

GREAT REFORMERS: HENRY GEORGE

IF, in 1949, a man like Henry George could run for Mayor in a large metropolis in the United States—as George did in New York in 1886—and if he could nearly be elected—as George was—there would be reason for considerable hopefulness about the future of the United States as a political and social community. For George was one of America's great men, and in 1886 large numbers of Americans were able to recognize him as such. Not enough, perhaps, to place him in office, nor to institute the fundamental reforms in land policy which he advocated, but enough to make of his name a byword in the history of social thinking, and enough for his influence to filter into scores of legislative programs and by this and other means to leaven somewhat the evils of monopoly and the grasping acquisitiveness against which he contended throughout his life.

George was one of the last of the great idealists of the nineteenth century. Without any academic training to attenuate his humanity, he regarded ethics and economics as inseparable. During his lifetime, the professional economists were developing the theory that economics, as an "objective" science, could take no account of ethical values, but George was untouched by this alienation of science from life. He was a man before he was an economist, and economics, for his purposes, was nothing more than a field for the achievement of human justice. His ardor in cultivating this field caused another eminent American, John Dewey, to say:

It is the thorough fusion of insight into actual facts and forces, with recognition of their bearing upon what makes human life worth living, that constitutes Henry George one of the world's great social philosophers.

George began with an ethical principle—that the earth and its riches of land belong to no one man, but to all. An industrious man may create

wealth by using the resources of the land, but in this case the value arises from the labor, and not from the earth. In George's words:

Land in itself has no value. Value arises only from human labor. It is not until the ownership of the land becomes equivalent to the ownership of laborers that any value attaches to it. And where land has a speculative value it is because of the expectation that the growth of society will in the future make its ownership equivalent to the ownership of laborers.

How did George arrive at this idea? Not from reading books, but from personal experience of the economic processes that were becoming dominant in the United States.

Henry George was born in Philadelphia in 1839, the second of ten children of an unsuccessful publisher of religious books. By the time he was fourteen years old, he was working for a living. He went to sea for a while, then learned the printer's trade and set type in Philadelphia at a weekly wage of two dollars. Restless and dissatisfied, he sailed for San Francisco in 1859. Finding no work there, he attempted gold mining, but soon returned to San Francisco, without money and in debt. He went back to printing, but found no steady job. In 1861—he was then twenty-two years old—he married Annie Corsina Fox, an Australian girl, who soon presented him with a son. He was employed in Sacramento as a printer until 1864, when, losing his job, he returned with his small family to San Francisco. Now the anguish of poverty began in earnest, for George could find no work. Of this period, he later said that he was so poor that a job of printing a few cards, enabling him to buy some corn meal for his family, saved them from starvation. On the day his second child, Richard, was born, George stopped a well-dressed

stranger on the streets of San Francisco and abruptly asked for five dollars. Asked what it was for, George said, "My wife has just been confined and I have nothing to give her to eat." The man gave him the money without further question. George said years later, "If he had not, I think I was desperate enough to have killed him."

As soon as Richard had been delivered, the doctor ordered, "Don't stop to wash the child," and, indicating George's wife, said, "She is starving. Feed her!" It was after this that George set out to look for money, and met the well-dressed stranger.

George's diary shows the black mood that pervaded these days. On one occasion, he set down, "I have been unsuccessful in everything." Again, "Am in very desperate plight. Courage." After months, some typesetting work came his way. Determined to find other ways of making a living, he practiced writing. In a self-analytical essay he sent to his mother, he wrote:

It is evident to me that I have not employed the time and means at my command faithfully and advantageously as I might have done, and consequently that I have myself to blame for at least a part of my non-success. And this being true of the past, in the future like results will flow from like causes.

Driving himself to work at writing in his spare time, George began submitting his articles to newspapers and periodicals. The *Californian*, which regularly published Bret Harte and Mark Twain, printed George's sketch, "A Plea for the Supernatural." While working as a printer, he wrote more and more. Noah Brooks, editor of the San Francisco *Times*, often ran editorials written by the young man who set type in the composing room of the paper. After seven months of these efforts, he was made managing editor of the *Times*. In this period, George's thinking moved rapidly toward maturity. He contributed to the *Overland Monthly* an article, "What the Railroads Wilt Bring Us," which anticipated some of the themes that were to appear, a decade later, in his great book, *Progress*

and *Poverty*. Already, he had recognized that material progress might have other effects than increasing the general welfare. He saw the power of the railroad as a land monopoly and as an instrument for graft and corruption, and wrote:

The completion of the railroad and the consequent great increase of business and population, will not be a benefit to all of us, but only to a portion.... Those who have lands, mines, established business, special abilities of certain kinds, will become richer for it and find increased opportunities; those who have only their own labor will become poorer, and find it harder to get ahead—first because it will take more capital to buy land or get into business; and second, as competition reduces the wages of labor, this capital will be harder for them to obtain.

