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PROBLEMS OF THE TRUE BELIEVER

MEN call the present time an Age of Unbelief, and if the prevailing intellectual temper determines how an age should be named, Unbelief is certainly the correct term. Today, most serious discussion takes place within a limited area of thought circumscribed by doubt and admitted ignorance. One of the first conditions for obtaining a hearing for any argument or point of view is to suspend it in a sea of skepticism with regard to all decisive philosophical views or absolute values. If a speaker or a writer even hints that what he says is connected with some profound conviction as to the nature of things—a conviction which is more than poetic or sentimental, and which implies some specific course of action which is consistent with it—almost immediately he gets an instinctive "what-will-this-get-me-into?" sort of reaction from his audience. Few people want to be involved in Big Schemes and Philosophical Outlooks. Big Schemes are likely to be false—look at the theological scheme from which the Renaissance and the Scientific Revolution rescued us—and in any event, they will involve us in new responsibilities. Meanwhile, it is possible to seem clever, even profound, by remaining skeptical, and we can still do more or less as we please, so long as our opinions make up a kind of floating island of words and ideas, unhitched to any principle with obvious consequences.

On this ground, then, ours is an age of unbelief. Yet life itself is no denial, but an affirmation. Skepticism is not a natural expression of human beings, but a reaction to repeated betrayal. We should all *like* to believe in some final order of things, so long as it does not destroy the most precious thing we know of—our moral freedom—and even though the intellectual temper of the times is against believing much of anything, most men are engaged in a kind of subconscious quest for certainty. It is a fact, moreover, that what gets done in the world is done mostly by men of conviction. Their convictions may be bad, which means that bad things get done, but it would be foolish to deny that skepticism always fights a delaying action, and that the men with positive programs, with great dogmas to declare and panaceas to apply, find it easier than the skeptics and doubters to hold an audience. The only thing that the doubters have on their side is the evidence they can present of betrayal. Fortunately, this evidence is fairly impressive.

But besides the pretentious affirmations of great organized ideologies, there are individuals and small groups—people of various persuasions—who are convinced that they have found the truth, or at least a major portion of the truth, and who busy themselves with trying to put it to work. They may be a small number of people who have found what they regard to be philosophical, rational religion. They may be subscribers to one or another of the decentralist credos; or see the key to social and moral reform in cooperative and intentional community living. They may be revivers of some ancient wisdomism, such as the doctrines of Plato, or those of Gautama Buddha. They may be pacifists with an anarchist theory of social arrangements, or simply conscientious followers of Henry George. In any event, they are people with a thesis, with some sort of program, whether it be one of moral education, philosophical inquiry, or a voluntaristic plan of social reorganization. We may leave out of consideration those who may be regarded as belonging to the lunatic fringe—the obvious sectarians, the utopian escapists, and the over-simplifying enthusiasts of mechanical panaceas—and restrict the discussion to people who may be presumed to be serious, intelligent, and interested in the general good. To call these people "true believers" is simply to identify them as having

certain settled convictions which reach beyond the common assumptions and the sterile skepticism of the age. It means that they are willing to work for causes, and have at least a basic inclination to be rational and open-minded concerning what they do.

On the side of the true believers, it ought to be noted that whatever good is accomplished in the world is done through their efforts. The floaters and the skeptics simply cash in, for a while, on the creative achievements of men with convictions. Narrow and bigoted as they were, the Pilgrim Fathers did make the voyage across the Atlantic. True believers are always needed for the arduous labors of pioneering. The Founding Fathers of the United States were true believers of a sort—they were, almost to a man, Deist philosophers with a broad, humanitarian faith on which the American Dream was founded. Even the origins of science in the ancient world are owing to men of positive philosophical convictions, rather than to ancient skeptics and materialists. As Lange, after reviewing the discoveries of the ancients in his *History of Materialism,* is forced to admit:

> When we behold knowledge thus accumulating from all sides—knowledge which strikes deep into the heart of nature, and already presupposes the axiom of the uniformity of events—we must ask the question, How far did ancient Materialism contribute to the attainment of this knowledge and these views?
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> And the answer to this question will at first sight appear very curious. For not only does scarcely a single one of the great discoveries—with the solitary exception of Demokritos—distinctly belong to the Materialistic school, but we find amongst the most honourable names a long series of men belonging to an utterly opposite, idealistic, formalistic, and even enthusiastic tendency.

