

## MORALITY AND POLITICS

THE trouble with politics as a field of human enterprise is that in it you can do less and less about less and less. It used to be said that a non-political person who also cherishes humanitarian ideals is bound to be an impractical person—one who is not really serious about the ideals he pretends to hold. In such an argument, the important question, then, is this: Is it possible for the reverse to be true—that a point may be reached in human affairs when the political person becomes the man who is impractical, and who may even be accused of not taking seriously the ideals he declares are his?

We are moved to ask this question by the contents of an article submitted to MANAS for publication. We are not going to print this article, although we shall quote portions of it below, for the reason that it presents charges against the people active in politics which, even if they are true in one sense, are untrue in another. Yet the force of the charges ought not to be ignored.

The writer of this manuscript, while not a political person, lives in Berlin, and is, therefore, abnormally sensitive to the political tensions of Europe, even though he is himself, like other Berliners, in no way able to affect the course of the political forces moving about him. His first attack on politics as a field of activity involves the claim that a politician cannot be truthful. He proposes to show by example that this is true of both sides in the "cold war," beginning with his personal experience of the Russians in East Berlin:

The Soviets pretend to be for equality, to have established republics of workers in which the workers have the say, in which all rural and industrial property is theirs. In this city of Berlin, from which I am writing, we have only to go a few yards across the demarcation line between "East" and "West" to get an idea of what this "equality" means. In East Berlin we can see the workers, the "owners of all," going to their daily occupations on foot or bicycle, and by luck we may meet the big party bosses hurrying through the streets in powerful cars, equipped with a special horn to clear the streets of pedestrians—not very different from the horn William II once used when his car was hurrying through the same streets. I have

an old friend in East Berlin who actually lives on a pension of 80 marks a month; I have another friend, also of East Berlin, a professor of mathematics, whose pension plus salary plus other income from certain indemnities totals 6300 marks a month, and I could not help remarking, when he told me of this, that apparently it pays to be a member of the Communist Party, which he is. So the slogan that the workers own all property is no more than a lie to deceive the people and make them support their government.

Well, in the "objective" terms in which the communists dearly love to define moral issues, it certainly sounds like a big lie; but if we are going to be completely fair about these things and allow even a communist the possibility of righteous subjective intentions, we ought to have a look at the history of this "lie." Only a few decades ago, the Russian revolutionists were intent upon seizing both power and property in behalf of the common people, the working classes. At that time the Bolsheviks talked about the rights of the people and declared that everything they did was in behalf of the people. Then, after the power had been gained, the necessities of governing a newly-born revolutionary State—a State, moreover, involved in at least half a dozen border wars with unsympathetic capitalist powers—began to dictate the policies to be followed by the ruling Party, and that Party, calling itself the Dictatorship of the Proletariat, dictated in turn to the people. This converted the full revolutionary rights of the people into "symbolic" rights, while the real rights, because of the emergencies of the day, were exercised instead by the governing authorities.

Now it is certainly conceivable that the original Bolsheviks believed that the transfer of actual power to the people would eventually take place—that the symbolic rights of the people would finally be metamorphosed into the substance of freedom. But meanwhile, the leaders spoke symbolically of what they were doing "for" the people. This situation has continued from that day to the present. Some of the hopes of the revolution have doubtless been realized—we leave it to the social and political historians to tell which ones, and to what degree. The question,

however, remains: When does the subjective claim of revolutionary intention become, in the face of facts, an objective *lie*? Some thought needs to be devoted to this question, since whatever the answer requires in terms of direct correspondence between political claims and existing circumstances can also be required of the claims of any rival system—our own, for instance.

Our German writer now gives his attention to the West:

The Western bloc likes to call itself the "Free World." It includes the Union of South Africa, where some 75 per cent of the inhabitants are deprived of all political rights and discriminated against. It includes Spain, where a totalitarian government, which gained power by ruthless violence and with the help of two fascist powers, has suppressed all civil liberties; a country where there is even a religious dictatorship under which no girl can learn shorthand or typing without first having passed an examination in the Roman Catholic religion. It includes the Republic of Guatemala, where a government established by free elections was ousted by means of military violence, and replaced by another government which came to power in elections held after all political adversaries had been imprisoned.

