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MEN WITH IDEAS: W. MACNEILE DIXON

IT is extremely doubtful that there will ever be another book like W. Macneile Dixon's *The Human Situation.* There may, perhaps, be other men born like Dixon, but the conjunction of a man like Dixon with another time like the middle 30's of the twentieth century is almost impossible to conceive.

The 1930's, we may say, marked the final ending of that period of positive vision and undaunted imagining which began toward the end of the fifteenth century in the Italian Renaissance. The Renaissance has been defined in many ways, but above all it was a rebirth of faith in Man—man as an independent thinker, as a wellspring of the creative spirit, as a rich, generous, capable intelligence with all the wide world before him, inviting his works and his play. The men of the Renaissance looked out upon a wide horizon. They knew the majesty of the past, the past of an Antiquity they had so lately inherited, and this rediscovery of human greatness became a promise of future accomplishment.

The men of the Renaissance never shied away from the expression of positive faith; they lived by it, and could not be embarrassed, as most moderns are, by its enthusiasms and brave declarations. They were not "sophisticated," in the sense that we use this overworked term, but accepted the validity of the primary intuitions of human life.

There is something of Plato in all great men of the Renaissance. Their use of reason has always some of the ambience of the Platonic dialogues, some of the deep optimism of Socrates, and likewise his honesty and personal fearlessness. Always, a man of the Renaissance asserts the presence of a creative intelligence in nature—that, he believes, however he phrases it, is the essence of the human being. He will accept no doctrine, dogma, or theory that seems to deny the independent integrity of the human intelligence—a doctrine which argues that man is some sort of synthetic *psyche,* mechanically stirred to responses by his physical body, or which contends that human behavior is some sort of passive reflex of the will of God. . . . But the flavor of the Renaissance affirmation is best provided by Dixon himself:

> The spirit of man . . . asks for immortality, and you say, "Be content, here is beer and bacon." Since there is nothing beyond the present to be hoped for, let us make the only lives men will ever know less pitiably wretched.
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> As the tide of religion has receded, the tide of this creed, the only alternative, it seems, has correspondingly risen. Miracles, once the province of the Church, will now be performed by the State, which will provide a heaven on earth, here and now. I am not to be understood as decrying humanity, kindness, philanthropy. These are no new things. There was plenty of kindness in the world, before it was set above the Olympian gods, above truth, and freedom and justice, before emotionalism was placed upon the throne of Zeus and took the wheel of the universe. In the new Garden of Eden, when we enter it, there will be good roads and water supply, unlimited picture houses, unstinted soft drinks, excellent sanitation, and humane slaughtering, the best of schools and wireless installations for everyone, free concerts and lectures for all. There will be no far horizons and invincible hopes. We shall cease to think of birth and death, of the infinite, of God, and the sublime secrets of the universe.
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> I am not much in love with these sixpenny Utopias. Men have other thoughts than these—thoughts that wander through eternity, and projects unattainable in time. How childish to think that the world's griefs are all of economic origin. Our world planners have great designs for the filling of empty stomachs. Let them ponder the more intricate problem—the filling of empty hearts....
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> Even morals become a nightmare when we reflect upon its self-appointed representatives. What sort of world would it be in which Wesleyanism or Anglicanism ruled the scene? in which throughout

its breadth and length not a soul ever kicked over the social traces, in which there were no idlers, or spendthrifts, or jesters or Sir Fopling Flutters? Does anyone in his senses really wish for an undiluted respectability throughout eternity? . . . Must we look forward to wholly conventional lives, all alike, on the model of a colony of ants, in standardised buildings with hot water provided, lifts and electric light, where all men think the same thoughts and pursue similar ends? If this be what is promised us, then indeed the life of all our blood

> Is touched corruptibly, and the pure brain,
> Which some suppose the soul's frail dwelling-house,
> Doth by the idle comments that it makes
> Foretell the ending of mortality.

