

AN OLD INQUIRY

FROM half-way around the world, a reader writes to ask us to make good a promise to discuss in these pages "the purpose of man's life on earth." As promises, wise or foolish, should be kept, an attempt in this direction ought to be forthcoming, although the gravity of the inquiry may produce more questioning than light.

It is obvious, first of all, that what a man is actually doing with his life, what he says he is doing with it, and what he thinks he is doing, may be three quite different things. And to these, doubtless, should be added a fourth—what he *ought* to be doing with his life. There is the further difficulty that, quite possibly, no one else can say what he ought to be doing, in particular, but only that human life in general has a basic significance which ought to be fulfilled by all human beings, each in his own way.

Pico, of the Florentine School of the Italian Renaissance, maintained that Man, unlike the rest of "Creation," has the restless destiny of having to choose his own purpose in life, and that this, indeed, is his purpose; which is another way of saying that the purpose of man is to become free. Free for what, or to do what? This is a question which seems without answer, unless it be that self-conscious beings are always contracting new alliances of the mind and feelings, and that these alliances constitute bondage whenever they are undertaken in a partisan spirit, but become new regions for the exercise of freedom when they are related to all the other purposes and meanings of experience.

Few men contemplate the question in the purely philosophical spirit that is typical of Pico. The Italian genius had no fear or shyness of discussing ultimate problems, and in one grand passage in his *Oration on the Dignity of Man*, he declares his conviction with great simplicity. The

modern reader, however, will find more congenial, if less profound, a passage in William James's *Principles of Psychology*, where the founder of modern psychology sets the problem in terms that are familiar to all:

Not that I would not, if I could, be both handsome and fat and well dressed, and a great athlete, and make a million a year, be a wit, a *bon vivant*, and a lady-killer, as well as a philosopher, a philanthropist, statesman, warrior, and African explorer, as well as a "tone-poet" and a saint. The thing is simply impossible. The millionaire's work would run counter to the saint's; the *bon vivant* and the philanthropist would trip each other up; the philosopher and the lady-killer could not well keep house in the same tenement of clay.

We like James because he does not burden our minds with weighty abstractions. Ah yes, we say; how true; and we review our own parade of dream-objectives with sympathetic tenderness. James Thurber wrote "The Secret Life of Walter Mitty" as a short story, which seemed its appropriate form, but Hollywood transformed it into a full-length feature: the entire battery and armament of motion-picture technology blew up Thurber's brief sketch of human foible to epic proportion, helping to make "the man with the grasshopper mind" almost an American culture-hero.

Against a background of this sort, in which the impulse and interest of the moment have such exaggerated importance, it is difficult to deal with larger human purpose in terms that explore and deepen the sense of reality belonging, however hidden and suppressed, to every man. It is this lack of a living tradition of cultural idealism which frustrates our higher longings and encourages self-ridicule and self-deprecation—and a general acceptance of our personal insignificance as human beings.

A real revival of the dignity and sense of purpose of human beings will probably require a far-reaching renewal of the idea of man as a spiritual being. It does not matter much what words are used—and it seems likely that the terms of this renewal will not be theological at all—but some extraordinary leverage is needed to lift us above the level of petty preoccupations and common timidities of the age. New conceptions of heroism will have to be born, and new worlds mapped out for conquest by the human spirit.

No poet writes as inspiringly as Wordsworth, today, for no modern poet feels intimations of immortality; or if he feels them, he does not believe in them. What are such intimations, really, but inner evidence of human participation in the endless productivity of nature-- the sense that a man may have of being a craftsman in the creation of the forms of life and consciousness? It is not merely that Wordsworth, the man, had lived before, and would live again, but that some flowing skein of mind-existence winds throughout eternity—that he, and we, have in us the stuff of enduring witnesses of the universal drama, and are continuous performers in the cosmic spectacle. We know suns that have died and the stars being formed from the mists of space are not alien to our minds. We human beings, that is—looked out across the sands of Africa before the pyramids were there; the seas and mountains of other geological ages were a part of our life, and we of theirs. Nothing is lost; nothing that the mind of man can encompass is ever lost; nor is it gained, except that the germ of knowingness swells and bursts into the rich diversity of growth, creating forms and names for the secrets that were unutterably locked in mystery.