Historically, at any rate, the True Believers need no particular defense. Social experience presents much the same testimony with regard to success in community enterprise. John Humphrey Noyes, founder of the Oneida Community, after listing forty-seven failures in attempts at community living in America, expressed the view that the most conspicuous break-downs were due to a lack of religious or spiritual unity rather than to inferior organization or management. Charles Nordhoff, author of an exhaustive study of American communities, came to the same conclusion: "Religion must be the foundation of every human society which is to be orderly, virtuous, and therefore self-denying," adding the important qualification that "if it is meant that in order to succeed there must be some peculiar religious faith, fanatically held, I do not believe it at all."

Thus the achievements of True Believers are more or less beyond dispute. The state of the believer, however, has its hazards. There is always considerable danger in being Right about anything. In the first place, most True Believers, save solitary mystics who listen only to an Inner Voice, embrace with great confidence an entire body of doctrine. It is of course quite possible for men who believe in rational methods of inquiry to cleave strongly to some basic philosophical outlook, together with its implications; they may say that the doctrines they accept are the consequences of first principles, and that while they have not yet tested *all* the doctrines, the first principles are what is most important, and these they know to be true. There is no great difficulty, here, in going along. The world is full of people who live in houses, drive cars, travel across bridges and ride in trains which all were built according to recondite mathematical formulas which these people do not understand. They take the theory on faith, and gladly accept the pragmatic justification in the results. While "proving" ethical and social and philosophical theories is more difficult, the method, at least, of starting with first principles and working out the doctrines as you go along seems about the only thing a man can do if he wants to believe in anything of importance.

But a special hazard confronts the True Believer who has grown up in the atmosphere of Western civilization. He was born into a culture

which for centuries declared that salvation could result from an act of *faith*, and from his childhood was instructed in tenets and doctrines which he could not possibly prove for himself, either through experience, or by the logical development of first principles. He is, in short, saturated with the habitual psychological attitudes of a militant and aggressive religion—for a religion which does not supply the means for gaining rational conviction *has* to be militant simply in order to survive. It cannot rely upon the might of truth itself, for truth expresses its might only in rational terms, while dogmas must avoid all commerce with rationality.

The emancipated True Believer, therefore, will have to guard against this heritage. Being on the Right Side is not Enough. It is a great deal, perhaps, to have faith in the dignity of man, to accept the proposition that all humans, regardless of race or condition, are equal in their divine potentialities, and to believe that love is stronger than hate, that there is something of God in every man, and that a moral law rules the universe. But it is possible to believe all these things and to be terribly, terribly wrong about many other things—about deeper issues of existence as well as practical affairs of life.

The one thing that the True Believer can never afford to do is to take an organizational view of the Truth which he thinks is his. No one's mistakes are ever sanctified by the fact that his efforts are on behalf of the Right Side. A man's mistakes *may* be sanctified by the fact that he has done his best not to make them, but he cannot be purified by association, any more than he should be convicted by association.

The truth, in short, is never political. Absolute knowledge may exist, but it belongs only to absolute men, and the only finality in the universe lies with the endless possibility for each man to discover a little more of the truth for himself. We doubt, therefore, that any sort of organization should ever be formed to declare any other finality but this one. And even such an organization should be carefully hedged with an anarchist constitution.

Organized truth, doctrinal dissertations, even logical demonstrations are so easily turned into systems of belief, and these, in turn, made into substitutes for personal discovery, that one can well understand why Buddha, Pythagoras, and Jesus never wrote anything down. And yet the world needs true believers. It needs men and women who will live their lives for their convictions. Perhaps the real test is simply that they must be sure that the convictions are really *theirs*, and not some form of pious hearsay, or an envied certainty which as yet belongs to others.

Letter from ENGLAND

LONDON.—Lady Violet Bonham Carter, daughter of a former Prime Minister, and herself a leader of that little which remains of the formerly great Liberal Party, has been saying in public what many must have been thinking in private these last few years. She has been attacking the policies and examining the achievements of that strange Moses, Clement Attlee, who would have led the people into the Promised Land; of Attlee and the Socialist Party led by him. One point made by this brilliant daughter of a brilliant sire, is worthy of quotation and thought. Said Lady Violet: "I do not believe that classes any more than nations can thrive on one another's ruin." Whenever thought is translated into action in human affairs, whether at the level of the family, or on the vast scale of national policies, there always come into play those imponderables which were not foreseen or brought into the total picture. Today, in England, we are experiencing the consequences of this limitation in foresight and wisdom of a group of men who, whatever may be said of their policies, are outstanding as disinterested idealists. That the present government, headed by the curiously private-public figure Attlee, with his Boy Scout outlook and Evangelical morality, has ardently desired to make better the lot of the masses of workers in these isles, nobody doubts. What, then, has gone amiss that the fulfilment has fallen so far below the high promise?