Superlatives are always hazardous, but we doubt if there ever was a man so at home among the philosophical meanings in the treasury of English literature as Dixon—or, perhaps we should say, so at home in the entire European cultural tradition. English literature was, of course, his field, but he is rather a true *amateur* among "professors"—a man who manifestly moved in a universe of living ideas. He was a believer in the Great Tradition, and when he speaks of man—and he speaks of little else—his thoughts have the flesh and blood of inward conviction, his words the majestic movement of a disciplined faith:

> The astonishing thing about the human being is not so much his intellect and bodily structure, profoundly mysterious as they are. The astonishing and least comprehensible thing about him is his range of vision, his gaze into the infinite distance; his lonely passion for ideas and ideals, far removed from his material surroundings and animal activities, and in no way suggested by them, yet for which, such is his affection, he is willing to endure toils and privations, to sacrifice pleasures, to disdain griefs and frustrations, for which, rating them in value above his own life, he will stand till he dies, the profound conviction he entertains that if nothing be worth dying for nothing is worth living for.
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> The inner truth is that every man is himself a creator, by birth and nature, an artist, an architect and fashioner of worlds. If this be madness—and if the universe be the machine some think it, a very ecstasy of madness it most manifestly is—none the less it is the lunacy in which consists the romance of life, in which lies our chief glory and our only hope.

Who is Dixon? We have often wondered. Wondered, that is, if by some palingenetic process in which he himself believed, he could be Empedocles returned to earth, or some vigorous associate of Plotinus made into flesh again. He has the eternal wonderment of the ancient Greeks, the fire for learning of the Florentine scholars who lived in the days of the Medicis, and the gentle *sagesse* of the Cambridge Platonists. He was an Englishman, a patriot, and an inspirer of his countrymen and his readers around the world. But this tells little of Dixon, really. *The Englishman* is the work of a man who respects and delights in his countrymen. In *Hellas Revisited* Dixon becomes a countryman of the ancient Athenians, and among manuals of travel or studies of antique greatness, this book is truly a passport to the "glory that was Greece." Hellas becomes a community that may almost be lived in, once again, by the reader. *Civilization and the Arts,* a brief essay, illustrates a central theme of Dixon's life-thought: that civilization owes more to the genius of "intuitive" individuals—artists and writers—than to men of great intellectual powers, just as we recognize deeper verity in the belief of the multitude in immortality than in smugly reasoned denials of the existence of soul.

The Human Situation (being the Gifford Lectures for 1935-37, published in book form by Longmans, Green), however, is unique among Dixon's books even, we might say, among all books. In 438 pages of irenical discourse, the writer invites his audience to examine the testimony of mind and heart on the great questions concerning the nature of things. Slowly, a structured organism of thought emerges—something which is Dixon's and yet not Dixon's. It is not daring too much to say that, quite possibly, this book comes as close to the impersonal truth of what we can know, or hope to know, of the world and ourselves, from any sort of intellectual inquiry—at least as much as we can know without some sort of mysterious initiation,

and it is hard to believe that Dixon had not heard the echoes of an ancient wisdom, if not the voices of the gods themselves. He begins with this invitation to the reader:

> Ours are not the first, nor yet the wisest heads which have pondered the riddle of the painful earth, and we shall not succeed where our betters have failed. But just as none of us can live any life save his own, none of us can wholly transfer his burdens to another's shoulders. We must in some measure in these days think for ourselves as we must breathe for ourselves, and walk for ourselves.
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> Happier, it may be, are those who can with serenity leave this troublesome business of thinking to others.... Let the mind once awake, however, and nothing, whatever vexation or labour is entailed, can extinguish its curiosity or stay its tormenting propensity for enquiry. . . .

Dixon's book is an all-encompassing affirmation of the life of the human soul. He joins with Plotinus and Leibniz in adopting the view that all nature is animate with endless congeries of monads—entire shoals of living intelligences pursuing their course of interdependent evolution. The spirit, for him, is an undying reality.

> And what kind of immortality [he asks] is at all conceivable? Of all doctrines of a future life palingenesis or rebirth, which carries with it the idea of pre-existence, is by far the most ancient and most widely held, "the only system to which," as said Hume, "philosophy can hearken." "The soul is eternal and migratory, say the Egyptians," reports Laertius. In its existence birth and death are events. And though this doctrine has for European thought a strangeness, it is in fact the most natural and most easily imagined, since what has been can be again. This belief, taught by Pythagoras, to which Plato and Plotinus were attached, has been held by the Christian fathers as well as by many philosophers since the dawn of civilization. It "has made the tour of the world," and seems, indeed, to be in accord with nature's own favourite way of thought, of which she so insistently reminds us, in her rhythms and recurrences, her cycles and revolving seasons. "It presents itself," wrote Schopenhauer, "as the natural conviction of man whenever he reflects at all in an unprejudiced manner."

But whether, with Dixon, we decide for palingenesis, or remain skeptic on the subject of immortality and its possible mode of fulfillment, we shall with difficulty deny that Dixon reflects in an "unprejudiced manner." And it is the freedom of his thought, the unabashed daring of his metaphysical inquiry, which marks him as a man of the Renaissance the last, it may be, of his kind.

