delivered at various lodges by eminent masons, prove how truly the situation had been gauged by Condorcet and Mirabeau. . . .

After considering presently available materials we must conclude that at the lowest estimate a co-

ordinated working basis of ideas had been established through the agency of the lodges of France; that thousands of men, unable to form a political opinion or judgment for themselves, had been awakened to a sense of their own responsibility and their own power in furthering the great movement towards a new order of affairs. . . .

The true history of the eighteenth century is the history of the aspiration of the human race. In France it was epitomized. The spiritual life of that nation, which was to lift the weight of material oppression from the shoulders of multitudes, had been cherished through dark years by the preachers of Freedom, Equality, and Brotherhood. From the Swedenborgian stronghold of Avignon, from Martinist Lyons, from Narbonne, from Munich, and many another citadel of freedom, there flashed on the grey night of feudalism, unseen but to the initiates, the watch-fires of a great hope tended by those priests of progress who, though unable to lift the veil that shrouds the destiny of man and the end of worlds, by faith were empowered to dedicate the future to the Unknown God.

Whether or not we accept this analysis in its details, it is certain that the great revolution of the eighteenth century grew out of a vast ferment of new ideas concerning the good of man, and was precipitated by circumstances which made men intolerant of any delay. What they did was shaped by their *ideas*, and these ideas had come to birth in the intellectual hot-houses of the Enlightenment.

Today, many of the daring conceptions of the Enlightenment, most of all the sacred *ternaire* of Saint-Martin—Liberty, Equality, Fraternity—are commonplaces of liberal thought. Insofar as Western political forms can supply constitutional guarantees of freedom, we have them, and if we have not been able to establish "equality" in the terms dreamed of, it is not for lack of trying.

Today, another language of revolt pervades our thought. Yet it is revolt without a specified enemy. "Troubled people living in today's fragmented and alienated society have few opportunities for real intercourse." Another sort of diagnosis is called for.

Curiously, the word "community" seems to embody the eighteenth-century vision at a higher-than-political level. And what stands in the way

of community is not so much the external conditions of life as prevailing habits of mind. Our society has its rigidities, but they are not the same as the hereditary rigidities of feudal society. They are internal rather than external. It was these inner sources of demoralization to which Henry Anderson directed attention in his article, "The War on Alienation," in the Feb. 22 issue of MANAS.

Perhaps we can say that the best possible "community" effort, today, will lie in combined efforts to understand the *meaning* of community, and that even modest attempts at "doing things together"—not just one thing, but many different things—may be the means of evolving the forms of a social life that can resist powerful disintegrating tendencies. Post-revolutionary reaction has always come in the past because men have placed their confidence in political formulas. But if we do not make formulas, we cannot be betrayed by them. This may be one of the basic meanings of community.

CHILDREN

. . . and Ourselves

THE ETHICS OF INQUIRY

[This article, on the importance of free inquiry in the university, first appeared in the Feb. 9 issue of *State Press*, campus newspaper of Arizona State University. The author, Prof. Robert Rein'l, is a member of the philosophy department.]

BY now we are fairly well-adjusted to the separation of church and state. We recognize that "Thou shalt not preach" applies to the public university. There is still a question whether "preaching" covers morality as well as religion; but it is certain that there cannot be a prohibition of all judgments of value, for then a university could not justifiably stand for anything of value.

Let us say for our present purpose that it stands for the pursuit of truth (and this could also be for religion, if there is no religion higher than truth) . Although science is suspicious of value judgments, it cannot assume that the pursuit of truth is an instance of bias. "Bias" itself is a value term and is not significant in isolation from the aims of knowing. All criticism is evaluation.

In logical criticism, for example, to point out to someone that his argument is invalid is not merely to describe the pattern of his statements, but also to suggest that he ought to produce an argument of a different form. So it seems that a university, either public or private, must be concerned with what might be called the "ethics of inquiry." But it must also consider other standards having little or no connection with its ultimate aim, the pursuit of truth. It is subject to many temptations, e.g., it is convenient for its policies to be consistent with the value judgments prevailing in the community, and it is not prudent for it to bite the hand that feeds it—the legislature, the foundation, the corporation.

But it must be admitted that the game of prudence can be played only with the utmost caution. The providers of funds and the community that sits in moral judgment may fail to grasp the basic aims of a university. The perplexities of the situation, I suggest, are due not so much to disagreement in

ideas as to failure of communication, intolerance, impatience, and lack of self-knowledge.

A striking example of these difficulties is found in the relation of this university to the clash of opinion concerning the war in Vietnam. When the war first became a lively subject on the campus, at the time of the McClenaghan - Sibley - Iyer lectures in October of 1965, the University nobly resisted the attacks on its autonomy. I say "nobly" in recognition of the great pressure the administration was under, the harassing phone calls at all hours of the day and night, for example.