George was now an established journalist, but a man who could hardly stay with one paper for very long. He believed too much in speaking and writing the truth as he saw it. From the *Times* he went to the *Chronicle*, where differences with the publisher soon set him at liberty again. The revived San Francisco *Herald* sent him East to contract for the Associated Press service, and on this mission George experienced the tactics of monopoly in the newspaper business. When the Associated Press refused its service to the *Herald*, George opened an office in Philadelphia and began pouring news over the wires to his paper in San Francisco. Disliking this competition, the Associated Press induced the Western Union Telegraph Company to raise its rates for *Herald* messages while lowering the AP rates. George went back to San Francisco, but not until he had written a slashing expose of the methods of the AP and Western Union. Among Eastern newspapers, only the New York *Herald* printed his article.

It was during this stay in the industrially developed East, when George was hardly thirty years old, that the young newspaper man saw the stark contrast between fabulous luxury and grinding want, side by side. In him was born a determination that made everything in human life except the fight against injustice seem petty and

unimportant. His own description of this hour was published after his death:

. . . I shall say something I don't like to speak of—that I never before have told to any one. Once—, in daylight, and in a city street [probably New York], there came to me a thought, a vision, a call—give it any name you please. But every nerve quivered. And there and then I made a vow. Through evil and through good, whatever I have done and whatever I have left undone, to that I have been true. It was that that impelled me to write *Progress and Poverty* and that sustained me when else I should have failed. . . . That is a feeling that has never left me; that is constantly with me. And it has led me up and up. It has made me a better and a purer man. It has been to me a religion, strong and deep, though vague—a religion of which I never like to speak or make any outward manifestation, but yet that I try to follow....

George went back to San Francisco to fight for the common rights of the common man. He began by joining with Henry H. Haight, Governor of California, against the landed might of the Central Pacific Railroad—against the policies of Leland Stanford, Charles Crocker, Mark Hopkins and Colis P. Huntington. George edited the *Oakland Transcript*, which supported Haight, and the latter ran for re-election on an anti-railroad platform. The railroad bought the *Transcript*, tried to buy George, and failing, fired him; and it bought enough votes to defeat Haight. But George had his say. In a pamphlet condemning the grants of the vast areas to the Central Pacific under the Pacific Railroad Act of 1862, he declared:

The largest landowners in California are probably the members of the great Central-Southern Pacific Railroad Corporation. Were the company land divided, it would give them something like two million acres apiece; and in addition to their company land, most of the individual members own considerable tracts in their own name.

In this pamphlet, *Our Land and Land Policy*, George developed the thesis that was later to become world-famous in *Progress and Poverty*. He showed that land obtains its value from society—it is the presence of people on the land which makes it valuable. Land, therefore, is

social wealth, which should belong to the people to whom its value is owed. Rent for land, therefore, should belong to the entire community—it should be, in short, a *tax*; and George maintained that this "Single Tax," or land rent, would be sufficient to cover the costs of government. He argued:

The value of land is something which belongs to all, and in taxing land values we are merely taking for the use of the community something which belongs to the community. . . . In speaking of the value of the land, I mean the value of the land itself, not the value of any improvement which has been raised upon it. . . .

The mere holder of land would be called upon to pay just as much taxes as the user of the land. The owner of a vacant city lot would have to pay as much for the privilege of keeping other people off it till he wanted to use it, as his neighbor who had a fine house upon his lot, and is either using it or deriving rent from it. The monopolizer of agricultural land would be taxed as much as though his land were covered with improvements, with crops and stock.

Land prices would fall; land-speculation would receive its death-blow; land monopolization would no longer pay The whole weight of taxation would be lifted from productive industry. The million dollar manufactory, and the needle of the seamstress, the mechanic's cottage and the grand hotel, the farmer's plough, and the ocean steamship, would be alike untaxed.

