

## BUSINESS AS USUAL

IT was Calvin Coolidge who, in 1925, gave a commonplace view the authority of presidential utterance: "The business of America is business." Such expressions seldom raise any great outcry of dissent. Most people, whether they are small boys or corporate officials, have no objection to being identified with what they are good at, and a man doesn't have to be a tycoon to feel that he contributes to the industrial and commercial splendor of the United States. There is undoubted virtue in being productive, and little reason to begrudge the pride of accomplishment felt by many American businessmen. What needs to be questioned is whether being good at business can be taken as a substitute for general thinking about the meaning of human life. One gets the impression from talking to successful businessmen—or overhearing them talk to each other—that they think everybody else is just "playing around."

This is not a matter of setting up the business community as a target for contemptuous criticism, which is already being done by experts. It is wholly reasonable to doubt that there is greater virtue in other large segments of the population, or that some other class or group would employ its energies more wisely than those who exercise power now. Most partisan analyses of power display a certain naïveté in respect to its use, as though it would become totally free and capable of being turned to unqualified human good if placed in the hands of those with better intentions. One may suspect that actual possession of power is often a sobering reality and that it leads to long second thoughts concerning what can actually be done. Power, as Guglielmo Ferraro pointed out years ago, unless it commands the psychological acceptance of *legitimacy*, is no more than the rule of terror. This does not mean that men possessed of power have no options, but that they are

obliged to choose what they do with it according to idea-systems which have a measure of acceptance on the part of the people.

The myth of Business as the primary role of Americans has a fairly "legitimate" ancestry. The first Americans were men who came to an undeveloped continent to carve out for themselves a free and independent way of life. They found great spaces and rich raw materials, and they asked to be *let alone*. They were not let alone. Their desire to develop domestic manufacturing was interfered with by the self-interest of the manufacturers of the mother country, England. A precipitating cause of the War for Independence, the Boston Tea Party, was a gesture by businessmen who wanted to be free to trade. There was a clear commercial background to the making of the Constitution, causing Charles A. Beard to write a small classic on the subject (although, later, he felt he had oversimplified the motives which shaped this great document). As we know, a rather impressive case can be made for explaining history on the basis of economic forces, and even if businessmen are not typically ideologists, there is a certain plump complacency in the pervasive notion that if they could just be let alone, the world would be a lot better off.

This, on the whole, is the dominating idea of the business ethic—to be let alone is good, interference is evil—and it can be so identified without any intention of going on to add that businessmen want to be free to "exploit" two classes of victims—employees and consumers. People do take advantage of one another, but this tendency is not a unique peculiarity of businessmen. On the whole, the American businessman is an expert in production, and he wants to be let alone in order to produce well and as much as possible. That is what he is good at.

But the ideal of efficient production is neither an individual nor a social philosophy of life. It offers no check on itself. It is a very limiting conception of ends. It cannot deal with any order of problems which originates outside the assumptions relating to efficient production.

If the ideal of efficient production is questioned, the immediate retort is that it is a good ideal because it leads to "plenty." Everybody wants plenty. Creating plenty is a service to all. It's practically altruistic. No argument. But when John Kenneth Galbraith points out that this basic equation has actually been reversed in practice—that the problem of business, today, is not production but to make people want, not merely "plenty," but goods far in excess of their needs, in order to give the machinery of production enough to do—nobody really listens or understands what he says except people in the advertising business, and they understand because they have made what Mr. Galbraith observed a fact of modern economic history. The sick superfluity of merchandise—much of it second-rate because of planned obsolescence—is a nasty fact which is simply ignored by businessmen because they have no way of doing anything about it. It is one of those things in heaven and earth that is not dreamed of by their philosophy. Meanwhile, the proud production men sneer at the sales department for its hypocrisy and go back to running their beautiful machines. A machine exhibits basic, engineering-type honesty. A mechanic doesn't lie. He is trained in honesty and has the habit of facing natural facts. He can't con metal into behaving in a way alien to its essential nature by spending half a million dollars in the mass media.

The pity of all such facts and attitudes is that they inevitably color the entire achievement of modern industry with moral opprobrium. Since attitudes are an index to motives, and since the tone of motives is the essential element in human relations—what we feel and react to, from day to day—the corrupting atmosphere of the pretense

that "business" is the true fulfillment of life generates nausea and rejection in men of sensibility, with the result that the concrete achievements of industry become virtually invisible to serious critics. Who, for example, ever stops to think that the Tower of Babel was an extraordinary feat of engineering, despite its misdirected pretensions? Even if the height achieved had been ten times greater than it was, the structure would still be a synonym of arrogance and folly. And who will care to notice, except as he pauses for breath to go on with expressions of horror, the undoubted technical brilliance of the devices of chemical and bacteriological warfare?