No Western politico can dwell for long with any safety on these unpleasant facts. Just as, in the United States, no Democratic candidate for the Presidency dare say very much about the current resistance in the American South to the de-segregation decree of the U.S. Supreme Court. As Murray Kempton noted in the January *Progressive*:

In Chicago last November 19, Gov. Stevenson improvised into his prepared speech the judgment that integration is no longer a political issue, because it has been decided by the Supreme Court. It was a notion which could at once satisfy the cold of heart and not affront any visiting Southerners, who must know that any man to whom judicial decree is reality and the morning paper irrelevant fantasy is no danger to them. The next day, Averell Harriman held a press conference and was asked about Emmett Till. He answered that New York has not solved its own racial problems and was in no position to preach to anyone else. And the Governor of New York thereafter departed for Alabama where he addressed a farm-porch audience of planters and business men and preached to the Russians about social decency. He did not mention civil rights.

Our German correspondent is undisposed to make excuses for such polite evasions. Instead, he says, bluntly: "The man who goes into politics in either the Soviet bloc or in the 'Free World,' has, first of all, to be willing to maintain these basic lies." Are they really "lies"? After all, a well-intentioned Democrat like Mr. Stevenson—who is also an extremely intelligent Democrat, as his speeches during the last Presidential campaign amply revealed—can hardly hope to put his beneficent program into effect, and can hardly hope to get elected without the support of the "solid South." So, of political necessity, he "glosses over" certain facts about the South which he cannot possibly approve. And other well-intentioned Democrats who admire Mr. Stevenson may squirm a little, but explain that "it's just politics."

The next chapter offered by our Berlin critic of the political way of life has to do with high diplomacy. No man, he says, dares to speak the whole truth at any diplomatic gathering:

Consider the recent negotiations concerning the reunification of Germany. One side pressed for "free elections" in all Germany, while the other side opposed them. The real issue was quite different. There is no doubt but that today the most important raw material on this globe is uranium. There are three major deposits of this material—one in Canada, one in the Belgian Congo, one in the Erzgebirge, on both sides of the frontier between Czechoslovakia and East Germany. Two of these deposits are at the exclusive disposition of the U.S.A. and the other Western powers. The third is producing the uranium necessary for the Soviet Union. Is there anyone in the world who will believe that the Russians can be persuaded by "free elections" in Germany, or in any other way, to deliver their only source of uranium to the West, enabling the U.S.A. to have a monopoly of uranium tomorrow and to bully Russia into unconditional surrender the day after? And can anyone think that the political leaders at Geneva were unaware that this was the real issue?

But uranium was never mentioned at Geneva. They all delivered their wonderful speeches, now memorialized as in the "Geneva spirit," each speaker knowing that his listeners knew he was dodging the essential point. This is foreign politics in our world, and without the plain determination of all who take part in it to deceive their adversaries and the people of the world, such politics would be impossible.

The life of the diplomat is not an easy one. He has three loyalties to claim his allegiance. There is his loyalty to his country's "national interest." He may also feel a degree of loyalty to humanity, being subject, like other men, to the suspicion that the national interest may have to "give" a little, here and there. Remains his loyalty to diplomatic tradition and protocol. The diplomat is indeed a captive spirit. Happy the man who can maintain a nice balance among his loyalties without suffering from fits of cynical depression! Such a diplomat can be both sincere and longsuffering, and doubtless there are many such diplomats in the foreign service of every great nation.

Domestic politics, also, is not without its trials. Our contributor offers this example:

In 1924 the British Labor Party came to power for the first time. At the next general elections, the Conservative Party used an inexcusable trick to defeat the incumbents. A few days before the elections, a letter from the Russian communist, Sinowjew, to Ramsey MacDonald was published, in which the Russian leader apparently gave some kind of "instructions" to the British Labor Party. The letter raised considerable excitement, since free Britishers had grave distrust of a party subject to foreign influence. Accordingly, the Labor Party lost the elections, and the Conservative Party came to power again.

A few days later the leaders of the Labor Party produced irrefutable evidence that the Sinowjew letter was a forgery, deliberately produced by the Conservatives in order to win the elections. But now it was too late. The Conservative government was in power and did not yield.

Suppose a friend or neighbor used such methods to gain success in his business: would you still want his friendship? Participation in political fraud, however, seldom affects a man's good name. Deceit is accepted as a main ingredient of political wisdom and practice. This is the decisive point. We are all so accustomed to deceit in politics, both at home and abroad, that we no longer see it and feel it with the moral sense.

