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THE AGE OF CONFUSION

IT is commonly said, in these pages and elsewhere, that confusion is the characteristic of our times. But confusion, we should like to argue, is not the Mark of the Beast. There are worse things than confusion—the wrong sort of clarity or certainty, for example. There are plenty of people who would rather be confused than be saints, and for the right reasons, it may be.

A saint may be defined—somewhat arbitrarily, perhaps—as a man who is willing to settle for some finite perfection. In contrast, a great man, as soon as he achieves some plateau of attainment, sets his sights beyond. Or rather, to be more psychologically accurate, a truly great man does not think in terms of any finite goals at all, but feels eternity in the present, and as a result he always conveys a sense of incommensurable reality in everything that he says and does.

The saint eschews sin; he practices the virtues, and if he possesses the authentic virtue of humility, his virtuousness does not annoy us very much. But there is nevertheless a certain placidity about the saints that repels all but those who are on the way to sainthood, themselves. We shall be told by the advocates of saintliness that this dislike of the calm of piety springs from the stubborn egotism in our hearts—"Nothing," it is said, "burns in hell but self-will." Perhaps so; but a parity of reasoning suggests that nothing is forever fanned by the cherubim in heaven but the easy virtue of self-abdication. Who wants to go to heaven forever, anyhow ?

What really seems missing in all the saints is the immeasurable dignity of the Titan, Prometheus. The factor which the saint's condemnation of self-will overlooks is the impersonality of the Promethean will. Prometheus brought fire to man—he is Lucifer, the Light-bringer—and there seems no just reason for accusing him of egotism. Zeus didn't want men to have the fire of mind any more than Jehovah wanted Adam to have knowledge of good and evil. The Promethean principle, in short, makes man a potential god, and it is this potentiality which the saints reject.

It is becoming very much the fashion, these days, for the zealots of organized religion to attack Secularism. Secularism is the agnostic's substitute for the Promethean spirit—the theory of progress jointly developed by socially-minded scientists, scientific-minded socialists, and liberal political thinkers. The ethical doctrines of secularism are usually termed humanitarianism, humanism, or naturalism, and all three of these closely related views are roundly condemned by the theologians who maintain that the confusion of the modern world has resulted from the intellectual arrogance of our secular civilization. The argument runs that little man—the man who appeared during the Renaissance and Reformation—has grown great with pride and has turned upon his creator and denied him. Without the creator and his law, the world has been given over to confusion, in which the moral disorder is even greater than the physical conflicts which lay waste the earth. Now, as the confusion grows intolerable, the little man is called to an accounting. Like the Prodigal Son, he must return to the bosom of his Father, weeping and confessing his sin of pride and his loss of faith.

The confusion is bad, and will doubtless get worse, and it also seems true that "secularism" has reached a stage of moral impotence where it may, with a little more of the persuasions of anxiety, merge with some form of materialistic authoritarianism. But in the warming controversy between organized religion and freethinking skepticism, nothing is ever said of the possibility of a third approach to the problem. The religionist assumes that only those who believe

that "man is a creature, a dependent being, not self-created," are capable of a spiritual outlook on life; that those who would say the opposite of man—that he is a self-existent, independent and creative being—must somehow cut themselves off from the confraternity of life, existing in separatist pride and isolation, ignoring both the grandeurs and the mysteries of nature. But *why* should this follow, necessarily? Why must the beau ideal of womanhood be a melancholy, slightly cringing madonna, and of manhood, a sweetly pale ascetic, preaching sermons to the birds?

This idea of human beings pervades the religious tradition of the West. Its full theological background and significance has been aptly stated by Jakob Jocz in a recent study:

> . . . to Christianity sin is an all-pervading principle in life. It has cosmic significance and expresses itself in the human attitude of inward rebellion against God. *Eritis sicut Deus* (Gen. iii.5). In the Christian view, man stands as a usurper of God's glory and a rival to his power: he is thus guilty of high treason. Sin is a power which en slaves man, incapacitates his will, pushes him irresistibly towards evil. . . . Consequently, in the eyes of the Church even the best of men needs salvation; . . .

Some day, some wise historian will compose a history of Western civilization as a tremendous revulsion and resistance to this idea, and then, perhaps, we shall have a dialectic of history that grasps the realities of the past three or four hundred years. In the meantime, we shall have—confusion.