A full analysis of the causes of a failure, no longer to be disguised, is beyond the scope of a brief letter. But certain salients may be indicated as significant, both of the general problem of political reform and the achievement of social justice in the modern state. And the first question that arises in the mind is this: *Must there always be a victim?* Is it, indeed, an iron law that what is one man's meat is, inevitably, another man's poison? That, it would appear, is the question posited by Lady Violet. For there is now abundant evidence that what has been done in England to better the conditions of the workers, a large section of the people, has been done at the expense of the so-called 'classes'. These are the rich, including the inheritors of wealth, the landed gentry and nobility, and the class best described as the managerial class. This group includes those who direct all manner of business and enterprises, and those who practice the professions. All these classes have suffered under the welfare state and are today in a state of measured liquidation. Whether it is a good thing to eliminate these classes of the community as part of the general policy of levelling down, I do not propose to discuss. The subject is too vast. What one may examine, however, is the consequence of the impact of the new conditions of life on the workers of this country. In what spirit are they marching into their Workers' Canaan? What cheers rise from the high slopes of Mount Pisgah as the once-downtrodden enter into their heritage?

Had William Morris been told this tale of the Welfare State and had he been asked to write a description of the effect of it upon the workers, he would, one may believe, have envisaged them as united by a common sentiment of gladness and an upsurge of the spirit, as we are invited to believe the Russian workers evinced on the passing of the old regime and the coming of the new.

Why there has been nothing of that kind it is hard to say: that there has been nothing of the kind is admitted on all sides. The chains of bad wages and long hours and insecurity may have been struck off, but the liberated party is not skipping with joy or manifesting a capacity to use wisely this new-won freedom. There may be many explanations for this apathy, this complete lack of a new *esprit* among millions now earning wages which would have been regarded as fantastic a few years since. It may be that there is a spiritual ennui after the efforts and sufferings of the late War. I do not know. But what is manifest is that the political leaders of today are getting no backing, other than at the polls, from

those towards whose betterment their labours are directed.

Thus, while the upper class and the great middle classes are adjusting their lives to the economic level of the working classes of a decade ago, the working classes are coming up to the enjoyment of amenities peculiar to the two classes which now move towards final eclipse. It is with the shock of the totally unexpected that the middle classes are realizing that under present day social and economic conditions in England it is better for a man to be trained as a tradesman, *i.e.*, a plumber, carpenter, mechanic, etc., than for him to be trained as a schoolteacher, lawyer or doctor. If these implications of the emergent new social order in Britain are to be acted upon, then the middle classes will have to jettison prejudices and a way of life whose roots go back into the times when their present plight was being generated in the sweatshops and sweat factories of the Industrial and post Industrial eras. A whole new set of social values will have to be created, for the threatened classes have but two alternatives. They must either fade out impotently, as the Russian rentier and aristocratic classes have faded out, or they must merge into the working classes and share in their economic advantages.

For the philosophic observer, the England of today has much to engender sadness. Our people work shorter hours at a slower tempo than the continental workers, and do so for far higher wages. The stress put upon the duty of the State to the individual has produced a widespread lack of moral responsibility. No longer are the primeval duties attaching to the rearing of a family the task of the parents, but that of the State. And with redemption from harsh, but necessary duties, has come a false sense of importance, with the word "right" working overtime. It is not untrue to say that the great masses of the people in Britain today take it as a right that the State should carry their burdens.

What they do not appear to realize is that the State, as entity, has limitations, both of wisdom and of wealth, and that by systematic transfer of wealth from one or more classes to another, as Lady Violet Carter has suggested, we may be building new lives for some at the cost of the ruin of the lives of others. So to our first question: must there always be a victim?

ENGLISH CORRESPONDENT

REVIEW
"MODERN MAN IN SEARCH OF A SOUL"

THIS title, given to a collection of Carl Jung's lectures on the psychology of religion, suggests two things: First, that the proper study for man is man himself—that in respect to religion the truths we need to know can never be obtained by choosing handed-down revelation as a point of departure; second, that it is only by giving respectful attention to the universally expressed religious quest for transcendent meaning that we can know the whole of the human story.