Imagine this country with all taxes removed from production and exchange! How demand would spring up; how trade would increase; what a powerful stimulus would be applied to every branch of industry; what enormous development of wealth would take place. . . . Would there be many industrious men walking our streets, or tramping over our roads in the vain search for employment . . . ? Go to New York . . . the best example of a condition to which the whole country is tending. . . . Where a hundred thousand men who ought to be at work are looking for employment . . . where poverty festers and vice breeds, and the man from the free open West turns sick at heart . . . and you will understand how it is that the crucial test of our institutions is yet to come.

The problem that tormented George throughout his early years was this:

Where the conditions to which material progress everywhere tends are most fully realized—that is to say, where population is densest, wealth greatest, and the machinery of production and exchange most highly developed—we find the deepest poverty, the sharpest struggle for existence, and the most enforced idleness.

Thrusting aside the usual pessimistic explanations of this condition as a necessary result of "natural" economic law, George asserted that man, as an intelligent being, ought to be able to create a social system under which the natural increase of population would make everyone richer instead of poorer. The key to natural prosperity he found in the idea of equality, and equality he saw in a just land policy. During the *Transcript* days and his campaign for Haight, "he was riding a mustang in the hills near Oakland and happened to ask a teamster what the land there was worth. The teamster pointed to a distant area and said, "There is a man over there who will sell some land for a thousand dollars an acre." Reflecting, George reasoned that the owner had done nothing to augment the value of the land, which was no more fertile than similar land, elsewhere, selling at a few dollars an acre. The land near Oakland would bring this price because *people* had settled in Oakland, Berkeley, and San Francisco. This unearned gain, he reasoned, "belongs in usufruct to all." This realization became for George "one of those experiences that make those who have them feel thereafter that they can vaguely appreciate what mystics and poets have called the 'ecstatic vision'."

The fortunes of the Single Tax movement and the story of George's later career may be looked up in any one of a half dozen volumes. One excellent account is that by Charles A. Madison in *Critics and Crusaders* (Henry Holt, 1947). A detailed biography by Anna George De Mille, George's daughter, has appeared in serial form in the Georgist quarterly, the *American Journal of Economics and Sociology*, starting with the April, 1942, issue. Such writers have told the story of his world-wide influence, his analysis of the Irish

land question, his trips to England, where he met with immediate popularity, and his adventures in New York politics. As to politics, however, it should be recognized that in 1886 George accepted the nomination of the united labor unions in New York, not through any great eagerness to hold office, but because he believed in applying his ideas to current problems and because he felt that the campaign would have great educational value. George secured a large vote in the election, and some have claimed that he might have won if Tammany Hall had not deposited a large number of his ballots in the East River. In 1897, he allowed himself to be persuaded to run for Mayor again, this time after being warned by his physician that the excitement would kill him. Characteristically, he replied: "How could I do better than die serving humanity? Besides, so dying will do more for the cause than anything I am likely to be able to do in the rest of my life." It did kill him, for he died five days after the election.

Two passages from George's writings are especially pertinent today. Calling land reform "the greatest of social revolutions," he insisted that material progress demands a corresponding advance in moral standards:

Civilization, as it progresses, *requires* a higher conscience, a keener sense of justice, a warmer brotherhood, a wider, loftier, truer public spirit. Failing these, civilization must pass into destruction.... For civilization knits men more and more closely together, and constantly tends to subordinate the individual to the whole, and to make more and more important social conditions.

This insight now has verification in every part of the world. Of socialism, George wrote:

All schemes for securing equality in the conditions of men by placing the distribution of wealth in the hands of government have the fatal defect of beginning at the wrong end. They presuppose pure government; but it is not government that makes society; it is society that makes government; and *until* there is something like substantial equality in the distribution of wealth, we cannot expect pure government.

George, in other words, believed in equality *and* freedom, and he thought he saw the way to get both. Perhaps he did. Of his ideas, Madison's estimate seems just:

His system of political economy is, for all its flaws and "unscientific" emphasis, an original and positive formulation of a body of principles which has been condemned as a whole or in part by a number of the keenest academic minds but invalidated by none. And while the remedy of the single tax has failed to make its impress upon society, the philosophy underlying it has withstood the attacks of the acutest critics.

We, at least, are persuaded that a society of men animated by George's love of justice would have little difficulty in making his economic system work. And George, we think, began at the *right* end of the problem, which is more than his critics are doing, or have done.