This fraternity of knowing and with all that knows forms the ultimate alliance of our lives. Even love is a kind of knowing—the love that is conscious and intelligent. No one who has seen the wide-eyed wonderment in the face of a child can still ask about the purpose of life. No one who has seen the death of aspiration in the satiety

of all things which are less than knowing can ever deceive himself as to what things are a natural part of human life and what are not.

Where shall we find new symbols for the meanings that we feel within us? How shall we communicate the hunger of our minds? This magic, this yearning, this concentrate of our humanity—we find it in the smile of a teacher, in the stroke of an artist, in the word of a friend. It is in the rounded moment of reality that can never be captured by words or photographed or charted by the technician. No ancient imagery seems adequate to embody these stirrings within the chrysalis of our imagination. Yet they are there as surely as snows melt in the morning sun, as seeds contain the embryonic promise of leaf and flower, and as the pregnant years bring forth the offspring of maturity.

Awakened giants trudge stolidly and ruthlessly about us, ripping away the fragile fabric of yesterday's dream of progress. Valhalla is an empty tenement of the mind of another age; there is no more a Jacob's ladder stretching from that world to this. But there are sleeping giants within, and the gossamer of our secret hopes can be woven into cables of strong determination.

The finding of purpose seems to depend more upon breaking out of the hypnosis of the past than upon the discovery of some new revelation. The only obstacles of absolute intransigence are those we make in our minds—our low opinions of ourselves and our fellows, and the habits that such opinions allow. It is only fear which makes men seek the well-trodden highway of conformity and convention, as though there were no other way to go; and it is only a foolish conceit which prevents us from learning from others who have found some portion of the truth. This is the paradox of human life that we are both alone and not alone—that to find out the deepest meanings of existence we must become independent and free, and yet being free introduces us to another kind of alliance and interdependence: the union of the free with the free, it might be called.

But there is another paradox, less remote from our daily lives. It is that the circumstantial elements of life seem at war with whatever high purposes we select. The capacity to imagine ideals is at the same time the means for justifying our failure to reach to them. This leads to the hostage theory of existence—under which we trade a portion of our energies, devoting them to indifferent or even evil matters, in order that we may gain some space and time of our own, to do as we please. But what we please is often not enough to satisfy us, nor is it necessarily as important as the drudgery which we hate and from which we wish to escape. As Tolstoy found out, it is not Life, but a man's theory of Life, which defeats him, most of the time. A man can deceive and exploit the system, or be deceived and exploited by it—but only so long as he holds the system to be alien to him, as something not his own. The fact that it is a bad and evil system does not make it not his own. We are not good men surrounded by a host of alien and malevolently intruding facts. We are men who live among our own creations—wherever there is agony and ugliness, it is ours; just as the truth, goodness and beauty of the world are also ours, whenever we can recognize and claim them.

It is this which Pico had in mind, which made him suggest that man is in fact a kind of divinity. For what, after all, do we mean by divinity? A god that can make no mistakes is not much of a god. A piece of wood or a rock has equal virtue in this respect. There is nothing infallible about any god, that is really a god, who ever existed. To be a god means to create one's own destiny—to be able to feel the various and contrasting rhythms which thrill throughout the whole of life which give it variousness and multiplicity, and from which the meaning and sense of both harmony and discord arise. To be a god is to be able to choose, to see and to distinguish between the currents of life throughout the octaves of sensation and perception, and to find the unity which increases one's sense of identity until it enfolds all the rest.

Letter from **CENTRAL EUROPE**

INNSBRUCK.—Central Europe is not a political conception. As a geographical one, it comprehends Austria as its heart, the larger part of Germany, Switzerland, probably the northern part of Italy, and—the duchy of Liechtenstein.

Liechtenstein is a midget State. No bigger than a medium-size Texas ranch, it has nevertheless remained—one is tempted to say, by accident—independent. Its capital, Vaduz, embraces a population of about 2,000, and the other 10,000 Liechtensteiners live in ten villages, beautifully situated between mountains, valleys and castles. The Principality has a railway station, an airdrome and a few factories. A great part of its present state-income derives from the publication and sale of postage stamps which for many years have enjoyed a special reputation among philatelists. That one of the duchy's Princes, Johann II. von Liechtenstein, ruled uninterruptedly for seventy years (1859-1929) has not only been a curiosity for the small country itself, but seems to represent a unique fact in the history of sovereigns all over the world.