A great deal of the semi-ideological, semi-moralistic confusion of the present could be swept away by an understanding of Ortega's conception of "historical gestures" and "pretexts." Take the familiar account of the development of the Protestant ethic—there is much truth in it—to the effect that if good men are men who work hard and are thrifty, it follows that good men will become wealthy: *therefore*, wealthy men are good. And if wealthy men are good, then pursuing wealth is becoming good. Here the original relative truth that hard work and thrift are virtues has been turned into a pretext for claiming that wealth is a mark of virtue, and for founding social and political canons on this idea. It takes no great imagination to recognize that the long-term effect of this pretext must be to earn contempt for any reference to hard work and thrift. But industry and thrift *are* virtues, even if limited ones, and angry polemical contentions which ignore this fact have an element of hypocrisy in them. No social system can survive without hard work and thrift.

When pretexts are substituted for genuine argument, dialogue loses its human character and becomes the manipulation of slogans and ideological flag-waving, with the result that it has meaning only for those who are used to thinking in the language of political abstractions. Ordinary

people are left to pursue their socio-ethical reflections with no more nourishment than the crumbs which fall from the table of the ideological experts, and they soon relapse into simple emotional loyalties.

Ortega gives a general analysis of the "pretext":

The man who performs an act he has learnt—speaks a foreign word, for example—carries out beneath it an act of his own, genuine; he translates the foreign term to his own language. Hence, in order to penetrate camouflage an oblique glance is required, the glance of one who is translating a text with the dictionary by his side.

There are many thousands of medium-size businessmen, and also people who work for them, who go through this process every day. They have to translate the language of the role ideologically attributed to them into the meanings which they gain from actual experience and which, for the most part, they quietly keep to themselves. A man who likes to build things say, houses—may be called upon by a representative of the national chamber of commerce. He listens patiently to all the good things the chamber is doing for him as a Businessman. There are all those bills being considered by Congress that will be harmful to His interests. More taxes threaten. The unions have to be watched. The expertise of the Washington lobbyist, repeated in a sing-song style by the field representative, gets a ritual nod from the businessman. He knows he is not supposed to let his side down. So, maybe he makes some kind of contribution to the Cause, or subscribes to a magazine. Or he gets rid of the salesman with some pretext that he does not especially believe in, but which conceals his indifference or his small heretical tendencies.

This same man, when he hears an angry attack on "business," turns away in disgust. He knows how hard it is to keep going. He fills out the forms required by the government partly because he must, and partly as an act of faith, but with the suspicion that the people who made all this paper work necessary have no real

appreciation of his problems and anxieties. *He* knows how hard he works. *He* knows what it means to meet a payroll. He also knows how some of the men working for him feel. Like him, they take some pride in what they are making. They don't regard him as an "enemy." They will often do things beyond the call of duty, without saying anything about it. (They can't let their "side" down, either, and who wants to be known as a company man?) Behind the ideological façades are all these secret but very basic human relationships of mutual trust, and even affection, which would be marred and hopelessly externalized if talked about or even acknowledged.

The big businesses are somewhat different—more like petty, socialist states which operate on statistics and management "controls"—but they undoubtedly have their corresponding existential relationships between human beings. These relationships are weakened by ideological doctrine and manipulative managerial theory, but still persist:

The general point, here, is that the ideological language of the "business" credo is filled with pretexts that get in the way of any real thinking and also distract from the obligation to do real thinking; and this disinclination to thought is reinforced by the polemical character of criticism of business in terms of other ideological abstractions which ignore the first-hand feelings businessmen have about themselves. Meanwhile, social science judgments are largely based on generalizations which convert vast numbers of human beings into *objects* so that they can be properly defined and then interpreted as "forces of history." Unfortunately, these generalizations are the easily available materials for social criticism, and they have an obvious importance. The problem implied here can be set in a more demanding way by a portion of a letter from a reader:

Most Americans have a stake in the war system. Our prosperity flows, directly or indirectly, from it. . .

. it is urgent now to put more emphasis on the fact that the war is not only illegal and immoral but that it is perpetrated and so diligently pursued because a system of exploitation is threatened. Perhaps you saw the exposé of foundation money and the amazing graph in the Opinion Section of the Los Angeles *Times* which showed the growing number of millionaires who report *no taxable income*. So far I have not seen any exposé of profits from government contracts for war matériel. The matter rarely comes up for mention even in the peace organs. It may be that since previous generations of war-objectors adhered so strongly to the notion that the causes of war are economic, this generation has leaned the other way. But now, when the casualty rates are mounting, is the time (it is very late!!) to clarify what is meant by the military-industrial complex and spell out that no man or corporation is asked to sacrifice or limit his or its profits out of patriotic devotion to the nation. In short, we live in a society which takes human sacrifice for granted but has so far found no national emergency so crucial as to require that *business* should enlist for the duration.