Letter from **CENTRAL EUROPE**

VIENNA.—To understand the coming general elections in Austria, one should bear in mind that the first elections after the war, at the end of 1945, saw three parties fighting for control—the Austrian Peoples Party (fully supported by the Roman Catholic Church), the Social Democratic Party, and the Communist Party. The Communists secured only 4 per cent of the votes in 1945, and after a three-party coalition of brief duration, the two stronger parties divided the ministries between them. Remembering that the numerous parties of the '30's in Austria, as well as in Germany, prepared the ground for the dictatorship, many people have been inclined to accept this three-party system as final, believing that more parties would only cause political confusion without offering any ideas which had not already been presented by one of the three.

Now, as the elections draw near, there are signs that people are altering their opinion. Three parties are still regarded as sufficient, but there is criticism of the methods of the present parties—such as forcing party members in parliament to vote as strictly prescribed by the party council, with the two dominant parties regarding themselves as identical with the State.

Another important fact is apt to affect the elections—since 1945, two strong elements have been added to the voting population: the many thousands of prisoners of war who have returned to their fatherland, and the many thousands of Nazis who, being prohibited from taking part in the 1945 elections, have been amnestied since. As the men who return from prison camps are comparatively young, and as the former Nazis are regarded as activists, the existing parties are endeavoring to attract as many of them as possible.

To win over these men and women will not, however, be easy for any party. The former prisoners of war are in general fed up with politics. They remember that while they had to fight, to suffer want, to be wounded and to live for years behind barbed wire, those who were responsible and who robbed them of their health—or, at least, of their best years of youth—sat at home. These men lost their faith. Now they desire to lead a life of their own and refuse to be entangled again by the old, familiar political claims.

The former Nazis, on the other hand, are to a certain degree the natural opponents of the two parties in power, for both these parties supported the Denazification Law—an ordinance which severely punished Nazi party members.

Under these circumstances, various individuals and groups see an opportunity to establish new parties. One that is emerging is a party with an entirely new construction. It does not call itself a "party," but *Verband*, and proposes to represent people who are tired of politics. This League of the Independents advocates the complete de-politicalization of daily life. The State, its founders argue, has during the past thirty years become more and more the dictator of the people, even in the case of governments which have pretended or pretend to be democratic. Legislators, it is said, have not been selected by the voters, but by a small, autocratic group within political parties. Further, the active party workers enjoy special advantages and privileges obtained for them by party comrades holding office, while non-members are discriminated against. Civil servants who are loyal to one government are fired by the next one that gains power, with injustice and corruption as the inevitable consequences.

The League of the Independents, in its already popular newspaper, claims to be non-ideological and says its ideals are simply decency and honesty. The Independents show little interest in a foreign policy for Austria, asserting that so small a country needs only to remain on good terms with all the Powers.

While the traditional parties will of course retain a high proportion of the votes, it is evident that a growing section of the Austrian population is extremely discontented with the interference of the State in personal and private affairs. As the average citizen of today has no higher desire than to live, to work, and to rest in peace, there is certainly a chance for the eventual success of a social movement which takes these longings into consideration.

CENTRAL EUROPEAN CORRESPONDENT

REVIEW

HEROES ARE SCARCE

MANAS has more than once made strongly favorable reference to Dwight Macdonald's discussion of War Guilt, called "The Responsibility of Peoples." This essay, which first appeared in Macdonald's magazine *Politics* in 1945, appeals to us as one of the classics of modern psycho-political analysis. Even *Time* liked it well enough to reproduce a paragraph or two. Possibly, this material will some day become available in a volume of collected *Politics* articles.

Meanwhile, Mr. Macdonald seems to be keeping up his own sense of "responsibility" by continuing to focus his attention on the dilemma of a world where individuals get smaller and smaller as social mechanisms increase in size and complexity. To the winter number of *Student Partisan*, a mimeographed quarterly published by the Politics Club of the University of Chicago, Macdonald contributed "Some Further Speculations on The Responsibility of Peoples." Much of Macdonald's philosophy is summarized in a one-sentence definition of modern history:

The process of hauling the individual about like a bale, or a corpse, and cramming him into some badly fitting context of ideology or action—this is what is euphemistically called "history."