Among psychologists, it is Carl Jung to whom we are most indebted for iteration and reiteration of the second contention—a thesis to which MANAS can subscribe. Freud, stronger than Jung in insistence that man free his mind from the warpings of guilt-ridden theology, nevertheless failed to give due recognition to the fact that "the religious instinct" in man is something above and beyond dogmas and creed, and that the problem of the quest for metaphysics is part, and a necessary part, of the problem of human happiness.

Appreciation of Jung is overdue in MANAS, especially since, a few weeks ago, a review of Erich Fromm's latest volume, *Psychoanalysis and Religion,* gave ground for the impression that Jung had been slighted if not misrepresented, in comparison with Dr. Freud. Our real intent, there, was to call attention to an original and provocative point of view, so that Freud might be rescued from the disapprobation in which he is usually held by men of religious background. For Fromm, we think, is right, and Freud can be called a religious man—a man with an impassioned message for the deliverance of his fellows.

Jung, on the other hand, is more of a genuine religious *scholar.* He looks at all creeds and beliefs as means to study man's psychic nature and heritage. Above all, he gives help to those who want to understand religions sympathetically. One of our readers, while levelling justified complaint at portions of the Fromm review, offers clear testimony on the matter of Jung's importance as an educator:

> Jung advances a thought that has been of some help to me in understanding and working with my contemporaries as well as my children. That is seeing the process of life as a continuous growth. Jung does not think that an individual should or can be judged as to final goals by actions in one short span of time, that, as the baby crawls back. ward in order to learn to go forward, just so the adult may seem to retrogress when actually in preparation for an advance in maturity. This thinking has gained acceptance in the field of child psychology (*i.e.*, Gesell). It might be productive of good results if more generally accepted in work with adults. I have a real horror of the prevalent practice of judging our fellows (usually unfavorably) when a sincere study of the total life-situation and possible outcomes would be more constructive. Perhaps Jung's point of view seems too optimistic, yet I've found it a good guide to my own living.

Jung finds psychological truth in Buddhism, Hinduism, the various sects of Christianity—and even medieval alchemy! He is a man with an open mind, an eclectic in the best and purest sense. But Jung has a doctrine of his own as well as a great tolerance—the doctrine of "psychological truth," which in respect to religion runs like this: Each belief represents a human need, though sometimes vague or twisted: Religions are necessary for most men, so that they will not feel lost and alone—else they would not have been created in the first place. Thus Jung was able to say, in *Integration of Personality:*

> May we, therefore, be thankful to humanity, to all the well-meaning shepherds of the flock, and to all the anxious fathers of the hosts of children, when they erect protective walls, set up efficacious pictures, and recommend passable roads that sinuously wind around the abysses.

One of the last lectures printed in *Modern Man* makes his meaning even more plain:

> I am firmly convinced that a vast number of people belong to the fold of the Catholic Church and nowhere else, because they are most suitably housed there. I am as much persuaded of this as of the fact, which I have myself observed, that a primitive religion is better suited to primitive people than Christianity, which is so incomprehensible to them and so foreign to their blood that they can only ape it in a disgusting way. I believe, too, that there must be protestants against the Catholic Church, and also protestants against Protestantism—for the

> manifestations of the spirit are truly wondrous, and as varied as Creation itself.

Finally, summing up his own position in relation to Freud, Jung shows that he feels that religions may be synthesized with psychoanalytical theories, without any fundamental alterations in religion:

> It is well known that Freudian psychoanalysis is limited to the task of making conscious the shadow-side and the evil within us. It simply brings into action the civil war that was latent, and lets it go at that. The patient must deal with it as best he can. Freud has unfortunately overlooked the fact that man has never yet been able single-handed to hold his own against the powers of darkness—that is, of the unconscious. Man has always stood in need of the spiritual help which each individual's own religion held out to him. . . . It is indeed high time for the clergyman and the psychotherapist to join forces to meet this great spiritual task.

Here, according to Dr. Fromm, and according to our review of *Psychoanalysis and Religion*, is Jung's weakest point. We consider man to need *religion* but not *religions*, and if Freud unexpectedly seems to emerge as the more percipient on this matter, Jungians need not feel desolate. Again and again, on other matters, Jung has proved himself the more helpful educator. But we hold the right to criticize the religion-for-your-needed-psychological-solace thesis as strongly as we wish, and like Fromm, we link this trend with a Personal God, Authoritarianism in the Church, and Authoritarianism in the State. Behind each one of these persuasions is a lack of conviction in man's capacity to become himself a self-reliant God, and a moral God, in his own right.