Now it is manifest from these comments that such generalized analysis is crucially revealing and that its findings cannot be ignored. Even if there are no current studies of the enormous profits made from the present war (such studies probably exist; critical comment in the liberal press about the excessive rewards of cost-plus arrangements in the defense industry is doubtless based on factual findings), the expression, "war profiteers," dating from both the Civil War and World War I, was grounded in relentless, muckraking, but indisputable research. And while C. Wright Mills' conception of the "power-élite" may be challenged from time to time, no reader of *Life Magazine* who remembers the proud announcement of the "American Century" can suppose that this grandiose claim was purely Mr. Luce's invention, put into print without a constituency.

But what analytical profiles of the profits reaped by weapons and munitions manufacturers leave out is the fact that these people don't think of themselves as monsters who are growing fat on the slaughter of children and other innocents. They are more like the *conquistadores*, who regarded their rewards as no more than a fitting

accompaniment to the spread of Christian civilization they were accomplishing. Add atom bombs and napalm and defoliation techniques to expansionist economic conceptions of human progress, and something very ugly emerges, but "we have always had war," and attitudes of mind which have never even been tangent to essential ideas of moral responsibility, but are based on the upward-and-onward-with-production-for-plenty credo, simply don't have doors to open to such critiques. There is no shock of self-recognition. Perhaps there ought to be, but there isn't. And this is true not only of men high in the military-industrial complex. It applies to the organizations of labor which are far more concerned with what workmen are paid for making the tools of death and destruction than with what is being made.

We do not, in short, have a "class" problem in relation to the horror of war and to the general acceptance of an economy which is luxuriating in a sensate, self-indulgent "prosperity," but a problem of basic human attitudes. It is a question of the system of values to which men's minds naturally gravitate when they try to think about what is "good." If issues such as the tragedy of war, the way men make their living, and the material ends to which they are so largely devoted are matters that come up only in the context of angry charges, what, exactly, can be expected in response? Everyday habit will rule, and this, even in the face of the profile of the anti-social and unspeakably cruel results of collective action, will produce either resentful or self-pitying reactions. One is reminded of an extreme form of this dilemma, illustrated by an anecdote quoted from *PM* by Hannah Arendt in her article on the Nazis, "Organized Guilt and Universal Responsibility," printed in the *Jewish Frontier* for January, 1945. An American newspaper correspondent is interviewing a "death camp" official who had fallen into the hands of the Russians:

*Question:* Did you kill people in the camp?

*Answer:* Yes.

Q. Did you poison them with gas? A. Yes.

Q. Did you bury them alive? A. It sometimes happened.

Q. Did you personally help to kill people. A. Absolutely not. I was only paymaster in the camp.

Q. What did you think of what was going on? A. It was bad at first, but we got used to it.

Q. Do you know the Russians will hang you? A. (bursting into tears) Why should they? What have I done?

We are not attempting to measure "guilt" here, but to take cognizance of typical human reactions to charges of guilt. The problem is not so much guilt as the capacity to recognize it. It is a problem of the impoverishment of thought. In the case of the death camps, the crime was monstrous, the guilt obvious. However, although Robert Jackson, the former Supreme Court Justice who was the chief prosecutor at Nuremberg, said that "we are not prepared to lay down a rule of criminal conduct against others which we would not be willing to have invoked against us," American judges presiding over the trials of present-day conscientious objectors to the Vietnam war find the Nuremberg defense "irrelevant." Fortunately, the higher courts may think otherwise, but to set aside presumptions of self-righteousness is a capacity usually limited to highly disciplined minds. The basic consideration involved here was put clearly by Dwight Macdonald years ago, in his essay, "The Responsibility of Peoples":

It is a terrible fact, but it is a fact, that few people have the imagination or the sensitivity to get very excited about actions which they don't participate in themselves (and hence about which they feel no personal responsibility). The scale and complexity of modern governmental organization, and the concentration of political power at the top, are such that the vast majority of the people are excluded from this participation. How many votes did Roosevelt's refugee policy cost him? What political damage was done by the Churchill-Labor government by its treatment of India, or by last year's Bombay famine? What percentage of the American electorate is deeply concerned about the mass starvation of the Italians under the Allied occupation? As the French say, to ask such questions is to answer them.