The fact that the lectures occurred proved that an unpopular view could be represented without eruption of violence. There had already been spokesmen for the government position. Now both sides were represented. I should say that this was an application of the morality of inquiry. Since that time departments and campus organizations have not had any special difficulties bringing speakers of any persuasion to the campus. However, University policy as reflected in its sponsorship of public lectures has not followed suit.

General Maxwell Taylor will speak to us this week, but there is no danger of our being able to hear Senator Fulbright. A comparison of the McClenaghan-Sibley-Iyer and Taylor cases suggests that the University takes the initiative only in situations requiring its own defense.

But the problem involved in getting the war discussed from all sides is not caused by the administration or even by the faculty. It is largely the result of the hard-line scientific attitude towards value judgments, which looks on them only as sources of bias.. Consonant with this attitude what should concern the political theorist as well as the State Department practitioner is "power" and "strategy." This is in striking contrast with the popular view that we are engaged in a holy war, or at least a moral war. Yet these two views seem to work together very well.

Those who advocate the war on moral grounds, or even on the sporting ground of honor, do not hesitate to use the non-moral armor of the Machiavellian realist for their own purposes, and the

Machiavellian realist on his side knows full well how to make use of existent moral enthusiasm. No wonder the "aid and comfort to the enemy" line has such persuasive force! From the realistic position, which recognizes no intrinsic values but considers only means in relation to established ends, it seems that criticism of foreign policy cannot proceed from reason, but must be treated as a hostile force. Hence if this criticism encourages the enemy, it must be stopped by force. That criticism is not merely a force, but an essential part of the rational life is overlooked. The failure to see the inconsistency between moral (although perhaps not patriotic-moral) and realistic justifications of the war is the source of endless confusion in argument.

It has not been my intention in this statement to take a position with respect to the war. This I have done elsewhere on several occasions. I wish to confine myself to what I have called the "ethics of inquiry" and its relation to the life of a university. In taking the war as an example, I have considered an end far more specific than the vague ideal of the pursuit of truth: it is the conception of the relevance of reason to the resolution of political disagreements.

What I wish to say here is that although there is no general agreement as to the logic of resolving value questions of this nature, there are certain obvious necessary conditions for such resolutions.

First, it should be clear that we are not in the position of one trying to discover a law of physics or of psychology. We are rather trying to construct a law for social decision on the basis of a rational model. We are not looking for the sort of thing that is true, but for the sort of thing that can be made true—what the conflicting sides could recognize as a principle of action.

Second, it should be clear that in this situation we begin to recognize the relevance of the idea of justice. Any fool should be able to see that one cannot work for harmonizing conflicting interests while harboring the idea that an adjustment must be made in one's favor. There must be a willingness to sacrifice at least part of one's own position for the sake of a solution. In political terms, the ultimate principle cannot be the sovereignty of the nation but

the sovereignty of man. The principle is an expression of the endeavor to be reasonable. Reason is a respecter neither of personal nor of national bias.

The great obstacle to this endeavor is the lack of understanding of the matter in dispute as it appears to all the parties concerned. This understanding is not promoted when it is treated as an obstacle to national interests—when for example the force of patriotism is summoned in the defense of ignorance. Another obstacle is the feeling that sacrifice is only justified if some specific reward is guaranteed. But note: this would not be a sacrifice. It would be simply an exchange. I doubt that we reason because it is prudent to reason. Do we learn to walk and to talk because it is prudent? In all these cases we run uncalculated risks, and we do so without constraint, and voluntarily.

Who will be the first to be reasonable, whether individual or nation? If each waits for the other to be reasonable, one can expect no more than the paralysis of reason. These are all sobering and it seems to me, quite obvious points. The difficulty is not that we fail to recognize them, but that we fail to remember them and apply them.

I have suggested one area where the professor can find a social function as critic. There are as many areas as there are types of problems involving men. What I want to suggest is that criticism of this sort is what enables the university to participate as moral force in the life of the community. In many cases it provides services in relation to demands that are external to it. There it is other-directed. But it may also be inner-directed. So people should not say that a university has no concern with values or morality. In fact, if it stands for the pursuit of values this sort of criticism can be regarded as a duty, and it remains a duty no matter how much it is misinterpreted, no matter how much abuse is heaped upon it. In these circumstances abuse is a sign of effectiveness.

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FRONTIERS

Defender of Faith in Man

BARUCH SPINOZA is not an easy philosopher to understand. One has not only to read him very carefully, but also to try to obtain a sense of reality for the conceptual vocabulary of Spinoza's times—something that seems quite beyond the ordinary reader. One thing, however, is likely to come through: Spinoza is a master of pure intellectuality who has had few rivals throughout the entire period of Western thought. He attained to such clarity of ideas when still a very young man that one is obliged to think of him in much the same terms as we think of the young Einstein, of whom an intimate wrote:

To Einstein, the presence of the truths of the universe are so plain, it is as though his theory lies against the wall of his consciousness like a huge map, and in thought he can go to it instantly, exactly as a general does when he goes to a material map to find any desired locality.