He continues with a suggestive illustration of his definition of history—the Berlin airlift:

Not since the completion of the River Rouge plant have we seen so dramatic an expression of American industrial genius as the Berlin airlift. Yet we have already seen, only three years ago, another airlift, perhaps not quite so amazing technically but still impressive enough, manned by the same kind of skillful young Americans and aimed at the same city and the same people, but whose cargo was not food and coal but rather blockbusters. Certainly we live in a world of shifting, flickering shadows, of protean shapes that suddenly change from horror to benevolence, from death to life. What is reality and what is illusion here? Were the bombs real, or is the food real? Were the young Americans who so masterfully bombed Berlin evil men? And are their

similar who are with equal mastery keeping the city alive good men?

Clearly, such concepts cannot be used here. In the last month of the war, the American air force destroyed in two nights the city of Dresden: one of the loveliest collections of architecture in Europe, a city of no military significance and with no war industry to speak of, a city that at the time was crammed with civilian refugees from the East, hundreds of thousands of whom died under the American firebombs. Yet I venture to say that very few Americans who planned and executed this atrocity felt any special hatred of the churches and refugees they destroyed. Nor do the airlift personnel today—feel any special love for the Berliners they are feeding. There is indeed a logic to both actions, but it is not a human, not a rational or ethical logic. It is rather the logic of a social mechanism which has grown so powerful that human beings have become simply its instruments.

Generalizing, Macdonald states that "such a viewpoint is chill and uncomfortable." He continues with the obvious explanation that our contemporary "political mythologists" make their living on man's need to transcend what *is* chill and uncomfortable. But, of course, even the prettiest myths don't actually warm us up. Only one thing will, and that is heroism, which, as Macdonald says, "like artistic talent, has always been a rare human quality." The reason why one has to be a "hero," or try to be, is because the modern State cannot afford to let an individual develop decisive individual judgment at any time. Too much independent thinking disturbs the "unity" of the Nation-State.

When Macdonald talks about heroes, however, he is not making another inspirational speech. He is saying, instead, something like, "Are you *really* a hero, little man? If you are not sure that you are, how can you blame the Germans, or the Russians—that is, the 'average' Germans and Russians like yourself—for failing to become heroes by opposing their governments?"

Mr. Macdonald becomes very irritated with the viewpoint—illustrated, he suggests, by such "liberals" as Thomas Mann and the former editors of *P.M.*—which rests on the dubious assumption

that "we," if tested, would reveal heroic qualities, whereas other persons in other countries are less noble. Macdonald doubts that many Americans would "resist a native fascism once it got its repressive apparatus functioning. Heroes just are not very common, that's all."

Here, and not for the first time, Macdonald has brought us to an important "negative" conclusion. Bearing in mind his able defense of what may only appear to be negativism, in an age where we seldom stop to face psycho-political realities squarely, the essential thing of moment still is, not to realize how few heroes there are, but how to become heroes ourselves. Granting that we cannot become heroes if we base our struggle for heroism on false premises, it is worse, even "vulgar," implies Macdonald, to try to make heroes of other people, as religions and political parties are always attempting to do.

But even if we do not know, and can never know in definitive terms, just how heroes are made, we can be sure that heroes will be assisted in their development by stimulating their powers of psycho-political analysis. So, while Macdonald may never create a hero, or even be one, he is contributing some material for the construction of them—at very low cost. And he puts in a rather fair bid for being some version of hero himself, through the dedication of his entire resources to publication of *Politics* and the various pamphlets issued by the Politics Publication Company. The funds, we understand, have run out, or nearly so, but we hope that Macdonald himself will not.

COMMENTARY

THE BEGINNING OF SCIENCE

SCIENCE for June 3 has an article on how to educate a "Scientific Generalist," the latter term representing a man trained in many fields of science, whose function would be to try to unify scientific knowledge in the service of the practical needs of modern society. The necessity for this sort of student of the sciences is obvious; as the writers of this article say:

Science is complex; yet it must become manageable. It can be managed better with the help of a few scientists with training in many sciences. A few such scientific generalists can be trained tomorrow with the courses at hand. To make science more manageable, we must perform a new and difficult synthesis on a higher level of organization.

There is a natural emphasis in the proposed program of training for "generalists" on study of "scientific method" and of the "logical framework" of the various sciences. But in listing the considerations which the writers say they started out with in attacking the problem, the first idea mentioned seems of greater importance than any of the others, yet it is the only one which has no serious development in the article. It is this:

All science began as part of "natural philosophy" and radiated outward. (Even in this modern day, it should be possible to recapture the universalist spirit of the early natural philosophers.)