Letter from **GERMANY**

BERLIN.—The Humboldt University in the Eastern sector of this city shows not only a picture of material ruins—the progress of reconstruction goes forward very slowly—but offers the same impression in the intellectual field to one who visits lectures as a student. Lack of professors is formidable, and instruction for students on a very low level. The history of the Middle Ages, for example, is taught by only *one* professor, the history of modern times also by only one; the same is true of the history of philosophy, and sociology is not taught at all, partly because of the aversion of dogmatic Marxism for all sociology. This, in a University where 7,000 students are enrolled!

This lack of teachers has two explanations: One is that the Nazis were driven from the colleges after the war; the other—more important one—that the best remaining teachers left the Soviet zone and went either to the Western zone or to the "Free University" in West Berlin. Meanwhile the new professors at Humboldt University are imbued with Marxism and only scantily provided with the range of knowledge necessary for scientific lectures. Consequently, the decline of scientific education in Germany which began under the Nazis is continued under the new totalitarian arrangement in the Soviet zone.

Another reason for the further lowering of the scientific level is the enforced enrolling of so-called "worker and farmer students." The justification for this is the claim of "social justice" (curiously enough, in a zone where omnipotent social injustice is hidden under thick layers of phrases and propaganda). The real reason, of course, is quite different, arising out of the steady political opposition of former students who were not delegated from the various Communist organisations to the university. An effort is now being made to change the composition of the student body by enrolling more and more "worker students" (the number of farm youths at college is quite negligible). Unfortunately, these young people are poorly educated; to enable young workmen to go to the university, you have not only to get them free access to college, but you have to build up their education since childhood; you have to pay their parents high wages, give them good dwellings and so on, all of which the Soviet zone does not do. In short, "social justice" has to begin with the social standard, and not at college. Naturally, young people who get for the most part scholarships of about 150 Marks per month, are willing objects of party propaganda; furthermore, they have to work overtime to get at least part of the necessary college standard; and they are not trained in independent thinking, nor have they the leisure to do so. The final effect is a willing body of students, but poor results in scientific attitude and work.

While under the Nazis, some sort of scientific tradition still continued, with the new regime under Russian occupation the break has become complete. The enforced creation of a new intelligentsia which is not very capable, the abolition of free and undirected research; the prohibition of discussion of "ticklish" things, the stamping of the cliché of dogmatic Marxism upon each sentence and result, the inability of the new "scientists" to raise any "philosophical" questions—all this leads to the same result: the policy of the totalitarian State turns against itself. Lack of *quality* is the necessary consequence, and *inferiority* in all fields, the end.

Engels put the question of decision before the workers of his day in these words: "There will either be Socialism or Barbarism." The epigones of socialism have made a splendid synthesis of this slogan by inventing the barbarian Socialism of our day.

GERMAN CORRESPONDENT

REVIEW
PSYCHOANALYSIS ON THE COUCH

RECENTLY, readers of such widely differing types of publications as *Look* and the *Nation* have been offered extensive critiques of psychoanalysis. It may not be legitimate to claim that a new "trend" in evaluation exists because of some four such current articles, yet the present seems a fitting occasion for discussing the increasingly popular recourse to the sanctums of private analysts.

The *Look* article is a bit tangential to the problem, being principally a Catholic-type denunciation of Freud's emphasis on the hidden influence of sexual motivations. The *Nation's* three-article series begins with a forthright piece from Dorothy Ferman, former newspaperwoman, entitled "The Psychoanalytical Joy Ride," presenting a case against one common sort of psychoanalytic practice. Mrs. Ferman feels, and her article offers convincing evidence in support of this feeling, that prolonged analyses can sometimes contribute more to the failure of a marriage—or of a life—than to its salvation. Mrs. Ferman's husband, it appears, had before marriage developed the habit of constant consultation with an analyst, and while he hoped to break off such dependence when he married, this proved "impossible." Instead, he "kept going back for more and more psycho-therapy."

> His dependence on psychiatric aid [Mrs. Ferman writes] had become such a habit that he seemed unable to act decisively without it. I was not only frightened at this sign but secretly jealous. Problems which I thought he should have shared with his wife in a good marital partnership he took to his psychiatrist instead. I have the impression that in doing so he magnified those problems far beyond their actual importance.
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> Maybe I'm wrong, but I feel strongly that we might have made our marriage succeed if we had been left to our own resources. Jim's children and I developed an excellent relationship. We had a home we all enjoyed and a stimulating group of friends who believed that Jim and I were as happy as people can hope to be in a complex civilization. Jim's public demeanor was as outgoing as that of any properly adjusted person. It was exclusively for my benefit and that of his psychiatrist that he relaxed into morbidity.