It is of interest that the doctrine of the inherent sinfulness and helplessness of man is nearly always propagated by institutions. Men who forge their own religious faiths, without benefit of clergy or help from dogma, usually come to the conclusion that man, like nature, is good; or at least that he has within himself the power to choose the good of his own will. Instead of the "grace of God," they believe in the all-pervading heart of things, and that the heart of man is of the same essence. They believe and sometimes declare that discovery of truth results from an act of the will, and not the will's submission. The mystical current in the thought of many of the great scientists of the past and of the present reveals this order of conviction.

A kind of volcanic turbulence afflicts the history of the West, for until recently men of extraordinary determination have been born in this hemisphere. They have been men of uneven character, in whom admirable qualities were sometimes mixed with raw crudities and personal lacks, but above all they have been men with faith in themselves. The kind of a world they made has now been overtaken by Promethean agonies which pierce the mentality of moral independence and make it doubt itself. But the agonies of the world are not suffered as Prometheus: suffered, out of compassion for others. The pain of the West is the double pain which comes from starting out to seize the kingdom of heaven by violence,: and then forsaking the ideal for a mess of pottage, while keeping on with the violence. This was the tragic mistake of secularism—the betrayal of the Promethean purpose.

But the faith in man, the Promethean hope, persists. It is this, even in our confusion, which prevents the return to a blind adoration of images of a historical savior, and the discounting entirely of human possibility. We cannot turn back the centuries nor wipe away from our inward consciousness the essential reverence that we feel for the free individual. For all its excesses, its monstrous wars, its raucous materialism and its adolescent conceits, our age, even on the verge of self-destruction, cries out above the din the truth that it has, not thrice, but many times denied.

It is said that no knight but Galahad could sit upon the Siege Perilous at the Round Table, for none but Galahad was pure in heart. But it is something to know that there is a place at the table of the gods for the pure in heart, and to be blasted for unworthiness is better than never to have dared to try to take that place. A surge of consciousness was mingled with the surge of world-girdling empire, and even the pillage of

Nature, the violation of her sanctuaries and the waste and profanation of her secrets were not accomplished without the flame of Prometheus.

In one sense, ours is an age without a Scripture, or if a Scripture for our time exists, it has not gained recognition or general comprehension. It is also an age without a literature of self-comprehension. We have the Great Books, it is true, but the intellectual penetration of a book depends upon its setting in an epoch of history and cultural tradition, while the Promethean spirit bursts out of history and creates new precedents for tradition to consolidate and interpret. In the history of the West, not just one man, a god, like Prometheus, revolted against Zeus and the Olympian order, but an entire culture. The French and American Revolutions were *social* movements to dethrone the Gods and to declare the self-reliance and self-dependence of human beings. The people learned to rule, instead of kings; storekeepers and farmers learned to philosophize, instead of echoing creeds; and scientists began to do the miracles which once were reserved for initiates of the magic arts.

And now we have failed, or almost failed. Many of us would like to return to the old order. We would like to settle for the humble peace of the saint, who avoids the hurricane of struggling aspiration, who will not lay his ladder against the ramparts of the mystery of life, but builds a hut and worships among the shadows outside. And yet, having ridden the hurricane for a time, we remember the sweep of its power, the flash of the lightning of self-consciousness in moments of unshadowed illumination. We have seen, we have had glimpses of the gods, in and through ourselves.

It comes to this, that while we don't want to be saints—some basic intuition of the unoriginality of "imitating" Christ prevents us from wanting to be saints—we are very tired of our sins and their consequences. What we fail to say to ourselves is that only irresponsible gods could invent an atom bomb, and only insane gods could drop them on one another. Suppose, for example, that a race of immortals became neurotic, and in their sickness of mind persisted in trying to stretch the finite into the infinite—to manufacture, in short, the things of heaven out of the fragile and forever crumbling materials of earth. What unimaginable compounds of genius and folly would they produce! Look at our world, with its men like Ulysses trying to sell the Golden Fleece in department stores, its men like Hercules, striving to harness the rivers of the earth, conquer the heavens in flight and turn the oceans into lakes for tourists to explore in comfort. When have so many men labored with such glorious frenzy and with such trivial results?