The last and most terrible compulsion of politics involves the weapons of modern war. The Berliner writes:

The chief tool of foreign politics is the threat of using atomic weapons. For a while, after the Geneva

Conference, it seemed as if the politics of bullying with atomic threats might be abandoned—not from the emergence of a new morality, of course, but in consequence of the amazing development of nuclear weapons. That time seems to be over, for bullying is once more in full swing, with further "tests" and threats. The man who hopes for a political future must be at least willing to menace his adversaries with atomic weapons and, eventually, to use them in war. It is senseless to make threats without having the heart to carry them out, if need be. And what will carrying them out mean? It will mean the deliberate killing, by atomic heat in a moment or by radiation within a few years of millions of men, women, and children—most of whom, if not all, may be called completely innocent, it seems to me. These people may of course be "guilty"—if that is the appropriate word—of living under a bad and tyrannical regime. But what a curious idea we have of liberating them—by burning them alive!

Ideological distinctions pale into insignificance in the lurid glare of such intentions. Survival is now the issue—nothing more. H-bombs have no political significance, nor can they "liberate" anyone at all.

It is a sign of the appalling degeneration of our so-called "Christian" civilization that the possibility of burning millions of innocent people for political reasons is now being discussed as though it were not a detestable crime. One can read in the press of the "Free World" such statements as, "We ought to have used the bomb in Korea . . . or in Indo-China!" There are similar proposals for a "quick" settlement of the Cold War, with very few protests that this would be an incredible mass slaughter of human beings.

We are not persuaded that all men who go into politics share these views. Indeed, with some it is quite otherwise. But there is enough truth in the charge for it to be deeply disturbing. And a case could be made for the claim that to vigorously oppose such views would be political suicide. We wonder if our correspondent can be called "wrong," even if his blanket charges are not "right," either.

The issue is not, it seems to us, so much one of righteousness as it is of maturity. Men who are untouched by slogans and utopian dreams are able to see the "objective truth" much as the Berliner sees it. But the others—what folly to think that they are all "evil" men! Meanwhile, this evil that may be found in politics—and elsewhere—grows and grows.

## *REVIEW*

### EVERY MAN A PHYSICIST

This is the universe: infinity. Space without beginning, without end, dark, empty, cold. Through the silent darkness of this space move gleaming spheres, separated from each other by inconceivable distances. Around them, again inconceivably far away, like bits of dust lost in immensity, circle smaller dark spheres, receiving light and life from their "mother suns." One of these little spheres, in the light of one of the countless suns in endless space, is our earth. This is man's home in the universe.

THE relationship between the awe-inspiring descriptions of heavens and atoms provided by modern physicists, and the history of man's imaginative thought, is nowhere more suggestively portrayed than in a remarkable volume by Fritz Kahn, entitled *Design of the Universe* (Crown, 1954). Consisting of 360 easy-to-read pages and diagrams, this book would be an invaluable addition to anyone's library. "Field Physics," "Quanta" and "Nuclear Fission" are not, we discover, simply mysterious topics for specialists to conjure with, but subjects which stir our own philosophizing capacities.

For the beginning of what we call "science" is really no more and no less than human imagination and philosophy. Both during the initiation of any experimental work—when hypotheses are being daringly constructed—and when the implications of a lately established theory are being examined, we find ourselves thrust into the realm of philosophical inquiry. Mr. Kahn's perception of this last supplies an underlying current in his book; take, for instance, this parallel drawn between ancient Brahmanic thinking and the concepts of modern physics:

In Brahmanic thinking, as in modern physics, matter and energy are identical. There is one universal "mass-energy" which plays as dominant a role in ancient Hindu philosophy as does God in the Bible. Named Brahma, it is regarded as the one universal divine agent. Brahma is the same pantheistic concept of god and nature as the One and All of the Greek philosophers, the *Ens Unum Eternum et Infinitum* of Spinoza, and Goethe's concept of the all-embracing God-Nature.

Mr. Kahn then turns to the phrasing of an actual Brahmanical interpretation, first remarking that "the following excerpts deserve to be read with care because through them one becomes acquainted with a beautiful interpretation of our mysterious world":

In the beginning was not non-existence, nor existence: There was no realm of air, no sky beyond it: no water, no height, no depth. Death was not then, nor was there aught immortal; no light was there, the day's and night's divider. Darkness was there, and darkness concealed the beginning of creation. But One Thing *was* there, and apart from it, was nothing whatsoever: Brahma. But he had no form as yet and no motion. The Gods were not yet there, for the Gods came later into the world. Who verily knows whence it was born and whence comes this creation? Not the Gods, but sages who searched with their heart's thought discovered the existent's kinship in the non-existent.

Invisible yet omnipresent; the hand cannot grasp him, yet he embraces all; he cannot be seen, yet light comes from him. He cannot be felt, yet all feeling proceeds from him. From him comes everything that happens, but he himself remains the same. He is never surprised and never speaks. He sees everything and causes everything to happen. Everything in him is unquiet, yet he himself remains quiet. As all things have proceeded from him, all return to him, as if they had never been. Therefore he is patient and still.