Mrs. Ferman made her *Nation* communication into more than a personal complaint, suggesting that self-reliance, upon which the satisfactory solution of most problems must depend, was inadvertently discouraged by her husband's reliance on an analyst. Mrs. Ferman claims that the "good" accomplished by analysts tends to be offset by morbid preoccupations and by feelings of dependence upon a mind other than one's own.

The *Nation's* editors invited comment upon Mrs. Ferman's criticism from two psychiatrists—Dr. Frederic Wertham of Queens Hospital, and Dr. Gregory Zilboorg, professor of clinical psychiatry at New York Medical College. While Dr. Zilboorg contented himself with attacking Mrs. Ferman's stability, calling her an "unfortunate, unhappy, bitter person," Dr. Wertham succinctly substantiated nearly all of Mrs. Ferman's claims with the following statement: "From many years' experience in clinics I have come reluctantly to the conclusion that eight out of ten orthodox psychoanalyses are not indicated, and that six out of ten are more harmful than helpful." Wertham's forthright confirmation of Mrs. Ferman's view will doubtless make him unpopular with many analysts like Dr. Zilboorg—as demonstrated by the latter's rejoinder—but it is difficult to ascribe Dr. Wertham's motivation to anything except a desire to preserve integrity. His further comments are worth noting, especially when he addresses himself to Mrs. Ferman's central thesis:

> Mrs. Ferman is also correct, I believe, when she implies that old-style psychoanalysis has not yet learned to let people rely on their own resources or be helped to mobilize their resources. I know of hardly any instance of an orthodox psychoanalyst telling a person that he did not need psychoanalysis, although Freud said that very definitely to a number of people who consulted him.

At this juncture, for further light on psychoanalysis, it may be helpful to turn to a book by Theodore Reik, a still living and practicing student of Freud. In his recent volume, *Listening with the Third Ear,* Dr. Reik undertakes a new approach to "explaining" psychoanalysis: he tells about the *analyst* himself, his problems and prerequisites. By this means Dr. Reik brings to light an often neglected consideration, but one which played a large part in Freud's own thinking. As Reik says:

> It was self-observation and self-analysis which led to the fundamental convictions which Freud presented to an unbelieving world. Inquiry into one's own emotional difficulties, an attempt to master inner unrest, marks the origin of the new science.
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> Our task is not the demonstration of the usefulness or necessity of self-analysis, but to show that self-analysis must precede analysis of others.

Reik considers that no one can be a successful analyst, or even a successful subject for analysis, unless he is psychologically prepared through sincere attempts at *self*-analysis. There is no magical, mechanical formula, Reik tells us, for producing a valuable analysis. Freud depended, he says, and every good psychiatrist must depend, upon intuition as much as upon the "system":

> Freud stated again and again that he gained his best insights by trusting to hunches. He did not agree with the accepted opinion of the scholars, that the dream is only a physiological process, but with the average man and woman on the street that it has a secret meaning and can be interpreted. He had another hunch: he did not accept the official view of the physicians who explained hysteria as a physically determined disease, but thought of it as resulting from emotional conflicts. He felt that the generally valid theory of psychiatry did not explain the genesis and the nature of the neuroses, but he preferred rather the concept of the uncultured masses who considered neurosis as an emotional disturbance. He generally preferred concepts in the field of psychology that nobody took seriously. He was not afraid to remain in the minority and his strong will as well as his moral courage enabled him not to give a tinker's damn about what the majority of his professional colleagues thought of him and his new views. For us psychoanalysts it is hopeless, of course, to try to emulate Freud's genius and mental endowments. We should emulate him with regard to his fearlessness, his moral courage, his readiness to suffer for his convictions and to remain lonely. Alas, I see very few signs of such a wish among psychoanalysts today.

Reik's illustrations of Freud's own persistent *self*-analyses are extremely illuminating. Casual incidents in Freud's life help to explain the measured compassion of a man whose "tolerance" sprang from self-knowledge. These incidents are also to be associated with the sort of open-mindedness which encouraged Freud to lend his name to investigations in extra-sensory perception.