The secularists have undoubtedly misled us, but not in their demand for freedom from dogma and their insistence on self-rule. It was the meaning of freedom that they failed to understand, and the nature of the self that was to reach to power. Just as the truths of religion were tainted by a denial of human goodness, and more than goodness—greatness—so the truths of the humanist revival were dwarfed and distorted by the denial of man's transcendence and spiritual kinship with the immortal essence of things. Small wonder, then, that we are confused, and reluctant to enter either fold—the one offering the emasculation of the spirit of moral discovery, the other, a baseless optimism of the supposed promise of scientific inquiry.

But with all our confusion, there are at least outposts of comprehension from which we need never recede. "I maintain," Einstein has said, "that cosmic religious feeling is the strongest and noblest incitement to scientific research." Speaking of Einstein and others, a writer has recently remarked:

> True, these physicists are scornful of myth and dogma; they are followers of no particular creed; they decry the persecution of science by the church; they cannot believe that a mature man can be so childish as to be ethical merely for fear of punishment or hope of reward.

Others have read the book of nature with their hearts as well as with their minds—as Peattie, in *The Flowering Earth,* as Byrd in *Alone,* as John Collier in his heartfelt identification with the American Indians, entering into their lives, their hopes and their religion of nature, and turning it into a religion of human understanding for himself. To speak in brief words of this slowly dawning sense of the religion of man—man joined with all other men, and with the infinite reach of the natural world—and of the living and non-traditional expressions of it, is to attempt to evoke the finest subtleties of the age—its very flower in human feeling and reflection—with the crude tools of summary. Yet it is there, this Promethean sense of belonging to the world, of being both the pulse and the voice of Great Nature, capable of the highest powers and the highest good—of knowing what we are, and being what we know. And this, perhaps, is itself the quintessence of the Fire that Prometheus brought, that will burn more brightly and finally burst into the full flame of moral triumph on the doomsday of Zeus and Jehovah.

Letter from SWITZERLAND

GENEVA.—The BIT *(Bureau Internationale de Travail)* and the OIT *(Organisation Internationale de Travail*—field workers of BIT) have recently celebrated here the thirtieth birthday of the BIT. A stirring review of the work accomplished on behalf of labour during these years was given at the radio by Monsieur Paul Ladame. He started by recounting a few of the hardships to which workers had been subjected before the inception of the BIT. These he contrasted with present-day conditions by interviewing the heads of departments of the BIT. This was intended to catch the attention of the public and arouse interest in active help to the Bureau, not only by lending sympathy and offering suggestions, but through tangible collaboration.

It may be said that the work of the BIT stands for slow but steady progress in humanitarian achievements. The motto of the BIT strikes the key-note of its policy: *"If thou desirest Peace, cultivate Justice!"*

Space allows us to mention but a few of the important reforms effected by the intervention of the BIT. Dr. Broundt, a Dane, head of the miners' section, told how in the nineteenth century miners were still without those measures which today protect their lives and care for their interests. They died, he said, from the then mysterious and incurable lung disease thought to be a form of tuberculosis. The research department of the BIT found it to be silicosis, for which a remedy was prescribed. Another disease, called bernium, which was responsible for so many deaths, not only among miners, but also among their families and their friends, was found by the BIT researchers to be carried by the fine coal-dust in the miners' clothes. Steps have been taken to overcome this danger.

Mr. Matelots, an Englishman, spoke of the tragic consequences accruing to fishermen whose boats, their only means of gaining a livelihood, were wrecked. Among the relief measures sponsored by the BIT were a system of indemnities for unemployment and the inauguration of old-age insurance. Legislation was passed to regulate the conditions under which sailors on passenger and other ships lived and worked, one of the many results being that the luxury liner, *Isle de France,* was obliged to renovate completely her crew's quarters. If requested, the Maritime department of the BIT inquires into disputes arising between sailors and shipping companies.

Madame Brune reported on work done for expectant mothers. These women are now not allowed night work. Further, they are given twelve weeks' paid leave at the time of bearing. No women can be employed to work in mines. For equal work, women are paid the same wages as men.

Mlle. Thomas, daughter of Albert Thomas, founder of the BIT, startled some of her hearers when she spoke of the time when, not so long ago, one could see children from five to fourteen years of age employed in weaving mills to detect breaking threads. Wards walked up and down among these children; if any failed to catch a broken thread, or fell asleep from eye-strain or exhaustion, they were lashed. Some mills even installed the children on high stools so placed that if they fell asleep they would fall into rapidly revolving machines. Fear of mortal injury kept them awake while it played havoc with their nervous systems. And they worked at this for as much as twelve hours continuously. Child labour under fourteen years has since been made illegal, but the BIT is striving to raise the age limit to sixteen. There is now regular surveillance to assure that the work of children is adapted to their capacity. This we owe to the efforts of the BIT.