Our opportunity in reviewing Dr. Fromm's book, incidentally, was that of showing that one of the greatest living psychologists maintains there *are* "absolutes" in respect to what is good and bad for man—that the effect of certain beliefs and attitudes is always destructive of human personality and happiness. The point of view is important if only because it is uncommon in psychological circles and needs discussion.

But if Fromm, or Freud, or Jung, or MANAS makes mistakes in summing up profound matters of human psychology, there should be little wonder. The problem of finding a genuinely helpful psychology today is the problem of finding what will bring "science" and "religion" together. This is knowledge we must have. Therefore, we have to make value-judgments, we have to attempt historical analysis, and we have to *hope* that greater self-knowledge will result. An easy or sentimental synthesis, however, is simply not good, just as marriages undertaken to avoid boredom or to gain security are poor risks.

It is encouraging to note that Jung, for years a pupil of Freud and later a rival interpreter of the psychological world, has never condemned his opponent, as is the wont with religious schismatics. Always he acknowledged his debt to the man with whom he differed. Meanwhile Jung was himself attacked, like Freud before him, most virulently by the orthodox in *both* religion and science.

The great modern psychologists, of whom Jung is certainly one, have all served, each in his own way, to explain the gap between Science and Religion. Freud did this explosively, believing that the structure of religions must be razed to the ground before man could stand forth free and unashamed. Jung saw religions as stopping-off places for humanity, necessary shelters in the night. Both Freud and Jung, however—the ideas of these two very different men being in fact complementary—have helped men to see the conflict between Religion and Science in terms of the conflicting values they face in daily living. Broadly speaking, Religion has told men to learn to live "out of this world," that they may not become corrupt and miss the higher, clearer and nobler living available beyond the grave. Science has joined full concentration upon the tangible benefits of sensory experience, insisting that we gear our idealisms to demonstrable possibilities of happiness.

The psychologist has had, in our day, therefore, the unique opportunity of playing the role of philosopher. If he fathoms that the secret most needed is self-knowledge, and that self-knowledge has to do neither with a possible future life nor the present life of the senses, but with *the world of values each creates for himself*, he can stand above the bickering of partisan claimants on both sides.

To point out Freud's ethical concern is difficult, but it is interesting, even if controversial, to try. Perhaps we can say that Freud came like Lucifer, the Light Bringer—both were confused with the devil. The "discoverer" of the "unconscious" flashed rays of illumination into the dark places of the average human mind. He had no message of faith in the sense that religious apostles carry faith, and he was clearly and deliberately a "godless" man, yet his concern was for the freedom of the human soul. His attacks on religion were not attacks on ethics; he rather re-stated the old Buddhist doctrine, paraphrased in the following way in Sir Edwin Arnold's *Light of Asia:*

> Ye suffer from yourselves. None else compels,
> None other holds you that ye live and die
> And whirl upon the wheel and hug and kiss
> Its spokes of agony,
> Its tyre of tears, its nave of nothingness.

(Neither can any God nor any Church help you—only yourself.)

How is one to synthesize the essential contributions of Freud and Jung? Freud was like a Thomas Paine—calling the evils of a system to account, and hoping that when all he wrote was proved true, by each one for himself, men would set themselves free. Jung was like a Madison, writing the Constitution.

Here we had better take note that if we leave Freud uncriticized and in the company of Lucifer, Tom Paine and Buddha, it may be concluded that we think Sigmund the wisest man who ever lived. We *don't* believe this. He was in part the child of his age, his preoccupation with sex theories of mental disorders being explicable by reactions against centuries of medieval theology, and perhaps in part also by his own personal nature and problems. Freud was intransigent in pushing his own theories forward—insistent and autocratic, too, we have heard. The urbane Jung was certainly a far better model of educational deportment. But Freud *does* have a message for genuine students of religion, we think, and it is by these that Freud should be read, as well as the more obviously helpful Jung.

In any case, both Freud and Jung had ethical concerns: What is ethics if it is not attempted growth towards a conscious and integrated sense of purpose, finally broad enough to include the significance of other individuals as comrades on the odyssey?