Originally populated by Rhaetians, the little land was invaded by a Celtic tribe about 90 B.C. The Celts were continuously diminished by the Romans, who at last took possession of the territory during the rule of Augustus. The first advance of the Germans was stopped in the fourth century by the Roman colonists. After a century, however, the Huns pillaged and burnt the country, and, fifty years later, it was conquered by the Goths, another German nation.

During the times of Charlemagne, his earls administered the country under the Emperor's authority, but in later generations, the earls, having loosened the connection with the royal house, regarded both land and people as their personal property. In course of a war in which an Austrian duke at that time the owner of the

country—fought against the Swiss, the castle and city of Vaduz were reduced to ruins.

The seventeenth century was for the population of this strip of land even more trying than earlier times. Not only Austrian and Swiss regular and irregular armies accomplished endless killings and burnings, but even Swedes invaded the country, murdering still more of the already weakened inhabitants and laying every dwelling literally in ashes. After another period of famine and distress, in 1713 the territory was bought by the Prince Johann Adam von Liechtenstein, of Austrian birth. As this family was in possession of far larger and richer properties in Bohemia and Moravia, for over a century neither the Prince nor his successors set foot on their newly acquired land, leaving its government to officials who often thought more of their own profits than of the welfare of their subjects. The Napoleonic wars brought new sufferings, for the Principality was used as a battlefield by French troops as well as by Austrians. In 1886, in consequence of the Austro-Prussian war, during which the Liechtensteiners were compelled to protect their vital mountain passes against the Italians, only 58 soldiers of the little country survived.

After World War I, the Principality concluded a currency-and-customs-union with Switzerland and commissioned the Swiss State Secretary for Foreign Affairs with the representation of the diplomatic interests of Liechtenstein, all over the world.

The Principality of Liechtenstein has doubtless played but a small part in the history of Europe. The reader may even be surprised to see any attention given to the development of so small a state, which seems to belong rather to light opera than to historical reality. But there are things to be learned from the history of Liechtenstein.

We do not know who "originally" lived in the territory, but we know that, during the past two thousand years, it suffered almost incessant pillaging, burning, shooting, razing and murdering.

To Liechtenstein came Romans from Southern Europe, Huns from Inner Asia, Goths from North Asia, and Swedes from Scandinavia, and there were doubtless others. The Romans probably intermixed with the Celts, the blood of their descendants mingling in the veins of the Huns and Goths and Swedes; but it is also possible that, at different periods, the existing population was entirely uprooted and destroyed by the newcomers. It is only safe to say that the Liechtensteiners of today are neither Romans nor Huns, Goths, nor Swedes.

The tribes who came from the wastes or deserts of Asia or the northern regions of Scandinavia had no interest, of course, in a small strip of land in the Alps. They had been attracted by and wanted to conquer all Europe. The Liechtensteiners, who were in the path of these invaders, could even be called lucky, for the Moors, the Magyars and the Turks were beaten or stopped by others before they had reached the heart of Europe.

The point is this: the United States of America, throughout its admittedly shorter history, has been and has remained an island. It could not be reached by the tribes of Asia and Africa nor by invaders from other continents. The intermixing of blood has taken place in a peaceful way. Thus it is perhaps natural for Americans even American statesmen—to be impatient about the "slowness" of the unification of Western Europe, which they deem necessary for obvious political reasons. Some have seen in it already an "obstinacy" of the West Europeans. A historical evolution, however, will mature by historical progress, not by fear and force alone. A United Europe ought to be cemented with very delicate hands—so that no old clefts will burst anew.

CENTRAL EUROPEAN CORRESPONDENT

REVIEW

LAND OF CONTRASTS

A FREQUENT reader of the Indian press will sooner or later be overtaken by a sense of wonderment at the confused complexity of the currents in modern life. There is so much to admire and, at the same time, so much to be puzzled by. In the India of today, almost side by side, are the living institutions of a religious culture thousands of years old, and the young but growing institutions of modern industrial society. Hindus take pride in India's storehouse of ancient wisdom—the *Vedas*, the *Upanishads*, and the great epics, the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana*—but there is also a curious imitation of European—mostly British—superficialities and customs. There is the atmosphere of benign theocratic paternalism emanating from the ashrams of India's numerous holy men, filling the publications of these cults or semi-cults with "the Master says" sort of quotations, and all this is contrasted with the sharply critical intelligence of the Indian with a modern European education. There is both the rhetoric of Western liberalism and the continuance of many of the political practices of British imperialism.