In its thirty years of varied experience, the BIT has learnt many valuable lessons. It needs the earnest help of every man and woman—there is none who cannot help in some way. For those who wish to familiarize themselves with its programme and activities, the BIT has published a 1000-page book of rules setting forth the protection to which workers are entitled. It is available on demand. Anyone may report to the nearest BIT any infringement of these rules, and investigation will be set afoot, no matter in what country the case is reported. The service of the BIT is truly international.

SWITZERLAND CORRESPONDENT

REVIEW
BOOKS ABOUT MAN

SOMEWHAT courageously, for a psychologist, Dr. C. G. Jung in 1939 titled a collection of his lectures, *Modern Man in Search of a Soul,* and the term "soul" appears without inhibition throughout the text. To restore to use the name of man's sense of unitary consciousness was a considerable achievement for the founder of one of the modern schools of psychoanalysis, and while Jung's use of the term is functional rather than metaphysical, he has nevertheless helped to prepare the way for a *working* metaphysics of human life.

A working metaphysics, of course, means also a practical psychology, and it is this which the modern world gives every evidence of wanting above all. Jung calls attention to this longing:

> The rapid and world-wide growth of a "psychological" interest over the last two decades shows unmistakably that modern man has to some extent turned his attention from material things to his own subjective processes. Should we call this mere curiosity? . . . This psychological interest of the present time shows that man expects something from psychic life which he has not received from the outer world: something which our religions, doubtless, ought to contain, but no longer do contain—at least for the modern man. The various forms of religion no longer appear to the modern man to come from within—to be expressions of his own psychic life; for him they are to be classed with the things of the outer world. He is vouchsafed no revelation of a spirit that is not of this world but he tries on a number of religions and convictions as if they were Sunday attire, only to lay them aside again like worn-out clothes.

This book of Jung's has the distinction of being a book on psychology which is also a book on the essential nature of man—something worth particular notice, not only because it is almost unique among the works of psychologists, but for the further reason that the very hunger which Jung describes as characteristic of the age is really a hunger to know about man. It may be a truism to say that great books are always about human beings, no matter what their "subject," but it is very much to the point to say, also, that only recently has there been any popular interest in books of this sort, and that, among contemporary works, the books which search the meaning of human nature along with other things are the books which attract the most serious attention.

Take for example Edmond Taylor's *Richer by Asia.* This is a book about India, but its value lies in the perspectives about human nature which the experience of living and working in India brought to its author. Taylor was deeply impressed by what was the same and what was different about the people he met in India, in comparison to the peoples of the West. The longing to be free, to know the truth, to overcome fear—these yearnings are the same all over the world. But people differ in their ways of trying to satisfy them, and from such differences are profound lessons to be learned. All things, Plato said, are made up of the same and the other, and because we know this in our hearts, we sense the truth in a book which is written from this point of view.

Books about human beings, if they are good books, help to dispel the terrible loneliness of the times. Some day, perhaps, we shall demand this quality of all books, even of scientific books, because we shall have decided that it is a waste of mental energy to read any other kind. The engineer, of course, will still have his tables, and the specialist his manuals of technical procedure, but it is possible that even such treatises can be invested with the quality of relationship with our lives. The great temples and cathedrals of the past, we are told, were erected in the spirit of a devotional rite; artists and craftsmen of other ages and lands have approached their work in reverence for the symbolism of creation, and even hunters once made respectful obeisance to their victims, recognizing their membership in the great fraternity of Being.

Something of these possibilities is suggested in a recent volume about house plants, or rather, a house plant—*The Plant in My Window,* by Ross Parmenter. Mr. Parmenter, a music columnist and reporter on the New York *Times,* has a plant in his window. There are many books on the care of house plants, but none of them say much about why indoor gardens have become so interesting to people.

Reading about them, however, Mr. Parmenter began to suspect the reason:

> I soon saw that the rash of indoor gardens was a striking symptom of our times.
>
> A symptom is an indication of the nature and phase of a disease. Our changing civilization has perhaps not induced disease. But it has caused disorder. The other writers did not seem to see that indoor gardens were symptomatic of that disorder, but nevertheless they gave additional information that proved the point. Their historical data showed how well changes in the symptom have mirrored the phases of the disorder.