We think it important to know that great psychologists of our age have all been "in search of the soul"—have ethical concerns—and that only the shallow hangers-on have failed to burn with some conviction as to how man's lot can be improved. Fromm's presentation of Freud's outlook is especially interesting in this regard, for we have become far too accustomed to judging a man's ethical feeling by the phrases he uses, instead of, properly, by how he uses them and for what end. Freud has been depicted as the arch materialist by the spokesmen of religion—the "non-ethical" man. But he was irreligious chiefly in the sense that Albert Einstein was "irreligious" when, addressing a conference of religions and sciences, he had the courage to speak against the concept of a Personal God. Freud, at such a meeting, would probably have won even fewer friends than did Einstein, in his similar contention that men have to throw away their religious crutches and look to whatever divinity they can find *within themselves* to solve their problems.

Over such a meeting, Jung, on the other hand, could have presided. We wish he had, by the way. He wouldn't have refused to invite Einstein again, as did some other dignitary, nor would he have wished, metaphorically speaking, to have thrown Freud out.

COMMENTARY
THE LIMITED CIRCLE

ONE need not be a sociologist or a social worker to know that in civilization-as-we-find-it, the individual is never very far away from some injustice which has a growth as healthy as its nature is vile. A close look at public institutions is seldom cheering, and the staggering problem of law-enforcement is met by shorthand solutions which generally are somewhat less than intelligent or humane. The administration of government or civic agencies, of school systems and hospitals, is fraught with compromises and expediencies of which the innocent idealist never dreams, while the great freedoms of speech and press are often protective coloration for "bugs" no zoologist has described.

By sheer volume, the mass of injustice seems outside the sphere of individual efforts at amelioration. One inequity removed only deepens the shadows of those that remain untouched. One tragedy averted underlines the many that cannot be helped. The cynic finally abandons all attempts to succor, and though the hopeful and willing reformer may continue his efforts against overwhelming odds, he cannot be sure that his way is unquestionably the best. Yet the impulse to help is undeniable, and something in human nature resists the idea of inevitable suffering. But what shall be attempted?

Extravagant notions about throwing one's life away in the cause of social progress can be put aside: of what use is it to imitate the indiscriminate excesses of blind chance? Recognizing at the outset that his efforts and energy will be limited, the person sets a limit also to his field of activity. From the point which is himself, with a radius determined by his sense of responsibility to others, he draws his circle of influence. If his sphere is too small, he will be engrossed with the futility of his own existence and attacked by feelings of meaninglessness and self-despair. If his circle is over-large, the discrepancy will likewise be obvious, for then he will have no will to do the possible, being obsessed with his incapacity for miracle-working. The man whose sphere is proportionate to his courage, will, and application may seem happier than anyone has a right to be in a world so filled with improprieties of justice, but he is happy in, and not for, himself. His is the happiness of whole-hearted effort, the peace of responsibilities ungrudgingly fulfilled, and the contentment flowing from a goal firmly set and striven for without deviation. Curiously enough, though such a man works within a limited circle, his influence appears to spread far beyond.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves

Watching small children scribble over large quantities of paper with their crayons has led me to certain reflections, which run somewhat as follows. Perhaps our abundance of paper for such purposes is a misfortune rather than an advantage. Without meaning to say that paper consumed in this way is really a "waste," it remains a possibility that play supplies for the very young might better be chosen among less easily destroyed materials. Perhaps the earliest drawings should be with chalk on slates, or done on the surface of the ground with sharp sticks, or on wet sand. Perhaps clay modelling should come before drawing. The crayon calls for control, which the small child lacks. Should tools needing control for proper use be introduced quite so freely? Isn't the idea of control and conservation of materials fully as important as "free expression"?

Isn't it possible for our abundance to betray us into obvious inequalities with other peoples who have not our material resources? Is the habit of using paper by the ream a good one to allow, and couldn't the same freedom of expression be obtained in other ways—ways less extravagant of a material like paper, which is so scarce in some parts of the world? Newsprint, we say, is very cheap, and we have so much of it—what does it matter? It matters, however, that "One Sunday edition of between 80 and 100 pages of one of the leading New York newspapers requires 60 to 80 acres of forest." At any rate, there are things to think about, here, it seems to me.

THIS criticism, like many others which may be levelled at some of the techniques utilized by liberal or "progressive" nursery schools, needs to be considered from two sides. There is no doubt that children ought to acquire a distaste for waste, or even excessive prodigality. We can establish this as something of a dogma if we accept the premise that the happiest child is the child who most completely grasps and uses his immediate environment. Having the child's environment the "right size" for him—not too complicated, not too much a matter of charity, nor too costly—was a strong point in Gandhi's educational pioneering in India.

