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THE IDEA OF PROGRESS

SOMEWHERE along in the first quarter or first third of this century, the idea of progress suffered a distinct eclipse in intellectual circles. This rejection of nineteenth-century enthusiasm probably began among scientific thinkers, taking the form of disciplined disdain for merely human hopes. There is no reason to suppose, scientific writers told us, that the changes which affect the human race are necessarily "progressive." A biologist, when urged to admit that the welfare legislation of our time is an advance over earlier indifference to human suffering, was likely to respond that, from his point of view, taking great pains to assure the survival of the weak and "unfit" amounted to little more than a frustration of the struggle for existence, accomplishing a dilution of heredity with genes that ought to die out instead of being carefully preserved by tender humanitarian hearts. As an antidote, perhaps, to the anthropocentrism of the man in the street, a scientist might speak casually of the possibility that the insects would some day take over the planet, driving humans to cover and finally to extinction.

There was, no doubt, an element of bravado in all this—an effort to convey the idea that "we scientists" are free of the delusions of wishful thinking, and of the egotism which assumes that the earth was made for man. The scientists were determined to pursue their observations without prejudice, and it seemed apparent to many of them that the hope of a high destiny for human beings gained little encouragement from the physical and biological sciences.

On the whole, however, only the learned, who read and write for one another, were much affected by this doctrine of the unimportance of man and its implication of the futility of human endeavors. It would not even be worth mentioning, beyond illustrating a rather extreme attempt on the part of scientists to exhibit their impersonal devotion to "facts" and their unyielding "objectivity," and except for the reason that, more recently, an attack on the idea of progress has come from another quarter—the pessimistic sector of religion. The religious argument against the idea of progress—or against, at any rate, the view that the ultimate good of mankind depends upon what we largely although vaguely call "progress"—addresses itself to the question of whether a modern Briton or American is morally better off—any closer to salvation, that is—than an ancient Roman or Egyptian. If you ask him about Moloch, the man of this persuasion will remind you of Dachau. If you deplore bread and circuses, he will tell you about the Korean "football game," as reported in the press. For him, today, as always, the righteous are still very few, and he finds nothing in the yardsticks of "progress" as commonly measured to change his view.

If you boast of literacy to him, he will ask you what is being read, these days, and how it elevates the readers. If you plead a greater honesty in modern times, he will invite an explanation of the prison population and the statistics of juvenile delinquency, and then, waxing morbidly eloquent, he will probably branch out into a discussion of mental illness, degenerative disease, alcoholism, and the spreading use of narcotics. He will ask you where he is to look for genuine progress, and you may be hard put to find an answer.

The ordinary man, however, finds it difficult to share this pessimism, even though he may be both bewildered and depressed by the evidence, offered, on the one hand, for the "scientific" contention that progress may be an illusion of wishful thinkers, and, on the other, for the neo-orthodox return to a "vale-of-tears" version of the meaning of life on earth. The rejection of the idea

of progress, we may note, has come in both instances from a school of specialists who base their claims on a view which abstracts from human experience. Bertrand Russell, for example, a distinguished spokesman of the pessimistic interpretation of science, manifestly founds his account of human possibilities on the data of the sciences:

> That Man is the product of causes which had no prevision of the end they were achieving; that his origin, his growth, his hopes and fears, his loves and beliefs, are but the outcome of accidental collocations of atoms; that no fire, no heroism, no intensity of thought and feeling, can preserve an individual life beyond the grave; that all the labor of the ages, all the devotion, all the inspiration, all the noonday brightness of human genius, are destined to extinction in the vast death of the solar system, and that the whole temple of man's achievement must inevitably be buried beneath the debris of a universe in ruins—all these things, if not quite beyond dispute, are yet so nearly certain, that no philosophy which rejects them can hope to stand.

This, while not exactly a rejection of the idea of progress, expresses the mood in which such rejection becomes the rule. What progress is possible in such a universe must be defined as a desperate fit of existentialist resistance to the inexorable entropy of matter. Neither the dreams and intuitions of poets nor the high visions of utopians can breathe in this atmosphere, which is a heavy distillation of hopelessness from the obvious perishability of all material forms.

A more temperate evaluation of both the idea of progress and its rejection is found in Carl Becker's article on this subject in the *Encyclopædia of the Social Sciences:*

> Belief in progress as a fact depends upon the standard of value chosen for measuring it and upon the time perspective in which it is measured. If we look back a hundred years, it is obvious that there has been progress in the mastery of physical forces. If we look back two thousand years, it is uncertain whether there has been much if any progress in intelligence and the art of living. If we look back two hundred and fifty thousand years, it is apparent that there has been progress in all those aspects of life which civilized men regard as valuable. All these judgments are based on standards of value appreciable by the mind of civilized man. But if we take a still longer perspective and estimate the universe as a whole, as an omniscient intelligence indifferent to human values might estimate it, in terms of cosmic energy, then progress and the very existence of man himself become negligible and meaningless. In such a perspective we should see the whole life of man on earth as a mere momentary ripple on the surface of one of the minor planets in one of the minor stellar systems.