Science, in other words, began as applied philosophy. It was certainly this for Copernicus and Kepler, and for Isaac Newton. Copernicus was Platonist and Pythagorean in thought; Kepler a pantheistic enthusiast; and Isaac Newton a profound student of Jacob Boehme, of Plotinus, and of the philosophical works of his contemporaries, the Cambridge Platonists. There seems little doubt that the seminal inspiration in the lives of these great discoverers came from their philosophical interests much more than from any other influence. They were, moreover, intense *students* of recondite metaphysical systems, rather than bright young men who,

wanting to be "scientists," took survey courses in the "humanities" so that their education would not be "one-sided."

We have no program of philosophical studies to recommend—not, at least, in the space that remains—but it seems extremely pertinent to point out the difference between the modern approach to "philosophy" and the originators of the "universalist spirit" which the planners of a scientific generalist education would like to "recapture."

CHILDREN ... and Ourselves

A SHORT letter from a reader on the question of "discipline" gives welcome opportunity to return to this central problem of education. A central problem of education is concealed in the term discipline, because, as our correspondent suggests, the whole "principle of leadership and social organization" is involved; and, we might add, also the question of the ultimate moral nature of the individual. Out of these two perpetual questions comes the issue of greatest moment in all our lives: How much, and in what way, can we influence *other* human beings towards the creation of the society we would like to have? and, also, What must we accept of an obvious implication of anarchist thought—that the only human being we can ever hope to change is ourselves?

Commenting on "Children" in MANAS for June 1, this reader says:

I pass over your concept of children as essential equals. It is both true and false—mostly false, in the same sense that "all men are created free and equal" is false.

What I wish to question is the use —of "discipline," which you equate with coercion and punishment. In one meaning of the word, this is sound, but

1. The pianist and the wood-carver have *disciplined* fingers.
2. The child who keeps his clothes and toys in their places is leading a *disciplined* life.
3. The Calvinist or ascetic disciplines his emotional life.
4. The discipline of the track team is accepted voluntarily by the members of the squad.

Totalitarianism in industry and war have led to violent reactions against coercion. But coercion and discipline are far from being synonymous.

Incidentally, the position taken in this article leads to the elimination of specialization and the abandonment of the principle of leadership in social organization. Are you ready to go that far ?

The context of our recommendation that "children should be treated essentially as 'equals' " should partially excuse us from the charge of too sweeping a generalization. We said:

While children do not develop, in the first seven or eight years, the same reasoning capacity as the adult displays, we *must* show toward the embryonic beginnings of reason in children the same deference shown to reason matured. Else, we demonstrate to the child that power and position, not reason, are the *important* things—before his ability to reason has fairly begun to unfold; and then, of course, it becomes unlikely that it ever will.

In other words, we are suggesting that adults make a conscious effort to treat children as equals *insofar as possible*. The fact that a conscious effort needs to be made is itself an admission that "equality" is elusive and only partial. The argument, then, is not that children are the exact equals of adults, but only that the most rewarding work with children is usually based upon the sort of community of thought, will and feeling which adults can help create if their principal concern is that of discovering *an essential common ground* with children. The "essential" equality, in our view, would be in the fact that the same faculties—the sense of right and wrong, and a sense of reason—are the common heritage of both. The differences in the capacity to reason and the differences in respect to maturity of moral judgment, while real enough for immediate decisions, are somewhat irrelevant to the goals of Education. The educator must, in a sense, ignore anything upon which he cannot build constructively, and concentrate upon those things which make growth possible. Essential capacities are therefore much more important than limitations of age.

Our June 1 article was designed to equate coercion and punishment with the Jehovistic idea that certain persons need to *be* "disciplined," rather than with the term discipline itself. The fact that the *philosophical* concept of discipline and the idea of *being* disciplined are almost

indistinguishable in our culture seems to us to prove the need for more clarity on both subjects.

"Coercion" and "discipline" are certainly not synonymous, nor, we might add, do we have to abandon the "principle of leadership in social organization" if we happen to oppose all tendencies to "punish" deviations from what are currently thought to be the mechanics of good organization. Leadership in social organization provides one of the finest opportunities for developing the sorts of discipline we all need to have. In the first place, the man who becomes a "social leader" must rid himself of all impatience, otherwise he becomes a dictator rather than a leader. His opportunity for "self-discipline" is endless, which might help to explain why political figures such as, let us say, Lincoln or Nehru, become genuinely great men. The very circumstances of their leadership forced them to realize something which Buddha was reported to have said—that "impatience is the greatest of all crimes, because it includes murder."