Everything, even the training of the intellect and the absorbing of useful information, should ideally come to us first in small packages. Especially is this true of what we get from the schools. And if we can think back to our own days of grammar or high school attendance, we shall have no difficulty in recalling that many subjects which *might* have interested us, if we had been able to take them a little bit at a time, actually swamped us completely with too great a coverage of detail and theory all at once. We can all "take" large doses of learning, *but only when we proceed from our own inspiration or desire:* only then are we able to throw enough energy into the job for genuine assimilation.

Let us draw further on the analogy already suggested. Many children are given too much to eat, too many things to eat, and things to eat too many times a day. It should be quite obvious that we need to look here for the cause of modern man's development of such truly atrocious tastes in food. It is here, in relation to the most primitive and basic of all life's physical experiences, that the problem of waste needs to be first met.

What we need to cultivate among children and among ourselves is the habit of "taking" only what we are sure we can assimilate, whether of ideas or edibles. As we mature, we may certainly hope to gain the capacity for judging our appetite beforehand. But since children have not had our years of experience, at first they might very well be given nothing more than "samples" of each food introduced to them, including the food of new ideas. This method, by the way, will probably give them lusty appetites for both.

Coming back to the original question, we may certainly join in deploring excessive use of paper for very young children—to the extent that it is the opposite of training in social responsibility, and an example of the type of indigestion we have been describing. But there is another side to the story, which can be ably stated by most progressive educators, especially those who have

considerable faith in the natural disciplines which may be brought to bear through freedom in artistic expression. Once again, looking back to grammar school days, or better, to kindergarten, when you were given several sheets and told to fill them with drawings, each sheet, as you completed it, *stood for something completely your own.* It was conceived, begun, and terminated by *yourself.* The very feeling of having paper that one could call one's own may have meant a great deal by helping us to feel our distinctive individuality, and, finally, our responsibility. For when we pronounce something "done" we are immediately driven to evaluate its excellence. Even if others did not see the drawings we made when we were five or six or seven, we probably developed some standards of criticism whenever we finished one and laid it aside.

We would find it easy to agree that a great psychological service is performed by allowing children to have more freedom of esthetic expression, and we think our civilization can well afford to use some of its paper for these purposes. (We would rather give up most of the newspapers, first, as a matter of fact.) However, to reverse ourselves once again, the child also has a great need for appreciating the value of all materials used. Long before he can be told how many acres of forest children use up each year for drawings, he *could* acquire a respect and care for all that he uses. This training, though, should be in the home. If our schools did all the "wasting" and the homes did none, what we can now legitimately call "waste" in the school would have to be given another name.

We submit that many, noting abuses such as mentioned by our questioner, have probably been bothered much less by the paper shortage than by most children's obvious lack of appreciation or concern for their materials. In these instances the criticism is certainly sound, but the cause does not lie primarily in the "theory of the educators"—rather, in home training. If there are any parents who hold the school systems responsible for teaching their children to be too prodigal with property and materials, the school should send the parents back to have a look at their own homes—and encourage them to study the household habits that have accompanied the child's growth from infancy.

FRONTIERS

The Institutional Dilemma

IN New Jersey, recently, an enterprising parent, Fridolin Seifred, who had decided to educate his children at home was jailed for refusing to pay a fine imposed on him for not sending them to a public school. (By interesting coincidence, the brother of this parent was imprisoned by the Nazis in 1936 for refusing to send his children to a Nazi Youth School.) Another New Jersey parent, David Dellinger, confronted by the same problem, addressed his County Superintendent of Education to explain the sort of education the Seifred and Dellinger children, and some others, were getting at home:

> With the children under four, the educational process is mostly related to music, art, crafts, dancing and other matters, which, as you probably remember, Plato considered the most indispensable ingredient of any education. The five older children also work together on the techniques of reading, writing, and arithmetic. At the present time the Seifred and Dellinger children study together in our homes a minimum of one day a week, besides the work they do separately. In addition they travel one day a week to The Modern School, in Stelton, New Jersey. Finally, we exchange regular visits, either for weekends or often for a week or more, with several other families who have four or five children of similar ages. . . . The neighborhood and family environments of the children with whom our children exchange frequent visits are very different from our own. We believe that this helps counteract any tendency to be too protected or ingrown, and stimulates the children to think for themselves. (Part of a letter appearing in *Resistance* for April.)