Books about house plants began to appear in the 1820's, soon after the effects of the Industrial Revolution began to be felt. There was a new spread of interest in house plants after the Civil War, and their culture was well established by 1873. Today, book dealers can fill a long shelf with nearly all new books on indoor gardening. The question of why so many people enjoy caring for house plants has three popular explanations. First, it makes a good hobby, second, plants are "likable," and third, they decorate the home. Mr. Parmenter reports that he found extensive analysis of these reasons for house plants. A good hobby, for example, is said to provide "a preoccupying interest in life, art absorbing activity and an outlet for the human passion for acquisition." This, no doubt, is what a hobby will do for you.

Then there is the craftsman's angle the pleasure of developing skill in the techniques of gardening. Plants are "artistic," too, and offer a "scientific" interest, while their growth from day to day affords "an element of excitement and change." But what is really significant about the popularity of indoor gardens is not in these books at all. As Parmenter says:

> The books, then, lined up the satisfactions of indoor gardening pretty well. But they did not dig into why those satisfactions were psychologically important.
>
> The authors were unfailingly cheerful. But for my part, there was little joy in much of what they said. Why is it necessary to have beauty? Why do we need constant cheering? Why is there such a passion to make things homelike? Why is nature indoors important? Why must we have hobbies? And why are we so desirous of the satisfactions of this particular hobby? Surely the questions reveal depressing lacks. And it is because gardening exposes those lacks so flagrantly that it is so striking a sign of inner change.
>
> The craving for beauty, for example, reveals how deeply we feel the lack of beauty in modern life. The need for cheering betrays an underlying sadness. The conscious and determined effort to make things homelike reveals a fundamental sense that things are not homelike. The crying for Nature, of course, shows how much we are cut off from her. And the need for hobbies shows how deeply most of us have come to hate the sort of work we are obliged to do to earn a living. The particular hobby of indoor gardening shows, too, how much we have come to hate the pattern of life such work has imposed on us.

In the passages that follow this analysis, the reader will find sentences and paragraphs of great delicacy and insight—how people may come out of their shells and be themselves in their relationships with plants. The things men hide from their fellows, such as the want to express tenderness, the feeling of reverence for living things, the hunger for quiet companionship: all these feelings may come to a focus in the care of an indoor garden.

It must not be thought that *A Plant in My Window* is mostly a treatise on the subconscious motives of indoor gardeners. The charm of the book is rather in the sense of great discovery that arises in the author as he learns to care for a single philodendron left in his apartment by a previous tenant. The pleasure of sharing in that discovery we leave to readers of the book itself.

COMMENTARY
THE VOICE OF ORGANIZATION

"REALISTIC" political thinkers increasingly express the view that the rights of man can no longer be entrusted to the simple body politic, but must be defended by pressure groups. They point to the fact that the interests or rights of a single individual—the man without a Washington lobbyist—have little chance of recognition by legislators who are constantly harassed by the demands of organized groups. And this, they say, is "practical" democracy—all the democracy we can hope to get.

There is evidence that religious as well as political analysts have adopted this basic position. In a recent *Atlantic*, T. Robert Ingraham, a theological student, discusses Paul Blanshard's *American Freedom and Catholic Power*, his principal criticism being that Blanshard fails to recognize that both Protestants and Catholics agree on one basic assumption:

> All Christian profession, whether Protestant or Catholic, explicitly declares that the church derives its existence and its authority directly from God in Christ, and that it can never bow to the supremacy of the state and still be Christian.
>
> The four evangels went to great pains to write in ways that would leave no doubt on this point. The Gospel writers profoundly believed that the church is *not* simply one agency within the state, but that it has an authority above the state. The church has believed so ever since.

It is far from clear why statements such as this imply that Mr. Blanshard has written a bad book. Even more to the point is the question: What about the citizens who have embraced non-Christian religions or philosophies? And, most important of all: What about people who are opposed on principle to any organizational authority in the sphere of religious conviction? Does Mr. Ingraham want them to set up a competing organization to vie with the claims to an authority "above the state" of Catholic and Protestant Christians? Or is it rather that he has just nothing to say to them—that he has left them entirely out of his calculations?