The Government is haunted by the problem of the extreme poverty of a large part of the Indian population of some 350,000,000 people, and to this are being added the complications of the new industrialism. The Indian Parliament was lately considering and by now has probably passed two measures which come very close to establishing government control of the Indian labor movement. The Labor Relations Bill, apparently modeled on the Taft-Hartley Act and similar British legislation, provides for compulsory arbitration of all strikes by a Labor Court which has the full status of a civil court and punitive powers. The Trade Unions Bill empowers a government official to designate the unions which are qualified to conduct bargaining negotiations with employers. According to Mervyn Jones in *Eastern World* for May:

It is hard to resist the conclusion that the Government of India conceives of trade unions as a part of the repressive machinery of the State.... The least that can be said about these two bills is that they will put Indian trade unionists in a very different position from that generally understood to be the due of organised workers in a free society. In point of fact, it is both obvious and avowed that leading figures such as Sardar Patel do not trust the Indian working-class to choose its own leadership and to resist the enticements of Communism.

What seems called for, here, is not cynical remarks about India's "democratic" Constitution, but a recognition of the possibility that the efficient practice of modern industrialism and the institutions of traditional liberal democracy are rapidly becoming incompatible, especially in a world oppressed by fears of war. We must at least accord the Indian government good intentions, yet the objective of a higher standard of living seems to involve rapid industrialization for India, and if strikes threaten this supposed "larger good," what is a responsible government to do? The followers of Gandhi have an answer to this question, but, so far, it has proved unacceptable to the government. Further, the most popular union group in India is said to be "mainly Communist-led," affording another "sound" reason for more extensive government control.

Another phase of this problem emerges in connection with the freedom of the Indian press. Under the Press Emergencies law of 1930, enacted by the British, all printers, publishers and editors of newspapers were obliged to post a substantial bond before beginning publication. This bond was forfeited if the newspapers offended the Government, whether through news reports, articles, or editorials. A printing press suspected as a source of "prejudicial matter" could be seized and confiscated. While the Indian Constitution provides that all laws inherited from the British regime shall continue in force unless specifically repealed or unless they are expressly repugnant to the provisions of the Constitution, the Press Emergencies Act, apparently, is neither

repugnant to the Constitution, nor has it been repealed, for recently, in Hyderabad, an editor who criticized the Government of Madras in his Indian vernacular paper was punished by the forfeit of his cash deposit with the provincial Government. This socialist editor, according to *Eastern World*, was miscalled a Communist. The *Eastern World* writer's comment is pertinent:

While, in the first quarter of this century, the British bureaucratic regime confiscated the cash securities of Mrs. Besant's *New India* and *Amrit Bazaar Patrika* under the old Press Act of 1910, in the second quarter of the same century, the Swadeshi, Swaraj, Secular State in India has been appropriating cash deposited by editors under the Press Emergency Powers Act. The Congress Politicians seem to have poor memories, or is it possible that they believe in Emerson's adage, that consistency is a virtue of small minds?

Criticism of the Indian press itself appears in the Indian weekly, *Swatantra*, for April 8, where a writer accuses the Indian newspapers of feeding the fires of sectarian controversy during the period of the partition of India into India and Pakistan. The Indian press, it is stated, while playing up stories about the "atrocities" committed by Muslims, ignored similar crimes against members of the Muslim community in India. "Anyone," the writer says, "who was in the Punjab in those days will admit that the killings here were on a much larger scale than killings in Pakistan." While Pakistan is admittedly Muslim, and the papers representing the viewpoint of the Muslim League were openly partisans of the Muslim community, the Indian press, this writer maintains, does not sincerely support the ideal of a Secular State proclaimed in the Indian constitution. He continues:

The brutal fact is that our Press is controlled by Hindus who have no use for the ideal of a Secular State, in the same way as the Press in Pakistan is controlled by men who openly believe in the Two Nation theory. The troubles and travails of Indian Muslims find as little place in our newspaper columns as do those of Hindus in the Pakistan Press. Yet, our Muslim fellow-citizens are having a hard time of it and it is not as if they have no grievances to ventilate.