Reik recalls how, once, as he was crossing a street with Freud during the last years of the latter's life, Freud hesitated on the curbstone for a moment, then turned with a smile to Reik with the explanation that he had just suffered a mild recurrence of his old tendency to agoraphobia (fear of open places). Reik reasonably asks if this quality of judicial introspection is a kind of intelligence that can be measured or guaranteed by any sort of standardized training:

> This general, silly overvaluation of mere intelligence has led to a misconception about the origin of psychoanalysis or about Freud's way of discovering it. The first is that this new research method was discovered by hard and penetrating thinking, by a great intellectual effort. Freud in his incomparable sincerity denied it energetically. He emphasized again and again that he was led to his most important discoveries by a prejudice, a preconceived opinion. The birth of psychoanalysis out of a hunch—that is perhaps not a comfortable idea for US scientific minds, for us psychoanalysts.

This is reminiscent of other profound insights into the nature of scientific discovery, and it also has its bearing on the general theme which the passages quoted from Reik seem to be presenting to us as we go along: that the most valuable qualities in human nature flow from within and cannot be made to arise by external manipulation. We can promise to turn out neither cured patients nor adequate psychiatrists. All that can be done is to provide the most favorable conditions we know

for the arousal of an individual's creative energies. Psychological matters are not mechanical. As Reik puts it:

> The analyst is faced with the question, "Who are you?" rather than with the problem of what is the special meaning of a symptom. He will try to find the depths of the personality, which are as hidden as the roots of a tree. The nature and the extent of these roots will determine the growth of the tree and what its trunk, its branches, and its flowers will be like.

This applies, as Reik has already indicated, to the analyst as well as to the patient. If the greatness of Freud lay in his powers of introspection, and not in chance discovery of a "new science," the greatness in any man must lie in similar discovery, accompanied by self-mastery. And this sort of mastery, which is probably what all men most desire, can never be gained simply by paying a psychoanalyst, even though he be Freud himself. But what can be learned from Freud and Reik and Wertham—beyond the fact that they learned much of how to alleviate serious clinical disorders—is that philosophical and psychological self-reliance is the only sure guarantor of clear perception.

COMMENTARY
TRUTH OR CONSEQUENCES

IN some of the old folk tales, a human baby was smuggled away by the elves and a queer little non-human being left in its place. Can we see here a likeness to the smuggling away of Truth and its replacement by all manner of anomalous creatures such as Dogma, Superstitution, Negation, and Unbelief? What has happened to the concept of Truth? Were men always so afraid to hear it, or has some fatal change come over the nature of Truth, making it an abomination in our sight?

Mathematics may not smile for every student, and may even, for a period bounded by examinations, be a matter of terror to a child's mind. But we have not heard the *idea* of mathematics inspire an instinctive distrust; we have not observed any who approached the subject with a strong suspicion that it was an evil influence, a dangerous undertaking. Is it conceivable that in all the generations of men, none should have arrived at any mathematical certainty with regard to a few human truths? Do we assume, as a corollary to our own lack of knowledge about what are called the realities of life, that such knowledge has never yet been attained and is forever unattainable? Or is it that mathematics, being a detached metaphysics, a pure science, has been more fortunate in its exponents, more disarming in its approach?

Even if, as was the case with Socrates, this "mathematical" sort of certainty concerning human truths is difficult for its possessor to communicate—more difficult to communicate, perhaps, than it is to acquire—these difficulties may themselves represent a portion of the major psychological realities of our lives.

We do not intend to assert that "mere" mathematical principles will satisfy the human heart in search of certainty. But in many ways they come closer to providing real satisfaction than does anything else. They have a clear impersonality, they cohere perfectly, they are not confounded by "new evidence," and they expand the mental faculties engaged in their comprehension. Few systems of religion or philosophy can duplicate these qualifications. Instead of seeing a normal child in the cradle of religion, we look upon a changeling—Authority—and sadly wonder how it can ever develop into anything but a more gigantic affront to the human race. Truth should come to each man as a thing of infinite potentiality. Authority begins and ends as a curse upon the household of the mind.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves

THE question of how best to "give advice" to adolescents, especially in relation to the complicated and crucial problems of emotional involvement with those of the opposite sex, is almost a lifetime is study in itself. Not only are innumerable matters of adult as well as child psychology involved, but also much of philosophy and religion. We can do little more, perhaps, than turn over one stone at a time, hoping that, in the process, any unorthodox views we encourage to emerge may be a stimulus to parents' thinking, even though no single expression on these matters can be regarded as complete.