Indifference to the rights of *unorganized* conscience is indeed the most noticeable symptom of the sectarian fever. It illustrates the basic arrogance, the basic ungraciousness, the basic injustice of all claims to dogmatic authority. When these rights begin to be defended by groups other than the organized secularists, then we may say, perhaps, that some glimmer of the meaning of the teachings of Jesus has reached the modern preachers of Christianity.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves

AS readers may have noted, we frequently seem to argue both sides of the never-ending debate between the proponents of increased vocational training and the advocates of greater emphasis upon the abstract things of the mind—reason, philosophy and the roots of our cultural heritage. At the university level, these differences of opinion have often been extremely vehement, and often, we think, unnecessary as well.

During the past twenty years, Robert M. Hutchins of the University of Chicago has assumed the role of chief protagonist for the study of great "Men with Ideas" rather than of facts and figures. Hutchins maintains that a University should exist for only one purpose, that of providing the concepts or tools needed for logical thinking, plus practice in relating one's mental life, ethically, to the social situation. The Pragmatists, on the other hand, associated through the unofficial leadership of John Dewey with Progressive Education, have claimed that reading Plato, St. Thomas Aquinas and the *Federalist Papers* does not actually teach adolescents to think, but instead gives them the mere husks of another age. In taking cognizance of this sharp division of opinion we have inclined to support Hutchins far more than we have the "Pragmatists" and "Progressives," partly because such support has not forced us to minimize the relevance of the considerations offered by the opposition. We unquestionably do need more work-experience for the young, because balanced living, even for a child, is best reached by making sure that part of one's energy is expended "productively." But Hutchins believes in well-conceived vocational training, too, and we think that he is not against attainment of a knowledge of crafts. He contends only that "The Higher Learning" of the University properly refers to the structure of man's *thinking*.

It is apparently possible for MANAS subscribers who are supporters of either the Hutchins or the Pragmatist view to feel that the editorial viewpoint of "Children— and Ourselves" is not inimical to the cause they champion. We recently received excerpts for suggested quotation from two readers—one in favor of more philosophy, the other arguing the case for more vocational activity. The first subscriber once again called our attention to the writings of Ralph Borsodi and particularly to a chapter on Juvenile Education in *Education and Living.* These passages speak for themselves:

> We are so accustomed to the absurdity of having children, including those who have arrived at the age at which children formerly contributed enough work to the family to be in fact self-supporting, go to school mornings and afternoons and devote what remains of the day to "homework" and extra-curricular amusements, that it is hard to realize how really absurd this is. It may be that in the past the children were expected to become adult too early; it is a certainty that today we are insisting that they remain juvenile too long.
>
> We are so accustomed today to the prohibition of all "child labor" and the restriction of childhood and youth to school attendance, that we accept the irresponsibility which this engenders as normal. We accept adult infantilism as natural.
>
> With students studying part of the time in school but most of the time working in the homes, on the farms, and in the businesses of members of the various occupational groups in the community, youth would undoubtedly learn—what it has now no opportunity to discover—the difference between work and money-making. But not only would the young not yet engaged in money-making learn the true nature of work; the adults already "in practice" would also develop, as a result of the teaching of their apprentices, a sense of vocation and of profession. The girl who worked in various kitchens in the community; the boy who worked on farm after farm in the neighborhood, and all the apprentices who worked for a number of "masters," would not only learn the techniques used by different men and women in doing their work, they would bring to each home, each farm, and each business in which they were "students," what they had learned in others. To a very considerable extent this would re-introduce the round of working at the same occupation in different establishments which prevailed when the medieval journeyman traveled from town to town and master to master. The more widely the student journeyed for his field work, the more new methods he would bring into all the places in which he worked during his period of vocational schooling. And in place of the

> one centralized vocational school we now have in each community, all the best managed places of work in the community would become schools engaged in preparing the next generation for work.

Here, Borsodi enters the province of philosophy, for he is advocating vocational education as the *means* to the inculcation of a sense of civic and general social responsibility. We should ourselves say that the only way to reduce to an understandable equation the debate between the proponents of theoretical and vocational education would be to recognize at once the extent to which both leading proponents say the same things despite a difference in words. Hutchins can very well argue that philosophical thinking is supremely important because philosophy is the means by which we perceive the interrelatedness of man and society in ethical terms; that we have to create in our minds some theoretical basis for believing that our interaction with other human beings is of more than momentary importance. Borsodi is saying that the child who learns to participate in the basic work of his community enters more directly into the vital life of that community and hence "matures" in ethical responsibility.