Here we have the changelessness, the immutability of "the infinite." But modern science focuses upon another dimension of the "eternal." Within the "absolute," there are millions of indomitable striving wills and energies on a never-ending quest for greater perfection. The Chinese teaching of Tao as "The Not Yet Perfected" also provides insight into this other dimension. After reading chapters of *Design of the Universe* dealing with the reduction of matter to energy, with radiation, and with that tiny universe known as the atom, we discover that Einstein, in his most far-reaching attempts, had a great deal in common with Brahmanical writers and with the philosophical Taoists. Describing Einstein's efforts to formulate "unified theory for the unpredictable, 'lawless,' short-lived 'quantum fields,'" Kahn summarizes:

Einstein objects to the defeatist assumption that these quantum fields could not have a common

denominator. . . . He is convinced that a "universal field theory" can be developed, even though the mathematical difficulties are enormous and surpass the capacity of our present mathematical methods. He thinks he has found the formulas of this unified field theory but he cannot prove them. He compares his situation with that of Newton, who, having found the law of gravitation, had to create the calculus to prove it mathematically. He does not agree that the world is dualistic, that protons are bodies which follow classical laws and are at the same time waves which do not follow classical laws but the rules of quantum mechanics. He does not abandon the scientific approach as hopeless. Like all great thinkers he believes that the universe is essentially what the word universe means: A One; and that a formula will be found which embraces all events in the universe. Asked for evidence to support his conviction, he replied: "I put my trust in my intuition."

Matter has been reduced to energy, and objects, large or small, to "fields"; what are now called "classical fields" are indeed a thing of past history. The activating force in the construction of worlds and solar systems is somehow inherent in each center of energetic intelligence. Causality is not mechanical, but an unfolding from within. Order comes from chaos; order is not a contradiction of chaos, but an unfolding of latent potentiality. Therefore, while the world may end, that which procreates worlds, solar systems, and universes cannot end—if we reason that since matter-energy is indestructible, so also are those invisible designing energies which provide their own forms for expression in "material" forms.

*Design of the Universe* also contains an excellent account of the role played by abstract philosophizing in the development of the heliocentric system. Copernicus "discovered" the laws of motion of the planets, and the proper position of the earth in the solar system, because he was deeply immersed in the writings of Pythagoras! Thus one feels a becoming humility in comparing the science of the present with the religion and philosophy of the ancients. The most important truths—even what we call "physical truths"—are simply being rediscovered in ways appropriate to our present stage of intellectual evolution. The ideas which Pythagoras expressed in terms of a heliocentric theorem

flowered as part of a common language spoken by certain ancient Greek philosophers—mostly discussed in "inner circles, such as academies, where they were transferred from teacher to pupil." From Greece, as from India, we have "the basic fundamentals of a philosophy," which is indeed "perennial."

The uniting of modern science with the inspiration of philosophy cannot, of course, be attempted carelessly, nor be achieved on the basis of over-simplification. But the publication of *Design of the Universe* indicates that the religion and the science of the past will give way to what Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan called "wisdom religion." Kahn concludes a description of the earth with these words:

We remember the words of the astronomer—a dot among millions. But if this is a dot, how marvelous a universe where dots are suns!

Each molecule is a constellation of atoms, and in every atom electrons revolve like planets around the sun. So the great circle of the pattern of things is closed: macroplanets above us in the sky, microplanets beneath us in the atom—and man just halfway between electrons and stars. Can this be coincidence?

We cannot provide the answer. But we are convinced of the basic truth: that the universe is an indivisible entity. There is nothing "great and nothing "small," nothing in the millions of galaxies that does not obey the natural laws governing our minute planet.

Form may differ and size may vary, but the innate nature of things is the same everywhere. We find nothing in other worlds that does not or could not exist on earth.

## *COMMENTARY* **SIEGE PERILOUS**

THE German correspondent quoted in this week's lead article explained that he had been caused to write as he did by a letter from a friend in India who spoke of going into Indian politics. Reflection on the prospects of a political career in India led our correspondent to consider by comparison the apparent necessities of going into politics in the West, with the manuscript we have quoted from as a result.

He is much more hopeful of the opportunities in Indian politics:

In the fine round hall of the Indian Parliament at New Delhi, there is a picture on the wall, just above the chairman's seat, with the inscription underneath: "The Father of the Nation." It is a picture of Mahatma Gandhi.