A point we have before wished to give special emphasis is that parents are of the most help to young persons when they forego claims to omniscience, conveying instead the impression that they, too, consider themselves to be searchers for truth rather than unquestionable authorities. The concept of Authority and the concept of Sin go hand in hand, and neither are of any use in an educational situation. Marietta Johnson, founder of the School of Organic Education, illustrates this point nicely, though some may feel she somewhat neglects the parent's responsibility for guidance:

> Altogether too much is made of sin and punishment in religious teaching. A story is told of some children in India, who, having no idea of sin, tried very hard to do something that might be called sin in order that they might experience the joy of forgiveness pointed out to them by the missionary. They felt that sinning would admit them to the missionary's group. The emphasis should be placed upon the joy of a fine life, the privilege of a high spiritual consciousness. Troward said that one's prayer should constantly be: "O Lord, give me more of Thyself." To desire to be filled with the Spirit and to learn how to receive it is the right of every soul.
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> Man is too apt to meddle; he is too anxious to make others do right. This, of course, is an egotistical self-consciousness very far from a true religious spirit. In our zeal to "save souls" we may be anything but religious. Sidney Lanier pointed out that those who make others do right save in giving facts or advice which may be accepted or rejected, commit prostitution of the soul! Only when by rewards and punishments is meant the inner satisfaction of wrong doing should we permit these results to follow the action of the child.

No question but that there are a good many parents in the world who try for something better than constantly managing every phase of their child's life. They are of that welcome breed who feel responsive to the developing enthusiasms of wholesome youth and who wish to place no unnecessary obstacles in the way of the child's opportunities for self-directed progress. Unfortunately, during a certain period of years, these are the very parents who are apt to have the "worst" problems of all. The energy of youth flies off in every direction. The astonished question, "What's necessarily wrong with that?" will be the response of children who have been allowed the maximum of free choice when they are informed of social prohibitions or usual moral disapproval. The parents of a child who has escaped the conditioning of excessive management will likely often have to face the disapproval of neighbors and associates; their children will, at times, appear to be acting with insufficient restraint. Yet such a trying period *may* be the beginning of a real evolution from adolescence to adulthood—an evolution that some men and women, unfortunately, never manage to complete.

It is precisely when the child thinks over every question from the standpoint of his or her own spontaneous inspirations that the most learning can take place in the least time. In other words, the educational situation is both most alarming and most fruitful during the same psychological phase. The helpful parent needs to appreciate the child's creativity whenever and wherever it is expressed, restraining his own desire for too wholesale a restraint.

For the sake of argument, let us carry this thought to an extreme: Even if the child evolves a marvelously complicated rationalization for a purely selfish desire, we can at least appreciate

creative ingenuity when we see it, and recognize that the same faculty of ingenious thought, applied to a broader context than selfishness, and to matters of greater moment, can make our children better parents, in their day.

Often, perhaps, there is a race in ingenuity between parents and adolescents. When the parents give warnings against dangers, they should express these as opinions and excuse their introduction of the subject by confessing a personal disturbance of their own. This is "logical" and also disarming. If parents can make their "warnings" fully rational and susceptible to extended discussion, the situation is ideal—children often respect Reason more than the parents do, for the prohibitions of the parent are actually harder to defend on a rational basis than is the creative desire of the child.. If the parent feels too tired or too ill-trained to cope with a sharp young mind, he can throw logic to the winds and still do it logically. He can say, "This is my *feeling*, a very strong one, which I have, even though I may not be justified in having it. I can't find perfect reasons to support the feeling that I wish you would not choose to do what you plan, though if I ever do find them I will tell them to you. By the way, can *you* think of any reason why I might feel this way?"

Our task, here, as with every other phase of the educational problem, is really with ourselves and not with our children. A parent who has learned how to be stable in happiness and uncompromisingly honest with himself will be *sought* for opinions on every question. Any of our failures to cope with our own circumstances—even one such failure—or any single omission of complete honesty, means a lessening of our opportunity to communicate with our children. It may sometimes look like so long a job that we might perhaps think it most sensible to worry about our children's grandchildren, rather than about our own progeny. And it may take that long for patterns of successful adolescent-education to be established, even in the best of families.

This particular discussion really began two weeks ago, with a subscriber's questioning of Homer Lane's "don't keep warning them" policy in regard to youthful romances. Lane did, however, believe in guidance, and in religion, too, if we conceive religion for children as Amiel conceived it:

> The religion of a child depends on what its mother and its father are, and not on what they say. The inner and unconscious ideal which guides their life is precisely what touches the child; their words, their remonstrances, their punishments, their bursts of feeling even, are for him merely thunder and comedy; what they worship, this it is which his instinct divines and reflects.