It seems appropriate, now, having reported these difficulties of the new Indian nation, to give some attention to the other side of the picture. On a recent trip to the United States, S. N. Agarwal, educator, and author of books and pamphlets on the Gandhian Plan, found time to visit John Dewey and to spend an hour in conversation with him. Principal Agarwal describes this meeting in the *Nagpur Times* for Feb. 12. Dewey asked about the Gandhian Plan of basic education, and said, after hearing Agarwal's account of it: "Gandhi's system of education is, I am sure, one step ahead of all the other systems. It is full of immense potentialities, and we all hope to learn much from India in this revolutionary educational effort."

As the Indian educator had recently come from Japan, Prof. Dewey asked about how the Japanese educational system had been influenced by the occupying SCAP authorities. Mr. Agarwal replied that various features of American educational methods were being foisted on the Japanese, and that, worst of all, "plans are being prepared for wholesale conversions of the Japanese to Christianity. The Americans seem to think that only Christians can be real democrats."

To this, Dewey said, "I have no doubt that Western impact is liable to prove more disintegrating than helpful to the Eastern countries." Asked by Mr. Agarwal for his views on Indian education, the founder of the Progressive Education Movement continued:

"So far, India had to suffer all kinds of cultural humiliations under British rule. She could not develop her educational system in accordance with her own genius. But now, after regaining her lost freedom, India must try to build up her educational structure on the basis of her ancient culture and traditions."

Prof. Dewey spoke of how much the West has to learn from an ancient country like India, and later wrote, "We look to India to elicit from its old history and culture that which will give help in the guidance of newer and younger people."

There is a sense in which Dr. Dewey echoes the feelings of many, many people in the West when he refers to India in this way. It is a sense of appreciation of the potentialities of Indian civilization for the rest of the world—its capacity for moral inspiration, as typified in Gandhi, and its brave attempt to build a new society out of the materials left by the oppressions of centuries, and in a time of world-wide crisis. India faces tremendous obstacles—difficulties from without, weaknesses from within—making the present above all a time for courage and for honesty. So far, the most anyone can say of India is that she is in transition; that the conflicting social forces of the Indian scene show no great promise of arriving at harmonious balance in the future; and that India is rather a land of dramatic contrasts and contradictions than the pattern of future synthesis between East and West. The most that can be hoped for, then, is that she will continue to struggle toward the ideals of both the great heritages which India now embodies, and that she will always have leaders who will be satisfied with no lesser goal.

COMMENTARY ON PURPOSE

THE question, "What is the purpose of life?" is like the question, "Do you believe in God?"—which, as Shailer Matthews once observed, calls for an education rather than an answer. Any writing on such a question, it seems to us, must be in a sort of cipher, if the reader is to profit by it.

While ostensibly philosophical, the question is also intensely personal. That is, a real answer must be personal if it is to avoid being vague or pompous. The editors of MANAS, for example, like some other people—particularly like other people who start magazines of serious intent—have a fairly articulate conception of the purposes they are trying to fulfill; although these purposes are something quite different from the "good news" of the proselytizer who seeks converts. The question of purpose in an activity like publishing comes down to a matter of what you think of human beings—whether you think they ought to be led to adopt views or conclusions—or whether you think enough of human beings to refuse to say to yourself that they "ought" to do anything at all.

This is the danger in wanting to be a "hot gospeller"—that you may succumb to the temptation of wanting to persuade others to adopt *your* gospel, or to become another hot gospeller like yourself.

We have a gospel, of course; that is, we have convictions about the purpose of life. We are persuaded that human beings are immortal beings; that the destiny of man is a spiritual one, and that the fire of consciousness which becomes the light of mind in us is all the divinity we shall ever obtain or need to ask of the Nature which is the universal parent. We are inclined to believe—although this may sound extravagant—practically anything reasonable about human beings which gives promise of adding to their freedom and moral independence—which means, as we understand freedom and independence—anything that may be

included in the logic of natural growth for mankind.

But we shall never, as editors, smuggle in the "tenets" of our faith except as they seem reasonable consequences of the principles we explore or declare. This is a faith we keep with our readers; even more important, it is a faith we keep with ourselves—with our understanding of what every man must do to fulfill his purpose in life, whatever it may be.

CHILDREN ... and Ourselves

[This week, we continue with the discussion of correspondence.]