That man went into politics with the firm determination never to lie nor to use violence. He could not be trusted with any secret, as he would talk about it deliberately. It was his habit, whenever he undertook a political campaign, first of all to inform the adversary of what his next move would be. Using such means, and never any other, he became, I dare say, the most successful politician of this century.

Why should I not advise a young Indian to go into politics, when such are the habits of his country?

India is indeed fortunate to have had the extraordinary example of Gandhi as an active participant in political affairs. And the Berlin critic of Western politics may be quite right in suggesting that a political career in India promises greater fruitfulness to a man of moral responsibility than would be possible, at this time, in a corresponding career in the West. But we suspect that most thoughtful Indians would experience some embarrassment if asked to defend the claim that the Gandhian spirit has become the "habit" of their country. Gandhi was a hero, but it takes more than one hero, or even two or three, to give heroic habits to a population running into hundreds of millions. It may be true that the challenge of Gandhi's example has evoked a

response from enough contemporary Indians to set up an authentic current of integrity and constructive friendliness to the rest of the world, and for this we may be immeasurably grateful. But it would surely be a mistake to claim that the Indians, because of Gandhi, have become so different from other peoples that they are untouched by the major confusions and temptations of twentieth-century public life. The Indians have had Gandhi, and they have had a fresh start on a national career. The degree to which they will confirm Gandhi's example and continue the momentum of their new beginning remains to be seen.

## CHILDREN and Ourselves

### "LITTLE THINGS, AND TIME"

WHEN Dr. Bruno Bettelheim chose the above title for a chapter in *Truants from Life*, he came as close as anyone possibly could to summarizing the process of emotional rehabilitation. Psychiatrists and counselors in such outstanding centers as Bettelheim's Orthogenic School at Chicago increasingly realize, it seems, that neither disturbed children nor adults can be expertly "adjusted" according to some formula. In fact, the trend has rather been toward following the old dictum, "when in doubt, abstain." When some new form of therapy is proposed, doctors of the mind recall Freud's initial insistence that each "mental patient" must eventually cure himself—a view that has been heavily underscored by clinical experience. Whether working with children or adults, the perceptive psychiatrist realizes that the most he can provide for an emotionally disturbed person is made up of "little things, and time." He cannot become a substitute for the "self" of his patient, make decisions as if he were that self. The consciousness of each individual, whether child or adult, is, in some mysterious way, inviolate. The therapist, then, *provides an environment conducive to self-awakening*, and may also assist in establishing helpful symbols for both conflict and progress. But the progress, in final analysis, must be self-induced.

It often seems to us that the psychological sciences are providing, in a manner so gradual that it may almost pass unnoticed, a definition of man in accord with the view of the ancient philosophers. The new picture of man is of man as a "God" in his own right, replacing the stultifying view that we were either born of an extracosmic Deity, or by chance, as creatures. And if the newest view and the most venerable view are one and the same, is this not indication that we are in touch with a fundamental truth of far-reaching consequences to all our religious, philosophical, social and political thinking? The "fundamental truth," we should say, is that we cannot improve anyone's life by doing something to

him. We cannot make decisions, and we cannot build a society in which he will automatically find fulfillment. We cannot "guarantee" his freedom nor, certainly, pursue *his* happiness for him, like some destiny-making Good Angel. All this, of course, has been said many times before, and said in ringing tones by inspired liberals, by poets and by artists. But if we are gradually coming face to face with the nature of man, the emphasis on inviolability of individuality can never be outworn, nor can this rule be fully and finally stated. Psychiatrists who work with children suffering severe emotional disturbances are certainly driving home the point impressively—since if even children must be dealt with in terms of their need for freedom of choice, how much more true this must be in respect of adults!

Recounting one dramatic case history in *Truants from Life*, Dr. Bettelheim describes that crucial period in which the child fights both *for* and *against* self-control. Patiently, counselors and psychiatrists had lasted out the awakening of repressed and hostile impulses, witnessed the destruction of minor pieces of property while they were unable to convey to the distressed youngster anything more than the feeling that they were interested in *him* and sympathetic to him, no matter what he did. The fact that he was a *person*, then, could gradually seem to be more important than what he did. Restraining only the wildest forms of overt behavior, the counselors thus allowed "Paul" to awaken, within himself, a desire for self-restraint. When Paul first resisted himself he became, for the first time, "open, direct, rational," and even though this occupied but a fleeting moment in his turbulent history, it marked the beginning of what Dr. Bettelheim calls "rehabilitation."