FRONTIERS

Is Individualism Freedom?

IN *Human Events* for September 6, Frank Chodorov writes a prescription for the ailing sense of individualism in American life, particularly among the youth of the country. He feels that, since the early years of this century, the colleges and universities of the country have been breeding-grounds of socialism; that bright young men who acquired their socialist views in college left school to take up positions of influence—as labor leaders, ministers, teachers, lawyers, writers—many of them filtering into the government.

These bright young men, Mr. Chodorov tells us, possessed a missionary fervor. They were not, he says, the kind of boys who make either the college fraternities or the athletic teams. They were not even, he seems to imply, very good "Americans" to begin with. But now the world they made, or were interested in making, is almost upon us, and the problem, as Mr. Chodorov sees it, is how to reverse the trend.

He has little faith in legislative stopgaps. Mere "laws" to oppose "the complete socialization of American life" attack the effects without looking to the cause. The trend he speaks of, he says, "is the product of the ideas implanted in [the mass-mind of America] long ago and carefully cultured through the years. Unless and until this mass-mind of America is re-educated to freedom, the end product of Socialism is unavoidable. No program based on a policy of immediacy can prevent it."

The program Mr. Chodorov proposes would start in the same way and in the same place as the propaganda for socialism started, years ago. Instead of socialist clubs, we should plant "individualist"' Clubs—or perhaps, he suggests, "Freedom" Clubs would be better—on the campuses. The same type of youth that once became socialists will now, he thinks, become individualists. The members of the Freedom Clubs, he predicts,

> would in short order establish themselves as the intellectual elite. They would attract to themselves the same restless, inquisitive type that took up with the Marxist promise; after all, freedom is a more impelling "cause" than collectivism.

The function of the clubs would be to embarrass, confound and refute professors who still reflect a socialist tendency. Textbooks containing socialist doctrines would be ridiculed by sophomores armed by "individualist" arguments. "Missionary lecturers" for individualism should speak on or near the campus. This synthetic radical movement for "freedom" would also have a magazine:

> In support of the lecturers, there should be a publication directed at the student mind. It should aim to present the pertinent news of the day but from the viewpoint of the individualist; it must be nonpartisan but definitely ideological. Its pages should be open to student participation and as soon as possible its editorial management should be turned over to the graduates of these radical clubs.

Finally, the movement will need "religious fervor." It must look forward to the future, for, "With Property confiscation on the increase, is there any other legacy a man can expect to leave to his grandchildren? See England!"

We may pass without comment Mr. Chodorov's glib Machiavellianism. We may admit his implication that the youthful campus radicals of twenty-five years ago were occasionally on the neurotic side. We may even admit that the passage of legislation to control the tendency to Statist socialization will probably accomplish very little, and that the only way to bring about a basic change in what he calls the "mass-mind" is through the gradual penetration of new ideas which are first embraced with enthusiasm by small minorities. But before we seem to agree any further with Mr. Chodorov, we should like to point out that the socialist movement of past years, whether on university campuses, or in the mill towns of Pennsylvania, the mines of Colorado

or the factories of New England, was also animated by a love of freedom, and by a love of justice. If freedom has not been won by State ownership of the means of production, this may be because there is something basically wrong with socialist theory, or it may be because, as Justice Brandeis once observed, socialism requires a far greater sense of moral responsibility among the people than prevails in a competitive society.

If Mr Chodorov wants to duplicate the "educational" achievements of the socialists, but on behalf of individualism instead of collectivism, he will have to provide the same moral inspiration as that which moved the socialists to lives of self-sacrifice. We are now speaking of motives, and not of the validity of socialist doctrines. Before all or most of the socialists are typed as "frustrated" characters who couldn't get along with the rest of us good people, some investigation ought to be made of what they believed, how they lived, and what they worked for, or thought they were working for. On the European socialists, Edmund Wilson's *To the Finland Station* is a classic. Then, for easy reading on a great American socialist, Eugene V. Debs, there is Irving Stone's recent biographical novel, *Adversary in the House.*

If Mr. Chodorov believes, as we suspect he does, that the single-tax idea of Henry George, or some appropriate and workable modification of that idea, is the taproot of freedom, why doesn't he say so? These freedom clubs will have to have something to talk about besides *laissez faire* economics and the virtues of rugged individualism. There is no denying that individualism has its virtues, but what about its vices? A lot of tired socialists of more than campus-age might be interested in joining a "freedom" movement if they could be sure that the "freedom" Mr. Chodorov is talking about has more to offer than a guarantee against the confiscation of property. They are persuaded, and we along with them, that the confiscation of property is wrong because of the tyrannical power which confiscators always exercise, and not because property is uniquely sacred. A man who thinks property is sacred has adopted the religion of materialism. We need a society made up of human beings who care less about property because they care more about more important things. Owning property may be one of the forms of freedom, but to make it into a virtual religion is to raise up socialist heretics from the propertyless millions all over the world.