EDITORS: YOU speak, in one of your columns, of "self-energizing ethics," of generating "Intensity," and of the "courageous giving of *the best that one has*"—all in relation to Sport, especially competitive sports. This is well and good, but do not children (and ourselves) need these qualities even more in other-than-pastime activities? Americans have the reputation, among certain large groups in foreign populations, of being a people devoted to Sport and Violence. This is probably a reflection of our reflection in movies, but the most dramatic content of our newspapers also consists chiefly of material under these two heads. It would seem useful to look around for some other ways of focussing Intensity and of courageous giving. How about it?

One reason, perhaps, why competitive sports have always been symbols for the "generation of intensity is because the problem to be solved in competition is so easy to grasp. The child can understand that rigorous discipline will soon be rewarded by a noticeable increase in mastery of his physical environment, and the business of mastering his physical environment is one of the chief vocations of childhood.

Mastery of the social situation becomes a persistent desire only with the individual who sees clearly what he must undertake—who can focus unequivocally on goals. Conventional education, unfortunately, is usually almost exclusively occupied with the *history* of religion, philosophy, psychology and political science. And we do not generate intensity from a study of history only from a sense of the immediate relevance of the issues which confront us today. Children in the Gandhian schools of India have "intensity because their whole approach to learning is oriented around the need for finding solutions to pressing difficulties of region and community.

Certain it is that we cannot generate intensity by rhetorical means, no matter how excellent our rhetoric. The child or youth has to feel that he is working to solve *his* problem, although, perhaps, along with a larger one. As a previous contributor has suggested, the child should feel that his own

assertion of principle and program is important, and that it has a fair chance of altering the status quo if well conceived.

Editors: I was brought up in the Francis W. Parker School of North Chicago, on "no examinations, no marks, no prizes,"—"EVERYTHING TO HELP AND NOTHING TO HINDER" as the motto, and "RESPONSIBILITY" as the keyword. It worked. Children studied for the intrinsic value of the subject, rather than for ulterior or secondary motivations, from the desire to "get ahead" of one another. Results were better than in the case of such competitive aims. Mr. Herbert Read, the Englishman, may not dream of the existence in America of such a movement, but it has cut a wide swathe in our history. Hundreds of crusading teachers graduated under Col. Parker in Chicago, and spread his methods and principles throughout the country. For twenty-five years his was the dominating figure in the NEA Conventions. He thus anticipated Mr. Read's demand for Education for Cooperation by about three-quarters of a century, and rooted this tendency deep in American educational practice. . . .

Here is one of Col. Parker's statements:

"Nowhere on earth has a child such advantages for elementary education as upon a good farm, where he is trained to love work and to put his brains into work. The best-taught school in a densely populated city can never equal in educative value the life upon a good farm, intelligently managed.

"The child upon the farm is made responsible for something, for some work, for some care-taking, and out of this responsibility grow trustworthiness, habits of work, and a feeling of personal power in all the essential elements of character, with the exception of the much-needed phases that spring from personal contact with society outside of home.

"The surroundings of the child upon the farm in contrast with the complexity of city surroundings are comparatively simple; the same forms, colors, sounds, are repeated in endless succession, presenting innumerable variations and at the same time complete harmony and unity. The trees, the shrubs, the foliage, the flowers, the fields, the hills,

valleys, plains, and brooks create distinct, everlasting images in the child's mind; images impressed, concentrated, and expanded by countless sensations, by countless contrasts, that stream in through every avenue of the soul.

"The tremendous advantage of a rational course of work in country schools is that it would make a strong, binding union of the home and the school, the farm methods and the school methods. It would bring the farm into the school, and project the school into the farm. It would give parent and teacher one motive, in the carrying out of which both could heartily join. The parent would appreciate and judge fairly the work of the school, the teacher would honor, dignify, and elevate the work of the farm. Farmer and housewife would be ready to discuss the methods of the farm and housekeeping in the school. Children, parents, and teachers could meet at stated periods and hold discussions in the direction of their highest interests."

This quotation from Colonel Parker certainly bears on our commentary on the first question discussed above. We might say that Gandhi's vision of how to "generate intensity" has a long and always inspiring background.

Editors: How about doing a job on the "responsibility of freedom"? Those of us who talk so much about "freedom," I feel, need to think a great deal more about the greater responsibility which "freedom" necessitates. I have heard freedom defined as not being tied down by anything or anyone, but this can hardly be correct.