An article of interesting correlative significance appears in the *Saturday Evening Post* for Jan. 14. "My Child Lives Again" is the story of two parents who, largely unaided, discover how to bring a totally uncommunicative child from darkness into light. In this case, so long as the parents fretted over clinics and the conflicting opinions of the experts, no progress was made. Why? Simply because the parents had, as yet, no real faith in their child, her potentiality for responding to either love or

responsibility. But when these parents then decided to give up visits to the clinics—mere "visits" may often do more harm than good—and became convinced that all the ingredients of the solution were actually present in their own household, a tide was turned. Speaking of this moment, the mother relates: "The strength I found from that decision was like an answer to a prayer; Sandy began to change. With the perceptive ability she had never lost, I believe she sensed the change from a negative attitude of uncertainty about what to do, to the positive attitude of reaching out to her in sureness. The walls between us began to crumble. There was nothing magic in what we did. No rules could be drawn up; an intuitive feeling for what was best at the moment had to be our guide." The story continues:

We eliminated virtually all discipline for many, many months—until the time came when Sandy herself demonstrated that she could accept discipline. Instead, we tried to show our love, especially after she had done something destructive, naughty or unacceptable. She never lost the ability to know what was wrong; we believed that she just couldn't help herself.

We did not put her under the slightest pressure to conform to any standard of behavior. With the pressure off, incidents of behavior that would be counted as unacceptable became rarer. Sometimes we saw Sandy punish herself for her misdeeds, slapping her own hand. Now she has begun to demand some discipline, even to enjoy it. In any case, we resolved to treat her with good humor and happiness. No one in the house has talked to her in despairing tones. Laughter has been the most healing of all our medicines.

A discussion of parallel interest occurred in the Feb. 23 issue of the *Christian Century*—dealing with the meaning of the word "empathy" and its role in psychological science. Empathy, as the writer, John Lagemann, points out, is "a word that has only recently made its way out of the psychological laboratories to help us increase our understanding and enjoyment of people. Empathy is the ability to appreciate the other person's feelings without yourself becoming so emotionally involved that your judgment is affected. It sharpens our perception in all sorts of situations in our daily lives. It's a state of mind which anyone can develop and improve."

The distinction between empathy and sympathy is crucial. While sympathy may be simply a state of feeling bordering on pity, empathy is active perception based on understanding—founded, above all, on recognition of the unique individual qualities of the person undergoing suffering. Mr. Lagemann continues:

Empathy is akin to sympathy, but whereas sympathy says "I feel as you do," empathy says, "I know how you feel." Empathy enables us to use our heads rather than our hearts. When you sympathize with someone in trouble, you catch and reflect some of his suffering; your anxiety in turn may increase his distress. But when you employ empathy you bring to bear a detached insight, which is of far greater help to that person in overcoming unhappiness. After all, if you are roped to your companions on a mountain-climbing expedition and one of your party falls over a cliff, you don't help by jumping after him, but rather by making your footing secure enough to haul him back.

Mr. Lagemann considers means by which people can "develop empathy," all of them, though, stemming from one's determination to learn how to put himself in the position of another. When effort in this direction is profound enough, one finds himself respecting the freedom and individuality of the sufferer in precisely the same way that he wishes his own freedom and individuality to be respected. The parent, teacher or psychiatrist then becomes less and less a manager or "adjuster," and more and more a companion.

We have no space here to explore the specific cases in which the recognition of each human being's need for freedom relates to religion and politics, but invite our readers to attempt some explorative thinking along these lines.



## *FRONTIERS*

### Recent Correspondence

THESE, it seems, are days of high indignation. At any rate, our mail-bag has lately contained so many letters which object to current world conditions and national policies that we have put together a selection of comments from readers, adding a note of our own to each one.

The first deals with problems of nutrition and world food supply—topics often discussed in these pages.

Many years ago, Sir Albert Howard [founder of the organic gardening movement] took over a home or an orphanage (I think it was) in which most of the children were under par or actually ill. He cured them all by using an organically grown diet—*no* medicine. Howard's record both in England and in India in raising livestock as well as crops is famous. What he did is being done by Friend Sykes and Lady Eve Balfour in England and by Louis Bromfield in the United States, as well as by many less prominent people. They use no medicines, sprays, insecticides, or chemical fertilisers. Their crops are higher in protein and greater in quantity per acre than the crops obtainable by the routine farmer, whose products are declining. It is reported, for instance, that in New York state, tests have shown that cereals now show 8 per cent protein, whereas the minimum was once 9 per cent. The same goes for the Canadian prairies, and in the Fraser Valley of British Columbia (the "Garden of Canada"), where both cattle growers and orchardists find that their crops show alarming deficiencies, and this reacts on their livestock and fruit.