A small book of Spinoza's letters, written during the last twenty years of his life, has just been published by the Philosophical Library (edited by Dagobert D. Runes, \$3.75). The book is titled *Baruch Spinoza—Letters to Friend and Foe*, and is made up of philosophical communications to sixteen correspondents. Some of the letters are to friends and supporters, others to petulant critics. The service these letters perform for the general reader is to introduce him to Spinoza as a human being—or rather, to show that it is indeed possible for a real human being to be almost totally engrossed with the presence in him of high intellectual intelligence and sensitive moral awareness, and to be motivated by little else than the desire to teach. Spinoza's was also an uncompromising intelligence. Perhaps the best way to get the flavor of this book is to quote a passage in which, writing to Isaac Orobio in 1671, Spinoza defends himself against an attack on the *Tractatus-Theologico-Politicus*. His critic had claimed that Spinoza, in order to avoid the

reproach of superstition, had "thrown off all religion." Replying, Spinoza says:

What this writer means by religion and what by superstition, I know not. But I would ask, whether a man throws off all religion, who maintains that God must be acknowledged as the highest good, and must, as such, be loved with a free mind? or, again, that the reward of virtue is virtue itself while the punishment of folly and weakness is folly itself? or, lastly, that every man ought to love his neighbor, and to obey the commands of supreme power? Such doctrines I have not only expressly stated, but have also demonstrated them by very solid reasoning. However, I think I see the mud wherein this person sticks. He finds nothing in virtue and the understanding in themselves to please him, but would prefer to live in accordance with his passions, if it were not for the single obstacle that he fears punishment. He abstains from evil actions, and obeys the divine commands like a slave, with unwillingness and hesitation, expecting as the reward of his bondage to be recompensed by God with gifts far more pleasing than divine love, and greater in proportion to his dislike to goodness and consequent unwillingness to practice it. Hence it comes to pass, that he believes that all, who are not restrained by this fear, lead a life of license and throw off all religion.

Earlier, in letters to his friend Henry Oldenburg, Spinoza repeated his views regarding miracles:

As regard miracles I am of opinion that the revelation of God can only be established by the wisdom of the doctrine, not by miracles, or in other words, by ignorance. . . . I make this chief distinction between religion and superstition, that the latter is founded on ignorance, the former on knowledge. . . .

I have taken miracles and ignorance as equivalent terms, because those, who endeavor to establish God's existence and the truth of religion by means of miracles, seek to prove the obscure by what is more obscure and completely unknown, thus introducing a new sort of argument, the reduction, not to the impossible, as the phrase is, but to ignorance.

Spinoza now proceeds to a philosophical interpretation of the miraculous appearances of Christ after the crucifixion, and to arguing that God's appearances to Moses require a similar reading: "God has neither right hand nor left, but

is by his essence not in a particular spot, but everywhere." He maintains that miracles should be explained by natural causes whenever possible, and—

When we cannot explain them, nor even prove their impossibility, we may well suspend our judgment about them, and establish religion, as I have said, solely by the wisdom of its doctrines. You think that the texts in John's Gospel and in Hebrews are inconsistent with what I advance, because you measure oriental phrases by the standards of European speech; though John wrote his gospel in Greek, he wrote as a Hebrew. However this may be, do you believe, when Scripture says that God manifested himself in a cloud, or that he dwelt in the tabernacle, that God actually assumed the nature of a cloud, a tabernacle, or a temple? Yet the utmost that Christ says of himself, that he is the Temple of God, because, as I said before God had specially manifested himself in Christ.

In another letter to Oldenburg, dated 1676, there is a further emphasis on the figurative character of much of the Bible:

I do not think it necessary here to remind you, that Scripture, when it says that God is angry with sinners, and that he is a Judge who takes cognizance of human actions, passes sentence on them, and judges them, is speaking humanely, and in a way adapted to the received opinion of the masses, inasmuch as its purpose is not to teach philosophy, nor to render men wise, but to make them obedient.

As though to reply to objections to the foregoing, he said in a letter to Blyenburgh:

I cannot refrain from expressing my extreme astonishment at your remarking, that if God does not punish wrong-doing (that is, as a judge does, with a punishment not intrinsically connected with the offense, for our whole difference lies in this), what reason prevents me from rushing headlong into every kind of wickedness? Assuredly he, who is only kept from vice by the fear of punishment (which I do not think of you), is in no wise acted on by love, and by no means embraces virtue. For my own part, I avoid or endeavor to avoid vice, because it is at direct variance with my proper nature and would lead me astray from the knowledge and love of God.

What becomes manifest from these letters is that Spinoza's high philosophical ideas of Deity

are possible to him as deep convictions because of his reverence for the nature and potentialities of man. It was his reliance on the human capacity to find out and to know the truth which so disturbed his orthodox contemporaries. But Spinoza would never compromise on this, and so led a lonely and persecuted life.