Though we think Borsodi's suggestions admirable, we regret the fact that he has apparently never sought for a common denominator between his own school of thought and that of the "metaphysicians" like Hutchins. This omission, we feel, leaves Borsodi and any who write in the terms of agnostic humanism unmindful of the truly natural function of philosophical pondering on abstract questions, even during the earliest years.

The Children's Magazine, published in Glasgow, Scotland, by William MacLellan, may be regarded by many as extremely optimistic. MacLellan thinks that adolescents *want* to talk over ultimate philosophical issues and he is making an attempt to stimulate this kind of thought at an early age. An editorial letter to adolescents, on the last page of a recent issue, assumes a potential interest in philosophy and religion:

> In a magazine for serious minded young people it seems a good idea to have a corner such as this set aside where it might be possible to think seriously and earnestly about life and the problems of living. Being serious is not necessarily a dull affair. Actually it can be fun to visit this thoughtful land of graybeards and philosophers, because you may happen to discover while you are there a sparkling new Truth that will throw light on something you have never understood before.
>
> What do we mean by serious thought? Generally the consideration of what are called moral and religious questions such as The Purpose of Life, Why there is Evil in such a beautiful World, How to be Happy, What is Right and Wrong, The Explanation of Death, Fear, Sorrow, and so on.
>
> There are no ready made answers to these questions, which have puzzled people from the beginning of time, but this deep kind of thinking called contemplation is well worth cultivating for it can bring much happiness by settling the doubts which cause pain in our minds. When we consider the many things we do not know about life there is little we can do but wonder . . . yet when the mind is open and wondering then the mysteries seem to unfold.

Well, so far as we can see, one may with profit agree with both Borsodi and MacLellan, and need not take sides at all.

FRONTIERS

Rules For Peace

IN *Science News Letter* for Feb. 18, Watson Davis summarizes the views of 2,000 psychologists on the problems of war and peace, as formulated in 1945. The psychologists then agreed that:

> War can be avoided. War is not born in men, it is built into men.
>
> In planning for permanent peace, the coming generation should be the primary focus of attention.
>
> Racial, national, and group hatreds can, to a considerable degree, be controlled.
>
> Condescension toward "inferior" groups destroys our chance for a lasting peace.
>
> The root-desires of the common people of all lands are the safest guide to framing a peace.

Granting that the psychologists are right. and we may do this, for no revolutionary ideas are *explicit* in these few sentences—the important question becomes: How are we using this knowledge?

Are we, for example, trying to build peace into men, instead of war? There is not much use in trying to discuss this question until the identity of the "we" is clarified. Is the "we" the government? A government which, however reluctantly, uses war as a national policy can hardly undertake to educate for peace, for the reason that such a government never knows when it may be called upon to send its people to war to defend the national interest—which means that the people must be trained for war and emotionally ready for a fight at all times. This is especially true, today, when wars are "total." The organization of a country that is ready for war is virtually the opposite of the cultural pattern of a country where the people live in the expectation of peace. Such things depend, of course, on what you mean by peace. A country ready for war thinks of peace as something which comes *after* a war, and the "true" peace of the future is always the peace that will come after the *next* war. People who accept this idea of peace will have no fault to find with overwhelming armaments and universal military conscription, and what the psychologists say will have no-practical meaning to them.

What about "planning for permanent peace"? According to a text now in use at Harvard University—*Making the Peace: 1941-1945,* by William L. Neumann (Foundation for Foreign Affairs)—"it was a childish dream to expect that the Four Freedoms and the Atlantic Charter had any possibility of achievement through war. . . . Those who sponsored this dream could not have been sincere in their hopes, and if millions believed, their faith is only a testimony to the power of propaganda."

What sort of propaganda? Mr. Neumann explains:

> Because war as an institution is now universally decried, nations embarked on a war generally attempt to invest the conflict with non-existent values. Grandiose peace objectives, valuable in bolstering wartime morale, divert attention from limited, achievable war aims. The result is failure to achieve both.
>
> As warfare has reverted to the practice of ancient times and obliterated the distinctions between combatants and non-combatants, mass hatreds have grown stronger. Civilian losses through starvation and bombing in World War II were comparable to the casualties of front line troops. An increased thirst for revenge has developed as a consequence, putting its own mark on the work of peacemaking.