But the best qualified "leaders" of society are not the only ones who have opportunity to become acquainted with discipline in the leadership equation. All the "followers" who profess a desire to accept a capable individual as coordinator of their social activities need to undertake the corollary discipline of continuous fair-minded adjustment to ideas and programs which have not fully originated in themselves, i.e., anarchistically. And we know that it is always difficult to be fair about ideas which are not our own. We are usually either indifferent, or in opposition, to things which do not reflect our immediate emotional inclinations. Totalitarianism is not a function of the leadership principle, constructively conceived, but rather its abdication. To be led ought to mean to *go oneself*, with guidance—not to go in a closed box-car at night.

The best background for discipline, whether in a school or in the government of a nation, would seem to be the honest proposal of plans or specific undertakings by "leadership," and then an

attempt by the citizens to make up their minds as to whether or not they care to pledge allegiance to that program and carry it through, despite minor personal perturbations. In any case, this is certainly the best context for working with a group of children. If children participate in the decision to undertake a certain course of study or a certain planned activity, it is reasonable to use every means of persuasion to hold them to it—every means short of coercion.

The difference between a great and a mediocre leader, whether educator or politician, seems to reside in the fact that the "great" man is always willing to give up a project when the men who helped sponsor it change their minds or hearts about it. All persuasion may be used, but no coercion. Gandhi's refusal to continue with the Civil Disobedience campaign against British rule when various of his supporters branched off into acts of violence is one good example of this. In other words, the genuine leader still considers himself "led," in all instances, by the capacities of the people who ask him to do the leading, but he need feel neither dictated to by, nor dictator over, his people.

FRONTIERS Science and Philosophy

THE tribute paid to Ortega y Gasset in the Review section some weeks ago recalls a passage in his *Toward a Philosophy of History* which bears on a much neglected aspect of scientific thought—the weakness of philosophical or social conclusions which are supposed to issue from scientific premises. It is a passage of some length, and happens to be the beginning of the book, but we quote it almost entire for the reason that it contains, so far as we can see, the most important criticism that can be made of what some contemporary thinkers call "scientism." Ortega writes:

Scientific truth is characterized by its exactness and the certainty of its predictions. But these qualities are contrived by science at the cost of remaining on a plane of secondary problems, leaving intact the ultimate and decisive questions. Of this renunciation it makes its essential virtue, and for it, if for nought else, it deserves praise. Yet science is but a small part of the human mind and organism. Where it stops, man does not stop. If the physicist detains, at the point where his method ends, the hand with which he delineates the facts, the human being behind each physicist prolongs the line thus begun and carries it on to its termination, as an eye beholding an arch in ruins will of itself complete the missing airy curve. . . .

For living means dealing with the world, turning to it, being occupied with it. That is why man is practically unable, for psychological reasons, to do without all-round knowledge of the world, without an integral idea of the universe. Crude or refined, with our consent or —without it, such a trans-scientific picture of the world will settle in the mind of each of us, ruling our lives more effectively than scientific truth.

This is a theme of Ortega's book—which anyone more interested in the *meaning* of science than in the multiplicity of its facts ought to read with pleasure and enlightenment. It is a theme which has special pertinence for the science-horrified modern world.

Recently, several writers in academic and scientific publications have been exploring the possibilities of this sort of criticism of scientism, as though they were making some new discovery. It

probably *is* new for many of the readers of these journals, but the fact is that Ortega only gave remarkably clear expression to an analysis of scientific thinking and philosophizing that has many forms and many expositors. E. A. Burtt, for one, of Cornell University, in his *Metaphysical Foundations of Modern Physical Science*, shows that the supposed divorce between science and philosophy never really took effect, but that, instead, scientific thinkers only imagined that they were ignoring philosophy, and one unsuspected result of this innocence was that they often gave vent to very bad philosophy.