Proving peoples' guilt is comparatively easy. Getting them into a frame of mind in which they are likely to act constructively is more difficult. For example, the first thoroughgoing attempt to persuade the business community to recognize that a nation's economic welfare is not improved by war was made by Norman Angell before the first world war, with publication of his excellent book, *The Great Illusion*. There have been numerous such books since, the most recent being *The Abolition of War* by Walter Millis and James Real, which is filled with absolutely indisputable facts. Actually, intelligent businessmen know perfectly well that war is a long-term disaster for commerce and industry. The business community often opposes war prudentially, as was at first the case in the Spanish-American war. The isolationist antipathy to World War II; typified by the America First Committee, was largely supported by businessmen. Their arguments, being derived from a "business" ideology, were eventually judged narrowly selfish. But deep moral conviction is not a natural factor in the commercial and industrial frame of reference, so that, then and now, once war seems inevitable—the politicians having had "their way"—most businessmen are content to do their "duty," which includes making money out of the war. And they certainly don't feel "guilty" about it. Charles E. Wilson, who ran the War Production Board during World War II, was perhaps the most eminent of the American industrialists of his time, and when his admirers—who were legion among businessmen—spoke of him and his tough efficiencies, their tone of voice and facial expression were almost reverential. *He* was showing the stuff a real businessman is made of, and serving his country, too.

If you call these people bad names they'll just go deaf on you, and so will all the people eager to be dependent on them for livelihood and jobs. Maybe they *ought to* listen, but doing what one ought to do, and thinking according to criteria which in many cases have never even been *heard* of, is not exactly a lifelong habit of American

businessmen, or any other large segment of the population.

This sort of problem is not new. Nearly two thousand years ago, when the highly cultivated Chinese initiated wars in Mongolia to protect their frontiers from the Huns, they caused the Asiatic migrations which produced vast disorders in Europe. Some twenty-seven Eastern "barbarian invasions" of the Roman empire, as Frederick J. Teggart points out in *Rome and China*, resulted when "the Chinese made war on the Hsiung-nu," and these wars, he says, "were in pursuit of what were conceived to be important national aims." The Chinese statesmen involved "were entirely unaware of the consequences which this policy entailed." He adds:

The wars of the Chinese, indeed, were initiated only after lengthy discussions at the imperial court by ministers who were well versed in Chinese history, and who reasoned from historical experience no less than from moral principles and from expediency. But the Chinese emperors and their advisors were unconscious of the fact that their decisions were the prelude to conflicts and devastations in regions of which they had never heard.

The Chinese decision-makers were isolated by geography and lack of communications, and by their certainty that they were the only civilized people in the world. Today, another kind of isolation prevails—the moral isolation of ideological self-righteousness and that created by the deeply rooted tradition that economic progress, being the first law of life, need not take account of ethical issues except peripherally and in terms consistent with the competitive principle of the survival of the fittest.

Putting an end to war, in short, requires a vast process of general re-education. Listing its crimes and inhumanities and corruptions is a necessary beginning, but it is only the beginning. How do you get men who do not think of themselves as doing "evil" to consider without prejudice the effects of their actions? How do you get them to *care*?

## *REVIEW*

### JOURNEY TO THE EAST

VARIOUS things might be said of *A Psychiatrist Discovers India* (Oswald Wolff, London), by the Swiss psychiatrist, Medard Boss, who was brought into contact with the Eastern philosophical tradition in 1956 through an invitation to lecture on psychotherapy at the University of Lucknow. Dr. Boss learned, for example, that emotional disturbance is the same the world over—not a psychological ill that he discovered in India, not "one single human problem, one single impulse and mode of behavior," nor any psychotic syndrome, he said, "was alien to me and which I could not have encountered in my psychiatric-psychoanalytic experiences with people in the West." Or, a reviewer might report on the extraordinary impact of Upanishadic and Buddhist thought on this perceptive psychologist, who recognized with small difficulty the importance of the Eastern concept of the Self for not only essential philosophy but also for the healing art he practiced and taught. But it is more valuable, it seems to us, to take note, not of the fact that this Westerner learned from "the East"—which is obvious—but of how a man born in the West, and saturated with the Western conceptual tradition, found himself in no long time *at home* with the profoundly subtle and at the same time liberating conceptions of Eastern philosophical religion. His triumph over the East/West dichotomy was as decisive as his freedom from the subject/object dichotomy of Western academic psychology, although the latter achievement had been longer in the making.

Of incidental interest is the author's attitude toward India. He saw—indeed, sought out—the agony of India's unspeakably impoverished millions, and he became aware of all the discouraging prospects which make it so easy to deprecate the Indian government and to point somberly to its overwhelming responsibilities and tasks. Yet because of his direct encounter with the human spirit behind all these adverse

circumstances, he read the evidence differently. He says early in his book:

The visitor is carried away by the courageous faith of the Indians in their future and by their conviction that India again has a major role to play in the history of mankind, just as once before, two or three millennia ago, when it led the world and decisively moulded the entire culture of the East, of Malaya, Thailand; China, Japan and Indonesia. So obvious and overwhelming are the forces behind the modern revival of India that our still widely cherished belief in the West as the hub of the world suddenly struck me as the most arrant and narrow-minded provincialism.