It often seems helpful to adopt the Socratic position in discussing "freedom" and "responsibility"—that there is only one kind of freedom, the freedom based upon sufficient knowledge. No man who is ignorant can be free, because he will constantly tend to be surprised or disappointed by the consequences of his actions. Unexpected impacts hang over his head, and the only release from this situation must be in having a good idea of the sort of consequences which will ensue when he acts. If a man were to choose *all* the consequences of his acts, consciously at the time of decision, we could then call him free. And no other man can we call free, no matter how far

removed he thinks he is from being "tied down by anything or anyone."

Applied to the problem of educating children, these considerations lead to an explanation of why it is that the spoiled child, whose every whim is indulged, is seldom happy. Such a child lives in a false world and must somehow sense, with disquietude, its isolation from some of the fundamental facts of human existence.

We have often advocated giving every child a full freedom of choice in any given situation, but there is no real freedom of choice unless the person doing the choosing is aware of the consequences flowing from either alternative. It seems to us that from the earliest stages, children should be educated to understand the nature of the unspoken compact which underlies the parent's willingness to furnish food, shelter, education, and healthful amusement. When parents' and children's beliefs clash the parent has every right to stop "sponsoring" a child in anything exceeding subsistence requirements. The child then learns that he is free—if he is willing to pay a price for the independence of his thought and action. Of course parents often threaten the cessation of privilege, but do this more as a part of the general bombast which marks an attempt to break the child's decision and less because of a rational principle they are prepared to apply with equanimity of mind.

Parents can teach children *part* of how to be free, then by teaching them of their interdependence with others.

FRONTIERS New Ideas At Work

III

GARRY DAVIS speaks of himself as "one little guy." This may be his own estimate of himself, and, for all we know, it may be a correct one, in some sense or other. If so, he is one little guy who has done a very big thing. Garry Davis is now home in the United States, thinking over what he did and what he will do next in his effort to live like a member of the world community of human beings, instead of as a citizen of a great, military power. In less than two years, simply by conceiving this ideal and acting upon it as a single individual, as best he could, he has become known as "World Citizen No. 1" to millions of people of many nations; and hundreds of thousands of "world citizens"—mostly Europeans—have declared that they share his ideal.

When, in May of 1948, Garry Davis took the oath of renunciation of nationality before an American consul in Paris, he achieved considerable notoriety. And when, ejected from France as a man "without papers," he encamped with a sleeping bag on the steps of the Palais de Chaillot—on United Nations territory, and therefore beyond the jurisdiction of France—he captured the imagination of tired, confused, and peace-hungry people throughout Europe. Thousands wrote to him, "Keep going. We're with you." They meant it. As Davis says:

The letters underlined a desperate yearning to believe in something affirmative, something responsive to basic human needs and desires. Had I been a man of religion, I should have said that these people were looking for the love of God. Or brotherhood, or friendship. But the feeling was definitely not political, nor was it economic.

I have since felt that because of the rigid social system under which these people live—and under which we all do in varying degree—they could not approach their neighbors with genuine feelings of brotherhood and kindness. The very nature of their daily lives prohibits it; they work too long for too little. Their ideals have been destroyed too often for

them to have faith and hope in much outside their own little communities. And yet they knew they were a part of the world society which was not allowed to function freely and efficiently, which was frustrated by strangling frontiers, mountainous state bureaucracy, and, worst of all, a crushing armament race spreading hate and fear.

Davis speaks of his bewilderment at the letters which poured in to him—30,000 in one week, from 76 countries, after his mass meeting at the *Vel D'Hiv*, the Madison Square Garden of Paris. He wanted to tell the writers to search *with* him instead of regarding him as a "leader."

My inner conflict [he writes] was great. I had not reached the awareness at it was in reality not me that they were supporting; that the words of praise were not meant for me personally; that the letters expressing hope and faith did not actually mean that Garry Davis, the man, was the personification of their ideal.

Later, I realized that I simply happened to be in the right spot at the right time—at the precise moment an idea was waiting to be expressed. I happened to pull out the plug which held back a flood of human sentiments dammed up by a divisive social order.