Apparently, there is no need to ask what was done about the "coming generation" in the wartime preparation for "permanent peace." This question is already answered in the reference to civilian losses. Nor has post-war education added anything new. German youth, travelers tell us, are sick of "words"—the lectures on democracy by an occupying power. In Russia, tots from three to five have song books with verses like this one:

> I have a cap with a star.
> I am a brave young fighter.
> My new rifle hangs by a strap.
> Boldly I gallop on horseback.

In the United States, the dangers of peace-mindedness are being realized even by the Indian Bureau, which has recently issued story books for Hopi children in which the traditional pacifism of the Hopi is made to seem silly and unmanly. There are not very many Hopi children, of course, and this program simply illustrates the thoroughness of a government intent upon readying its youth for combat. The larger aspect of "preparedness" is taken care of by the newspapers, the schools, and the patriotic organizations.

Skipping to the last of the psychologists' counsels—attention to "the root-desires of the common people of all lands"—it may be wondered just how these ought to be described. Aldous Huxley, in *Science, Liberty and Peace* has this to say on the subject:

> At the San Francisco Conference the only problems discussed were problems of power. The basic problem of mankind—the problem of getting enough to eat—was relegated to an obscure international committee on agriculture. And yet it is surely obvious that if genuine international agreement is ever to be reached and preserved, it must be an agreement with regard to problems which, first, are of vital interest to the great masses of humanity and which, second, are capable of solution without resort to war or the threat of war. The problems of power are primarily the concern of the ruling few, and the nature of power is essentially expansive, so that there is not the least prospect of power problems being solved, when one expanding system collides with another expanding system, except by means of organized, scientific violence or war. But war on the modern scale shatters the thin, precarious crust of civilization and precipitates vast numbers of human beings into an abyss of misery and slow death of moral apathy or positive and frenzied diabolism. If politicians were sincere in their loudly expressed desire for peace, they would do all they could to by-pass the absolutely insoluble problems of power by concentrating all their attention, during international conferences and diplomatic discussions, on the one great problem which not only does not require military violence for its solution, but which, for the world at large, is wholly insoluble so long as the old games of militarism and power politics continue to be played. The first item on the agenda of every meeting between the representatives of the various nations should be: *How are all men, women and children to get enough to eat?*

William Neumann's *Making the Peace* is a careful review of the various policy-making conferences of the Allied Powers, from 1941 to 1945—from the Atlantic Charter meeting to the Crimean conference at Yalta. Now that the memoirs of some of the diplomats involved have been published, sufficient background facts are available to place these events in a fairly comprehensive frame of historical meaning. The meaning that emerges is at best depressing, and horrifying at worst. It would be difficult to find a more concrete verification of the general observations of Mr. Huxley than that in Mr. Neumann's factual narrative of how "peace" was planned for by the Allied Powers.

Mr. Huxley's proposal for devoting diplomatic conferences to the problem of world food-supply may seem a bit mundane to some, yet what better things is a diplomatic conference capable of doing? Diplomats cannot manufacture "freedom"; they can only expend the resources which freedom has accumulated, and, usually, they expend it in war. To concentrate on ways and means of getting food to the people who need it— to think of food as nourishment, and not as a weapon—would be so extraordinary a departure from usual diplomatic procedure that the effect of such an undertaking, all over the world, would be little short of miraculous. And this, at least, would be something that diplomats *could* do, for the distribution of food is largely a matter of obtaining and applying technical knowledge to the problems of the countries most in need of food.

But of course, the question of "national interest" would arise. A thousand reasons would quickly be supplied to the diplomats, if they did not think of them themselves, for devoting their attention to other matters. The idea of feeding the world adequately is far too grandiloquent, and diplomats are already engrossed in considering more "rational" possibilities, such as the strategic

order in which the cities and countries of the world may be attacked with atomic weapons.

The reading of the daily press against a background of factual and reflective discussion such as may be found in Neumann's study and Huxley's small volume invariably points to one conclusion—that there is not the slightest hope of any practical use being made of the knowledge of our psychologists on how to prevent war except by people who have grown immovably indifferent to what is commonly called "the national interest." The psychology of "the national interest" is as unalterably opposed to the peace of the world as suspicion is opposed to friendship, as avarice is opposed to generosity, as injustice is opposed to its victims. This is what the psychologists ought to tell us, along with their rules for making peace.