Of course, the awakening of India is painful and abrupt, an awakening from the coma of centuries of alien rule and from crippling poverty into a highly differentiated and technologically oriented age.

Dr. Boss became sensitive to the cultural ambivalence of the Westernized Indian. For example, a professor of psychology in a leading university told him flatly that the "spirituality" of the Indians was a British invention intended to flatter and make British economic exploitation more palatable. Indians, the psychologist asserted, must now get on with both the industrial and the atomic revolution, and enjoy the motor cars, bathtubs, and other "material amenities" which advanced technology provides. Yet a few days later, this same psychologist, growing serious, said to Dr. Ross:

Never forget that all really important Indian thought always came from a conviction that man is by his very essence a divine-spiritual being. The West, on the contrary, beginning with Aristotle, has conceived of man as primarily an *animal rationale*—an animal endowed with reason—and has stressed the animal aspect for so long that finally, with Freud, the *ratio*—the Reason—became the mere sublimated product of the instinctual animal drives. At the most, in Western religious theories, there was still left to man a tiny spark of soul as a really spiritual and godlike substance; this substance by its nature was potentially in communion with God. But, if man is not by his *entire* nature a spiritual-divine being, but is fundamentally distinguished from the divine in quality, there cannot be any relationship at all between God and man. Nor can there be any relationship between the tiny godlike spark of the

human soul and all the rest of the human sphere. How should an authentic relationship, or even any real contact, be possible between entities that are radically divorced one from the other in their fundamental quality and constitution?

Over and over again, Dr. Boss was exposed to arguments of this order, many of them showing complete awareness of all the nuances and subtleties of both Western philosophical speculation and psychological theory and research. It was the perfect command of Western thought, joined with the immediacy of ideas grounded in disciplined introspection, that won Dr. Boss. Yet for all this conquest, he never loses his own intellectual balance. He is never persuaded of anything that he does not realize, in some way, entirely by himself. It would be difficult to find more convincing evidence of the philosophical potentialities of a grounding in psychotherapy than the earnest search and intellectual integrity shown by Dr. Boss throughout these adventures of the human spirit.

By the Indian doctrine that all life is related, all rooted in "the *one* divine-spiritual Ground," Dr. Boss was driven to a comparison:

The Christian Bible also speaks of the body as the temple of the soul, and it is expressly stated in the Epistle to the Romans: "I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus that there is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean." Nevertheless, the official Christian morality of the West ordinarily stamps man's bodily sensual nature as mainly guilt-laden, sinful or diabolical. Therefore, in many Western, and very Christian cities, bull fights have become such very exuberant festivities, in which the toreros, under the patronage of a holy and gorgeous Madonna, are supposed, as the honored heroes of the people, to triumph over the brute nature of the animal and to lay it low. By contrast, for the Indian god Shiva, the bull Nandi is the bearer, the helpful and beloved servant and comrade; and for Indians the mere account of a bull fight seems too horrible and disgusting for them to believe in its reality. According to the central tradition in Indian thought, the only real sin is the neglect, condemnation and destruction of any part of the living phenomenal world.

An interesting light on the "cow" issue comes from the following:

I once heard a portly Indian, with nicotine-stained, beringed fingers, brandishing a big imported cigar and cursing from the window of his limousine. How could efficiency ever be expected from a country that would not even have done with this stupid cow business, he complained. The pious man with me, a Sanyasin, said: "Poor man, he doesn't even realize that the forms and ways of 'efficiency' are quite different, depending on what is being aimed at. For the majority of Indians, inner spiritual release is still the highest goal. For this purpose is it not more efficacious to preserve and revere symbols of the basic form from which we have all come—and this is what the cows symbolize—than to get to the stock exchange five minutes earlier?"

Dr. Boss is not, however, one to urge Westerners to rush off to India for "spiritual enlightenment." During his visit he met eight European and American people who had done this, and were living in "retreats." He says: "With one exception, however, they had remained in the depths of their hearts self-willed, envious and intolerant Occidentals." Further: "They had merely inflated their very limited egos with Indian formulas of wisdom instead of with large bank accounts of other means to power." Finally: "Clear evidence of this was their ungenerous contempt for Western culture and for Christian beliefs. The human magnanimity of their Indian teachers did not appear to have left any traces on them as yet."

There are many things of value in this book. The most valuable thing of all is the perceptive wondering and sure educational and therapeutic wisdom of the author.



## COMMENTARY

### CAN STATISTICS BLASPHEME?

FROM *Time* for May 26 we learn that we overlooked another magazine account of the child war-victims in South Vietnam—that published in *Ramparts*. (See *Frontiers*.) *Time* reports that as the result of the *Ramparts* story, an American Committee of Responsibility to Save War-Burned and War-Injured Vietnamese Children was formed which sent a three-doctor mission to Vietnam to find "warinjured children suitable for medical treatment in the U.S."