Really to get freedom, and to maintain it, means giving up something for it. Mr. Chodorov is undoubtedly right when he says that you don't get freedom by taking away the property of those who want to keep what they have. But you don't get freedom, either, simply by having and holding. Freedom, in the terms of this argument, is probably obtained by overcoming the acquisitive spirit—not by hating it in the name of socialism or by sanctifying it in the name of individualism.

And what about war? A State made up of Individualists at war will be hardly more free than a socialist State at war. War brings an impersonal, technological end to every freedom, regardless of ideologies. Both individualists and collectivists will look about the same, obey orders about the same, kill and die about the same, in another war. And what is left afterward will be about the same, too.

Has it Occurred to Us?

ONCE upon a time, a few centuries ago, there were professors—and students—of "Natural Philosophy," a large and felicitous term for the investigation of the, again, natural universe. Physics, biology, mineralogy, anthropology and all the other ologies we have so precisely distinguished, used to be taught by a single individual whose forte was not an encyclopedic brain but an expansive and expanding mind. Impossible to certify that all Natural Philosophers were at home in their subject, but at the very least the title was familiar to their contemporaries, and inevitable in school curriculums.

Natural Philosophy—has it occurred to us that even the reverberations of that term may have played a significant role in humanizing and fertilizing the common mind of those not-too-distant days? Think of the man who, with no pretensions of learning or broad experience, was yet conscious that the educated person could consider a whole handful of sciences under one head. One might never be fortunate enough to actually study Natural Philosophy for himself, but it *was* studiable.

The pleasures of a simpler age are patently not ours today, and it is often just as well to forget what society has forgotten, and go on with our days as conventional twentieth-century men and women. Still, occasionally, we may be allowed to contrast and compare, since civilizations have been known to return in aim and interest to the values of a former time. Suppose, today, we had a few vestigial remains of Natural Philosophy, and that our children—until, say, the middle of high school—were taught that old science in place of half-a-dozen modern ones. Has it occurred to us that the consequences might *not* be tragic?

Superstitions would doubtless be mingled with the "facts" of scientific observation. Broad generalities only shakily sustained by logical evidence might contaminate, it is true, the "valid" theories. Certain orders of information respecting strange and "disproven" species of invisible beings and influences might even be gingerly advanced. But there will always be those who are uneasy in the presence of abstractions and glad to be secure inside the three-dimensional world. When the sharply defined modern sciences break upon the consciousness of the mid-high-school pupil, many would breathe easily for the first time as they took firm hold on the solid realities of the exact sciences.

Nevertheless, it is a question if Natural Philosophy, providing it could be taught in our schools, would not have certain securities of its own to offer. After all, this is One World, in more than a visionary political sense. In Nature, we do not find the latitudes and longitudes of scientific observation marked on the landscape or lettered on the trees. Nature, for all her delight in sweeping generalities of plain, forest, ocean, and flocking birds, is mistress even more of the unique, the splendid contrast, the mind-catching integration of finely-meshed moving parts. The bird we can laboriously study by diagram, description, and dissection—is only a flash to our real eye, a momentary apparition we can hardly watch long enough to identify. The great tree whose species we have learned by rote and rule is curiously individual when we encounter its living grace and dignity in the woods.

What do we wish to know about the natural world? Its influence may be a boon if we love, trust and respect its very self; its balance may restore our equilibrium by contagion, if we are sensible of its harmonies; its unchanging changeableness may remind us in the nick of time that we and all our circumstances, all our joys and sorrows, all hope and misgiving, must also partake of that cohesive flux which is everywhere discernible in man's own birdlike flight of imagination. The beauty of a flower could not be appreciated if human life had no fair qualities to teach us wonderment and gratitude. The sweep of sky catches up our thought only because the mind itself knows limitless reaches. It has been said that we are what we see, but it is more true that we see what we are.

Has it occurred to us that Natural Philosophy may again be ours some day, that we need the inclusive laws, the species-skipping distinctions? Has it occurred to us that any man is a natural philosopher when he discovers that it is natural to be philosophical?