Davis tells the story of his one-man revolution against nationalism in articles in the *Progressive* for April and May. After the war, in which he served as a bombardier in B-17's, flying missions over Germany, he returned to the United States and to show business. He is the son of Meyer Davis, the orchestra leader, and had entered the entertainment field, one may suppose, almost by heredity. In the fall of 1947, when Soviet Russia was looming as the new "enemy" of democracy and freedom, Davis began to have doubts about nationalism and war. "I couldn't help but think," he says, "that the next world try at destruction might prove that we were so clever in this field that we had outsmarted ourselves right off the green earth." He came across some literature of the United World Federalists in September and soon after started working with and for this group. He never joined. "I figured if I were working for an ideal, it wasn't necessary to join anything or sign a paper. An ideal by

definition is greater than any organization and I felt that to join an organization was in fact a denial of that ideal."

Davis quit show business to devote all his time to working for world government. As he worked, he kept on questioning. Finally, the questioning took this form:

The nation-state with full sovereignty is obviously rotten and obsolete, and produces only war and misery. If I were completely honest, I would see that my present position as a national citizen isn't tenable. As a member of a single world community, I must renounce this division and declare myself a partner with all men, regardless of minor differences.

If Garry Davis is not a completely honest man, he'll do till one comes along. He did renounce his citizenship, not because he has no love for his homeland of America, but because of what the practice of nationalism is doing to America—and to the world. Nationality, he says, is a dead concept. "I was willing," he explains, "to give up my homeland as long as nationality had its berth there because the past two wars proved pretty conclusively that nationality couldn't protect me, my family or friends, or, in fact, anyone."

Living in Europe, Davis was profoundly impressed by the oppression of the common man by "documents"—his papers, supplied to him by the government bureaucracy. "A man without papers in Europe does not legally exist." This substitution of "papers" for the existence of real human beings, he says, "has led to a psychosis of personal unworthiness and a depreciation of human values and personality." As a paperless man, Davis soon found himself in trouble with the French. When they asked him to leave France, he moved to UN territory.

He had seen a picture of the French Premier, Robert Schuman, giving a golden key to Trygve Lie of the UN Secretariat, symbolizing the cession of the land on which the Palais de Chaillot stood to the international entity, the United Nations. That gave him the idea of moving in with the UN.

He later pointed out, after the UN began to regard him as something of an international nuisance: "If the UN couldn't solve the case of one little guy who had done nothing but obey national regulations until he finally landed in UN's collective lap, it didn't seem probable that UN could solve the problems of the millions of people they presumed to represent." His next step was to address the UN delegates from a balcony of the *Palais*, during a session of the delegates. He ended his minute-long speech by calling upon them to convene a World Constituent Assembly to work for the "true peace of one government for one world."

Now the letters began to come in volume, and Garry Davis found that he was famous. People wrote with religious fervor. They didn't care much about the political structure of a "world order," but they wanted something that would allow "world brotherhood to express itself fully." As Davis says:

That is what I found in my letters. I also found it in myself. It was brotherhood I was looking for, understanding, communication with my fellowmen. I called it world government and a people's world assembly. I do not dispute these two, but after all are these not only shells which will permit us, as human beings, to live in harmony and peace?

Two mass meetings drawing Paris crowds that reached a peak of 20,000 people were not the final embarrassment provided by Davis to the French Government. When France imprisoned a French conscientious objector, Jean Moreau, Davis picketed the prison. He refused to enjoy the freedom to live in France given him by President Auriol (who admires him) while Moreau, whose principles made him a "criminal" in the eyes of French law, was in jail. Davis declared himself a pacifist, too, and equally a "criminal" before French law.

Now Davis has come to the United States, to live the life of a private citizen for a while, and to figure things out. He is tired, as only those get tired who try to put their best ideas to work—but

it is hard to believe that he will remain tired for long. To his critics, he says:

Many have no doubt regarded my renunciation of U. S. citizenship as illogical, impractical, foolish, or neurotic. They may be right. If I were an American citizen now, I would not consider it necessary to renounce that citizenship to be a good world citizen. At this time I see no necessity for regaining my U. S. citizenship; this does not mean that sometime in the future I might not see that necessity. . . .

My conclusions to all my activity are brief and quite simple. Mankind is ready for world civilization. Men are ready to be men, to show friendship and love, to create, to live in harmony. Our problem is not to create more division through arms and hate. Our problem is one of reconciliation, of understanding, of giving. . . . whether we survive and grow into manhood will depend upon how many of us enter morally, mentally, and instructively the world community and act as world citizens in our daily life.

This is an article which should have a sequel, a few years from now.