*Time's* principal interest seems to be to achieve a more "accurate" count of the victims, said by *Ramparts* to total a million children. The three doctors visited thirty-seven South Vietnamese hospitals, but in the end relied on Ministry of Health figures, which showed "30,000 child casualties a year at current rates, and perhaps 150,000 since the war began." A photograph of a children's hospital ward is captioned: "Perhaps 150,000 but certainly not 1,000,000." The rest of the story, while saying that "civilian hospitals are piteously inadequate and understaffed," conveys the impression that the number of napalm victims has been vastly exaggerated. The team of doctors, for example, saw hundreds of cases of war casualties, but only thirty-eight of these suffered from war burns, of whom only thirteen were children. It is added, however, that most severely burned victims die before reaching a hospital.

But this is not really a subject for scrupulous statistical analysis. Let us hope that the burned children are fewer than some people claim. For if you prove that the number of children thus far harmed in the war is only 150,000, what indeed have you proved? Is there "perhaps" a *permissible* number of such victims? What sort of people would go about counting beds to support an argument like that?

*Time* would do well to devote one of its sophisticated essays on the times to the chapter,

"Pro and Contra," in *The Brothers Karamazov*, in which Ivan asks his brother how "justice" can ever take the life of *any* child:

"Listen! I took the case of children only to make my case clearer. Of the other tears of humanity with which the earth is soaked from its crust to its centre, I will say nothing. I have narrowed my subject on purpose. . . . If all must suffer to pay for the "eternal harmony, what have children to do with it, please? It's beyond all comprehension why they should suffer, and why they should pay for the harmony. . . . I understand solidarity in sin among men. I understand solidarity in retribution, too; but there can be no such solidarity with children. And if it is really true that they must share responsibility for all their fathers' crimes, such a truth is not of this world and is beyond my comprehension. Some jester will say, perhaps, that the child would have grown up and sinned, but you see he didn't grow up, he was torn to pieces. . . . Oh, Alyosha, I am not blaspheming! . . ."

## CHILDREN ... and Ourselves

### THE UNIVERSITY SCENE

IN the *Saturday Review* for May 27, Norman Cousins has a report on the University of Alabama which ought to be echoed here. This is the university where, it may be remembered, ten years ago Autherine Lucy attempted against the opposition of white students and even faculty members to realize her right to an education at a public university. Mr. Cousins writes:

Today, more than 300 Negro students are enrolled at the University of Alabama and more are being trained and recruited under a program set up by President Frank A. Rose, who came to the university in 1958. (Already, Negro enrollment at the U. of A. is greater than that of many Northern universities, Columbia and Harvard included.) What is even more significant, perhaps, is that thirty-five university students are currently participating in the tutorial program for helping Negroes to upgrade their high school studies. U. of A. students were also among the nation's first to apply for a federal grant to participate, along with other community agencies, in "Headstart" centers in the Tuscaloosa area.

When students demonstrate or sign petitions, at the University of Alabama, it is usually to show support for the administration policies, instead of opposition to them. When Lurline Wallace, the state Governor, sought more jurisdiction over the Alabama public schools, President Rose refused his support, and when the state legislature tried to pass a law to control choice of out-of-state speakers coming to Alabama, student leaders and faculty backed Dr. Rose's opposition to the measure.

When Alabama legislators objected to political material appearing in student publications, arguing that state funds were being used to spread "alien doctrines," Dr. Rose defended the right of the students to publish freely without censorship. He reminded the critics of the common complaint that individualism is declining in the United States and pointed out the contradiction between praising individualism on the one hand and attempting to suppress it on the other. When this argument did not convince, the students rallied in such strong support

of the president that the demonstration of strength, which had backing from other quarters in the state, including even the business community, settled the issue in favor of freedom. Of Dr. Rose's "quiet style" and effectiveness, Mr. Cousins writes:

He enlarges the area of common sense just in the act of appealing to it. He gives strong support to educators and community leaders who recognize the need to pursue constructive policies in the field of race relations. In Tuscaloosa, where the influence of the university is naturally strong, public school integration is now virtually complete. A year ago state officials sought to block integration in Tuscaloosa but failed. Despite all the thundering predictions, Tuscaloosa has been singularly free of chaos and calamity.

The problems of the university in the United States are discussed from another point of view by Nathan Glazer in the *Spring American Scholar*. The issues to which he gives attention are made clear by the following:

In America, our universities have a very distinctive form: they are run by trustees, public and private, not by faculty, and not by students. And we have a long history of interference by trustees in the running of the university—private trustees and public trustees. Certain ideas—arguments in favor of socialism or communism, arguments in favor of full racial equality, criticisms of the American economic system and its capacity to create the best society, criticisms of America's foreign policy and participation in war—are capable of arousing violent and emotional reactions. These reactions are one of the permanent dangers of a democratic system. They lead the powerful to interfere in the teaching function of the university; and they lead the people to interfere, too, through their legislators. If the people were in a position to act directly on their feelings all of the time, democracy, we know from various studies, would be in very bad shape.