The writer, David Dellinger, explains that one of his children would be away from home about nine hours if sent to the nearest public school, with nearly three hours spent walking and riding on rough country roads. The State, however, requiring all New Jersey children to attend public school or to obtain "equivalent instruction," has found it necessary to punish one of these parents and may penalize others.

The obvious defense of the New Jersey law is that irresponsible parents would soon neglect to send their children to school, while giving them no training at all at home. It is the situation of the Seifreds and the Dellingers, in contrast to this argument for compulsory education, which creates the "institutional" or "organizational" dilemma. If we start out by admitting that education by government authority is a good thing, we are forced by the justice in the claim of the Seifreds and the Dellingers to say that compulsory education laws should be more loosely written and enforced with greater discretion. But if we say this, there is at once the rejoinder that extensive discretionary power on the part of administrators creates opportunities for graft and the misuse of power. Doubtless, the solution lies in better administrators—people who can be trusted with discretionary power—but this means, really, that we need more people who are more intelligent, to elect and support such administrators, and to vote for more flexible laws. Actually, the present laws seem to single out and work a notable hardship on the parents who are exercising unusual intelligence—as in the case of the Seifreds and the Dellingers—in the education of their children!

Another phase of the institutional dilemma appears at the other end of the educational situation—in the schools themselves. In the *Nation* for May 26, Hannah Bloom reports on the one-woman crusade of Ione Swan, Los Angeles elementary school principal, for safe playgrounds, nutritious and clean food in school cafeterias, for an end to graft, inefficiency and mismanagement, and for more intelligence, generally, in public school education. After producing evidence that the ice cream sold to the children in her school was unfit for human consumption, that the "hamburger was extended with suet and water . . . that meat containers were coated with dried blood and often left unwashed for months . . . that maggots were seen crawling in the meat containers," Mrs. Swan was discharged last February by the Board of Education. Although, as a result of her charges against the Board of

criminal negligence and malfeasance in office, which led to a grand jury investigation, one school board member failed to be re-elected last month, no civic, educational or labor group is supporting Mrs. Swan in her fight for reinstatement as principal of the Wilshire Crest Elementary School. Her backers, thus far, include only some aroused parents and a few courageous teachers. She has, however, the enthusiastic support of one local newspaper, the *Canyon Crier*, published in Laurel Canyon, Hollywood, which on March 22 printed a complete story of her campaign.

The problem, obviously, is one of raising the level of parental and public responsibility. Meanwhile, the same sort of difficulties afflict other public institutions, for example, the Veterans' Administration. In 1945, when Dr. Paul B. Magnuson took over the job as Chief Medical Director of the Veterans' Hospitals, after the post-war shakeup and national scandal of the mistreatment of sick veterans, he tried to inaugurate a program which would place the best possible medical services at the disposal of the veterans. His partial success has been recognized by several investigators and committees, but lack of authority to affect medical purchases on behalf of the veterans' hospitals and to choose the locations of new hospitals (he wanted them close to important existing medical institutions so that the veterans would benefit by their facilities) led to his protesting resignation early this year. In February, Dr. Magnuson told a Senate investigating committee that the VA medical program "has already begun to show signs of deterioration," adding that "as long as the Administrator [General Carl R. Gray, Jr., who succeeded General Bradley in 1945] maintains that he is 'the Surgeon General' as he has publicly stated, I can see no possible chance for a really successful medical program." The criticisms of administrative policy made by Dr. Magnuson and by impartial groups who have studied the problem include such striking statements as the following:

> Nearly half of the 89 new VA hospitals are being built or planned in areas where experience has proven that it will be difficult, if not impossible, to secure adequate staffs. Further, construction of these may prevent erection of essential hospitals near medical centers which can be staffed and given the best care.

According to expert testimony given before the Senate Committee, some 5,000 VA hospital beds are idle, due to a choice of isolated hospital sites, over the objection of medical advisers.

Parents are in a position to fight against inefficiencies and corruption in the schools, but veterans incapacitated by war are virtually helpless and friendless, except for veterans' organizations. The responsibility of government in connection with the care of sick and disabled soldiers is peculiarly great, yet now, within five years, the Veterans Administration has twice been charged with gross neglect through maladministration, and, according to qualified investigators, twice convicted.

One can conceive of a plan of decentralized responsibility for education, but how can men who have suffered from the national calamity of war be returned for local care to their homes and communities? It is difficult to see any real solution of this problem, short of the abolition of war.