This is apropos the alarmist cries of the modern Malthusians who fear that the world is doomed to starve by overpopulation. But so long ago as sixty or seventy years, Peter Kropotkin showed how the population of Great Britain could be well fed without importing foodstuffs, and that

actually the population could safely double and still feel well. (Kropotkin's *Fields, Factories, and Workshops* also has excellent chapters on education.) Followers of Howard, Sykes and others are proving the same thing today, without accepting Kropotkin's limitations. They are growing cattle for milk and flesh, while Kropotkin was a vegetarian who pointed out that *five* human beings could be adequately supported on an area that would feed only *one* cow.

Perhaps it is pertinent to remark that health cannot be put into food stuffs by spray pumps and synthetic chemicals, nor can health be shoved into human bodies by pills, syringes, injections, or "miracle" drugs.

I suggest, therefore, that since food is basic and physical health is built (essentially) on what is taken into the body, some attention should be paid to what "science" and chemistry (and greed) are doing to the foundation of physical life. Add to this, that the methods of Bromfield and others are the cure for dust bowls, run-down soils, and erosion, etc. It is of vital importance that the living earth receive attention in any philosophy.

One more angle on this subject: an article in *MANAS* (July 27, 1955) suggested that when the earth could no longer support the population, the sea could do so; the sea, it was claimed, affords potential food supplies even greater than soil can produce.

I am not disposed to dispute the fact, if it is fact, but two comments seem called for. First, to exploit the living creatures of the sea as mercilessly as animal life has been exploited on the land may support physical life, but it will mark no moral progress. If man is determined to denude the planet, both land and sea, he will no doubt do so—to his own ultimate destruction, but I submit that the destruction of sea life will not release man from the Nemesis of having first destroyed the soil and animal life of the planet. The second comment is that those who advocate sea foods as a solution are likely to find themselves living in a fool's paradise. The United States has taken over

the Pacific Ocean and made it an American lake, and is proceeding arrogantly to poison the waters thereof with its bomb tests. Japanese fishermen learned about it; and I am enclosing a clipping from a local paper which *may* have a bearing on the matter. Read the clipping, and then ask whether bomb tests are beginning to show results.

With the effect on the atmosphere which will eventually require man to adapt his lung structure, following the continued loading of the atmosphere with by-products of American, British, and Russian bombs, plus the probable destruction of vegetable life (and thus *all* life) on the planet, it would seem that the treatment of the land, the air, and the oceans is of utmost importance, and no philosophy of life—idealist or otherwise—can afford to ignore it. That is a side of the enquiries undertaken by MANAS that I think should be examined.

The clipping referred to above is from the Vancouver *Sun* for Jan. 3, and reads as follows:

SIDNEY, Australia (CP)—More than 300 whales stranded themselves on sand bars in bays near Dunallery, 40 miles from Hobart, Tasmania. About 60 of the whales have died.

Fishermen risked death from the thrashing tails to lasso some of the whales and tow them into deep water. But each time the whales moved back to the sand bars to become stranded again.

The conclusion our correspondent suggests is that the sea is so polluted by the products of thermo-nuclear explosion that the whales can no longer tolerate their natural environment, preferring death on an Australian beach.

There is nothing incredible in the suggestion, although we are not sufficiently expert in such matters to have an opinion. However, it is certain that the general public is largely unaware of the serious apprehensions of scientists who have studied these possibilities. Readers who wish reliable information on the subject should consult recent issues of the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, which has an article on pollution and

fall-out and radiation dangers in nearly every issue. Such articles are by leading authorities in the field. Then a British magazine, *Contemporary Issues*, has probably printed more factual material and compiled more expert comment on the subject of pollution from atomic and thermo-nuclear explosions than any other publication. Copies of *Contemporary Issues* may be ordered from the offices of Contemporary Press, at any of the following addresses: 26 Heber Road, London, N.W. 2; 545 Fifth Ave., New York 17, N.Y.; and P.O. Box 13, Johannesburg, South Africa.

Now comes a "letter to the editor" which the newspaper editor did not print. It is a rather biting comment on the journalistic and radio and television version of what the communists of the world want and intend to do.

Sometimes we can learn more by looking for what a person wants to believe than we can by listening to what he says he believes. Sometimes we can learn more by looking for what the press wants to believe than by listening to what it says is the news. (By "press" I mean radio and TV as well as newspapers.)

If we look for what the press wants to believe about Communists and Communist nations, we notice a very strange thing. We notice they want Communist governments, except for Yugoslavia, to be ruthless and cruel. The wishful thinking and the enthusiasm with which they repeat stereotyped accusations about the Soviet Union reveal they actually want it to be planning to attack the U.S.