Essentially, Mr. Glazer's article is an attempt to evaluate the circumstances in which it may be broadly "right" to expose higher education to such "violent and emotional reactions." His own view is indicated toward the end:

I do not think the university in a democratic society ideally should be a chief target of political forces, seeking to find recruits and activists, to seize the political leadership of students, and to use student

organizations and the university name as a weapon in political combat. I can envisage situations when such an all-out use of all available resources in society for a political struggle to prevent some great evil is necessary, and I appreciate the views of those who believe the American involvement in Vietnam presents such a threat, and thus does require us to ignore the special character of institutions in bringing them all into the battle. I do believe the situation of the Negro in the South in the early sixties did justify the use of every resource the Negro possessed—the church, the college, the tactics of civil disobedience—to overcome the grave injustices of his position.

This seems to say that Mr. Glazer regards the civil rights struggle as justifying—at least for Negroes—the politicalization of the campus. And he defines the circumstances under which this sacrifice of the character of higher educational institutions is likely to take place: "when the students are the only chief class available for political activity; when the problems of the nation are desperate; and when there is no effective democratic procedure for reform—under these circumstances, I believe, the students become one of the dominant political classes in society, and become the target for recruitment by the chief forces in political society." The New Left, he maintains, now sees America in these terms:

. . . the New Left believes the people are corrupted by the mass media dominated by business interests, and that therefore their participation in our democracy is meaningless and ineffective; they believe the American people are corrupted by the opportunities for a high standard of living, and therefore are indifferent to the poverty and misery of most of the world and their fellow citizens as well; they believe democracy is ineffective because even those social groups that in the past have fought for the extension of equality—intellectuals and the labor movement—have been corrupted and bought by what they call the power structure, and consequently only among students does one have the political forces potentially available for solving the problems of society, which they also see as desperate.

Putting together other things Mr. Glazer says in this article, we get his reaction to the foregoing—which is in any event an informing statement of the outlook of many of those in the New Left. He says:

. . . what is the student's political role in a democracy? He should be prepared for a political

role, he should learn from involvement in political activity—but he should not try to transform his university into a bastion and base of political activity. . . . For our society as a whole certainly does not show the features of an undeveloped society [in which only students are intellectually equipped for political revolt], the students are not the only available class to do the political work of society; our problems are not desperate; our democracy functions, and change, even extensive and radical change, has been and can be brought about through the democratic process.

In sum, then, the educational work of the university and its patient, dispassionate analysis may be justifiably jeopardized only in an extreme situation, and for Mr. Glazer that situation does not yet exist. One of his arguments against politicalization is especially appealing:

. . . those who oppose our policy [in Vietnam] bring into play the most powerful emotional appeals, not in order to make the issues clearer, but to arouse the strongest possible response—in other words, they become propagandists and recruiters. At this point, the university brings nothing of its own to the discussion and understanding of our problems. Indeed, the political leaders of the New Left criticize the faculty too for its effort to maintain objectivity and its refusal to join them in a warm bath of emotion and anti-intellectual communal togetherness. This is also a danger to the university.

A two-sided comment seems in order. First, emotional appeals which seek to operate on people's wills, without waiting for or even seeking the response of full understanding, is a characteristic defect of all manipulative political activity. It is obviously anti-educational. But it is also obvious that a cold, administrative, Establishment bias is vastly provocative of anguished, emotional response. And the opinion that "our problems are not desperate" is not shared by some of the most distinguished citizens of the United States. Thus the guilt for turning the university into an arena resounding with the polemics of angry political activism needs to be spread around more evenly. When public educational institutions suffer distortion in their work because of the tortured consciences of the young, the true burden of responsibility may lie more in sins of omission by the community at large than is ever openly admitted.

## *FRONTIERS*

### The Children of South Vietnam

A FEW weeks ago, a Canadian reader sent us an issue (April 1) of a Toronto magazine, the *Star Weekly*, in which there are photographs showing South Vietnamese children and mothers who have been mutilated by napalm and phosphorus burns. The text, partly in reproach to Canadian officials, is headed, "How Canada Turned its Back on Viet Nam's Maimed Children." Both pictures and story are heart-rending, and the reader in the United States is made to recollect that he seldom sees such pictures in the magazines of this country, save for the pacifist press.

*Look*, however, is something of an exception. *Look* for April 18 published a story by Chandler Brossard, "Vietnam's War-Ravaged Children," and while the accompanying photographs are not of napalm victims, Mr. Brossard wrote so strongly that, along with approving letters, severe criticism came from readers who accused him of implying that "the United States is responsible."