Attacking the problem at another level, Harry N. Rosenfield in the Spring *Antioch Review* writes on the fallacy of leaving important human decisions to "experts." "The expert in any profession," he writes, "has no special competence or wisdom over other citizens for dealing with broad social goals." Great social reforms are seldom the work of experts, but "almost uniformly come from outside the organized ranks of the experts." Further:

Our professions have contributed heavily to human welfare through their remarkable scientific advances and technical progress. But resistance to change and innovation is the consistent pattern of the professional hierarchy. Our most respected professional organizations constantly act as bulwarks of the *status quo*.

History finds our organized professions lacking in social vision, foresight, and imagination. As an institutional force, when their vested interests are at stake, the experts have never been right in assessing the forces of social progress.

Is the indictment unjust? We do not think so. Someone might argue that *true* science, the *spirit* of science, is not like this, and the argument would have force, but Mr. Rosenfield's point is that Science as a human activity which affects our lives—the science that goes to Washington to explain how to arm the nation more effectively, the science that is in the business of making and selling new medicines and drugs, the science that dictates the health policies of nation and state and maintains the doctrines of medical orthodoxy—this Science, Mr. Rosenfield will tell us, is no longer the spirit of discovery but something quite different: it is the spirit of the custodians of other men's discoveries, theories and beliefs.

This writer is talking about the kind of science you can look up in a book, and when you find what you are looking for, there are no two ways about it. You do what the book says, and if you do it well, you get the desired result. Mr. Rosenfield thinks we should not listen to the experts—the keepers of "the facts"—when we come to questions which have no answers in the book—which belong in the region of that "airy curve" that Ortega was talking about. Experience bears out this counsel, for it appears, according to the evidence cited by Mr. Rosenfield, that more than half of the advances in legislation usually credited to the medical profession were strongly opposed by the various medical associations until some "layman" with a conscience got stirred up and went to work.

We need, in other words, another sort of competence than the competence that we have come to respect almost exclusively—the competence of the expert.

In the *Scientific Monthly* for June, Lewis Beck accuses scientists of imitating one another—specifically, he says that the social scientists have been trying to look up the answers to their problems in the handbooks of the physicists. He writes:

In imitating the natural sciences, the social sciences attempted to follow both the methods and the metaphysics of the former. The social studies tried to tend only to observable and measurable entities and to connect these by simple causal or functional laws. If the social scientists thought that they were like the natural scientists in studying "reality," they became mechanists or materialists. If they feared equating their verified hypotheses with "reality," as many natural scientists did, they became positivists. In either case they took over ready-made philosophies of the nature of scientific objects. But there was no unanimity on the philosophical foundations current among the natural scientists, and the "unity of the natural sciences," by virtue of which they might have served as an unequivocal model, was an illusion even before the death of Comte.

What the social scientists referred to do not seem to realize is that they have chosen to work in the region of the airy curve, but are unwilling to admit that at least some of this region is beyond the scope of "facts" that can be codified and stored away in a library or on microfilms, for use "when needed." The social scientist is confronted—or ought to be confronted—by such

questions as, What would happen if every man who pretends to the ideal of wanting to live a useful life should begin, *right now*, to pattern as much of his life as he can on the example set by, say, Socrates? You can't look up the answer to that—all you can do is try it for yourself—a procedure which, incidentally, would be highly scientific as well as vastly educational. Then there is the question of individual and group behavior. What part do ideals play in affecting behavior? Which are the "right" ideals, and what is "good" human behavior? These questions need careful weighing, for if too much "prudence" is exercised in answering them, the answers, taken together, may define Jesus of Nazareth as a psychopathic dreamer and Gautama Buddha as a chimera who couldn't possibly have lived and done what he did with the ideas he held.

It is Mr. Beck's suggestion that it would be nice some day to have a "Newton of the social sciences," but what, actually, should we expect of one who would put the study of man on a scientific basis? He would have to have, it seems to us, at least four times the genius of Isaac Newton, and to be prepared to set aside as inapplicable most of the trusted principles which have served the physical sciences so well. Instead of trying to establish the rules of action and reaction for man, he would have to start out with the postulate of the unpredictability of human freedom. And instead of amassing definitions of the "properties" of human beings, he would be concerned with their *purposes*, and with what is the best means of distinguishing a good purpose and a bad one. We suspect that if Mr. Rosenfield were called upon to make recommendations, he would urge all those who go into training to become future Newtons in social science to make sure that they successfully avoid all "specialties," and any sort of limitation on the field of their study and inquiry, lest they lose sight of the primary aim of the study of man—the achievement of social and moral synthesis for the sake of man.