They want so much to believe war will be necessary that they credited the Soviet Union with having an industrial system wonderful enough to repair war damage, re-equip armies and be ready to attack the U.S. two years after World War II ended. They said the Soviet Union was planning to bomb us seven years before the U.S.S.R. had planes capable of making such a flight. They have loudly insisted there can be no successful peace negotiations, because they don't want to risk

missing out on a war. They did show for a brief period how a decent press might act. That was during the visit of the Soviet farmers and the conference at the summit. After that they returned to their wishful thinking.

The veneer of civilization on these men and women of the press is very thin, although they may not realize it themselves. They want an excuse to go to war, make people shriek with pain and make men, women and children die in agony. They want to turn human beings into radioactive particles floating in the stratosphere. Rather, it would be more correct to say they want to make draftees do these things. Is it possible for Communists to be worse than this?

This letter, despite the pertinence of its observations, seems unfair. In fact, its writer virtually admits a sensationalist bias, since he accompanies it with the comment: "It is a mud-raking type of thing which does not go into reasons. I would expect you to go into reasons."

Well, the important thing to recognize about the behavior of the press is that newspaper publishers are well aware that fear is the principal lever in the shaping of national opinion about preparedness for war; and if the publishers fail to see this, they are probably regularly reminded of it by propagandists who want to keep the United States in an indomitable military position. Thus, if the military is to have adequate support for its program of armament and national defense—a program which anticipates the very worst that can be expected—the fears of the people cannot be allowed to die down. It could be argued, therefore, that the publicists who create a war atmosphere become victims of their own loyalty to "military necessity." They do not really *want* war—which would be complete insanity—but they want the things that, throughout all past history, have produced the wars they don't want. This is their tragedy, which becomes the tragedy of us all. The only way for the general public to avoid participating in the tragedy of these

irresponsible "war-makers" would be a general strike against the popular press, which is no better in respect to other matters than it is in respect to the threat of war. We have little hope of such a strike by readers. Men choose their "authorities" for the reasons that seem suitable at the time, but when those authorities betray them into war, they have really betrayed themselves.

The Review article in MANAS for Dec. 14, 1955 presented a reader's efforts to interest others in the Quaker pamphlet, *Speak Truth to Power*, and his puzzlement at the apparent apathy of most people toward the issues of war and their indifference to the logic of pacifist contentions. Now another reader reports reflections stimulated by this article. This comment has principally to do with the reactions to pacifist thinking of persons working in Government.

In reading the article, it seemed to me that a very good reason for officialdom's negative reaction is to be found in bureaucratic modes of thinking about society.

A pacifist position too often implies an individualism and rational organization of society which is contrary to the society organized more in the style of an army barracks. Social cohesion based on "adjustment" to the demands imposed by social conformity (administered by competent technocrats) requires a type of individual whose antithesis is most clearly exemplified in the pacifist. Therefore, the social administrator who is thinking in terms of how TV viewers will respond to animated cartoons, rather than the quality of their thought, will for practical reasons want such persons out of the picture. Though he may have no real dislike of pacifists, he will from expedient considerations rule adversely on their case. This "two-faced" approach to social problems is becoming an increasingly important factor in the modern world. Whereas at one time such expediency would have been regarded as a

moral fault, it is now commonly regarded as "sound social technique."

Whether this attitude of mind should be called ambivalence (and therefore to be treated on the analyst's couch) or bad philosophy (to be remedied by education), it remains a decisive factor in modern policy-making which is seldom sufficiently exposed, whether in MANAS or elsewhere. Perhaps the failure to explore in this direction is due to the difficulty of obtaining scientific accuracy when giving expression to an intuitive impression of fraud, and the risk taken (whether political, economic, or otherwise) in exposing or revealing the hidden self.

This analysis, which seems extremely pertinent, reveals more than anything else the general loss by modern society of the authentic feeling of individuality, and, therefore, of the meaning of human freedom. All lesser questions, it seems to us, are irrelevant compared to this basic diagnosis. It is for this reason that MANAS concentrates on philosophical questions and issues, as forming the foundation for ultimate values in human life.

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#### CORRECTION

In MANAS for Feb. 18, in *Frontiers*, a quotation from the April 1955 *Philosophy East and West* was mistakenly attributed to Prof. A. J. Bahm, instead of George B. Burch, of Tufts College, who wrote the passage we printed. Prof. Bahm edits the Department in *Philosophy East and West* from which we took the quotation, and after the matter had been copied out we failed to note that it was part of an address by Prof. Burch.