The senior editor of *Look* begins by speaking of how hard it is to identify with the suffering of others. He asks: "*How would you like it if one of your children came crawling into the house with blood, screaming with pain: 'I was hit by a hand grenade, Mommy'?*" He then writes:

To the degree to which you can imagine this scene, you will be able to comprehend the human situation in Vietnam. It is estimated that one million Vietnamese children have been wounded in this war. More than a quarter of a million children have been killed. Can you imagine what it is like for a parent, or sister, or brother, to hold a dying child? If one child in any American community is killed by violence, his death becomes headlines. In Vietnam, it has become almost pointless to weep.

Can we help these innocents? . . . .

The rest of the story is devoted to the refugee center set up by the American Friends Service Committee in Quang Ngai, where some seventy-five children from refugee camps are fed, taught, and cared for. A hospital wing is planned by the

Quakers, to deal with problems of malnutrition in Vietnam, where less than half the children live to be six. In America, Mr. Brossard says, "malnutrition is a condition our children read about in spooky fables," while in Vietnam "some things they could not find in fables, napalm and incendiary burns, are as familiar to Vietnamese children as the soft break of day." The fact that in South Vietnam alone more than 800,000 children are living "the inhuman life of the refugee" made one American visitor to Vietnam say that token aid programs "function more to ease our own guilt feelings than they do to change the living structure in that country."

The article in the *Star Weekly* describes the delays experienced by Dr. Gustave Gingras, a Canadian specialist in child rehabilitation, in his attempt to establish a center for treatment of child victims of the war. With site selected in Saigon, staff ready, he waited eighteen months for instructions to go. Finally, the *Star Weekly* reporter relates, Canadian officials hinted that there were obstructions to the project in South Vietnam. Trying to get at the reasons for this shocking situation, the reporter learned that in 1966, when the Swiss-based international agency, Terre des Hommes, flew wounded Vietnamese children to Europe for treatment, publication of the photographs of these tragically mutilated tots caused such a furor that only victims of disease and civil accidents were allowed by the South Vietnam government to be carried on the second plane-load. Pointing out that other Canadian aid-to-Vietnam projects have not been similarly blocked, the *Star Weekly* writer suggests as his "guess" that South Vietnam changed its mind about the rehabilitation project because it would mean "a flood of pictures—such as the ones on these pages—in Canadian and American newspapers and magazines." He added: "Readers might react angrily against the whole war because of the pictures; they might get the notion that it is not a good idea to mutilate children, even to save them from communism."

William Pepper, who took the *Star Weekly* photographs, reports that "at least a quarter of a million of the children of Vietnam have been killed in the war." He recalls the (disputed) statement of an American Congressman, Clement Zablocki, who said early in 1966 that "some recent search and destroy operations have resulted in six civilian casualties to one Viet Cong." Pepper adds that of these six, four were children. "Napalm," Mr. Pepper writes, "and its more horrible companion, white phosphorus, liquidize young flesh and carve it into grotesque forms." Of the children he saw, he says: "The little figures are afterward often scarcely human in appearance, and one cannot be confronted with the monstrous effects of the burning without being totally shaken." Mr. Pepper draws on UNESCO statistics for the fact that, in 1964, 47.5 per cent of the people of Vietnam were under sixteen. Since males over sixteen are away fighting on one side or the other, it follows, he says, "that in the rural villages which bear the brunt of the napalm raids, at least 70 per cent and probably more of the residents are children." A *Star Weekly* editorial paragraph notes that "by far the majority of present refugees in South Viet Nam have been rendered homeless by American military action, and by far the majority of hospital patients, especially children, are there due to injuries suffered from American military activities." The *Star Weekly* obtained a statement from Dr. Benjamin Spock, who said:

It is not that President Johnson or the military want to injure children. But in modern war the bombing of strategic targets inevitably includes civilians. The situation in South Viet Nam is particularly tragic because a majority of the people in the countryside support and often conceal the Viet Cong guerrillas and thus they become targets with them.

The frustration of the U. S. Forces, because they cannot find and fight the enemy in conventional battle, has led them to use napalm, phosphorus, defoliation, the poisoning of crops, the bull-dozing of whole villages. This shows how, once an unjust course has been set . . . it can lead, step by step, from one wrong to an ever more horrible one.

According to a later issue of the *Star Weekly*, Canadian officials are now being pressed by public opinion to make further efforts to establish a Canadian rehabilitation center for children in Saigon. Meanwhile an American *Look* reader, responding to Chandler Brossad's question, "How can we undo the awful damage?", wrote in to say: "The only way to stop killing and maiming Vietnamese children is to pick a day—hopefully [this month]—and just stop!"