Even in Becker's urbane comment it is possible to detect the element of "scientific" prejudice, for why should he or anyone assume that an "omniscient intelligence" would be "indifferent to human values," preferring "cosmic energy" as the basis for judgment?

But Becker is certainly right in saying that "Belief in progress as a fact depends upon the standard of value for measuring it." It is here that the condemnations of religious orthodoxy founder, since the portrait of the Beloved Community, from which we have widely strayed, omits so much of the splendor of human life, and all, perhaps, of its mystery. W. Macneile Dixon, that resolute enemy of the narrow pietists and perfectionists, declares in *The Human Situation:*

> I submit to you that life is a greater thing than the moralists have perceived, and that the poets see it in its true dimensions. When in *Henry V* we hear of Mistress Quickly's death, and Pistol's disgrace, when we hear that Nym and Bardolph have been hanged, how many of us are so much in love with virtue as to rejoice? "I believe," said Dr. Johnson, sturdy moralist though he was, "that every reader regrets their departure." And who is so besotted as not to agree with him? Would you rid the world of their kind? "A rich life in dereliction, the life of beggars, drunkards, tramps, tinkers, cripples, a merry, cunning, ribald, unprotesting life of despair, mirth and waste"—God's tolerance for these superfluous persons disgusts you. You would contract His spacious universe into a tidy garden of saints. Yet there are lovable scamps, of whom the world is full, who astonish us by doing magnificent things of which their virtuous neighbors are quite incapable, exhibiting a self-sacrifice or a cheerfulness in adversity, or in face of death, which saints might envy. So baffling are the aspects of life

when a sudden illumination comes from the heart of darkness. . . .

To me it sometimes seems that our moralists would do well to cease their upbraidings and apply themselves to the interesting problem—"How is goodness to be made the object of passionate desire, as attractive as fame, success, or even adventure?" If they could excite in men an enthusiasm for virtue, as the poets, musicians and artists excite in them enthusiasm for beauty, and the men of science for truth; if they could devise a morality that had power to charm, they would win all hearts. "To be virtuous," said Aristotle, "is to take pleasure in noble actions." A poet does not tell you how happiness is to be secured, he gives you happiness. And our reformers might do a great service to humanity if they could explain to us why a diet of milk and water does not appear to suit the human race, why the milksop has never been the hero of romancers, why the biographies of the peace-makers lack readers, why the lives of dare-devils, of buccaneers and smugglers and all manner of wild men captivate the youthful souls, the young folk so recently—if we are to believe Plato and Wordsworth—arrived from heaven, trailing clouds of glory from their celestial home. This is a mystery for them, upon which to exercise their wits. . . . Something appears to have gone amissing in our moral code. Repression, renunciation, resignation, we have heard of their values and recognize their values. But how dispiriting, how slavish as a panacea for our ills! Mankind in these days appears in need of more rather than less life, of resolution, high-heartedness, and the star of hope in the heavens. If you desire to serve rather than desert the world, you must avoid the attempt to quench the flame of life, to destroy the energies nature has implanted in the race. You take the wrong path. You should make use of them, divert or deflect them to nobler ends, harness them to the chariot of your ideal. And not till we have rid ourselves of the monstrous notion that the sole human motive is self-interest need we hope to lay the foundations of a sane moral philosophy.

And what, in the face of such benevolent incantations of the mind, shall we now say of the idea of "progress"? If Dixon, as we think, speaks to our condition, have we any longer the tools of measurement to apply to man's pilgrimage? Has there, after all, been progress in the search for nobler ends, or do the very champions of modern progress clutter the horizon with their six-penny Utopias and their copy-book maxims on the "satisfaction of human needs"?

With these prospects, it is not difficult to find a place for the nihilists of intellectual systems, the haters of political reformers, the anarchists and the new enthusiasts of Zen, who invite us largely to do away with all these forms of delusion and to come to terms with the immediate realities of daily life. We need them, it seems, to make for ourselves some tracts for the times. A zeal for progress of the customary sort too easily becomes a totalitarian mania, begetting a blind ruthlessness whose excesses are possible only for the righteous mad. So, today, we tell ourselves that we must become "organic," and abandon the deceptions of metaphysical casuists which have produced this world of schizoid horrors. What need have we of progress? There is no progress in eternity. The world will destroy itself, from longing for progress.

This is not distant from the truth. The "progressive" world has already taken some ominous practice shots at destroying itself, and is frantically tooling up for the big game. The prospect is at once so hideous and so formed of incredible folly that it is enough to make a man join the ranks of the total unbelievers, who oppose serious thought of any kind as the origin of evil.

But we suspect that the truth of the matter is that human beings can no more stop dreaming of progress than they can stop breathing. It is simply unbelievable that the whirling heavens, the bursting seeds, and the countless artificers of both life and death, everywhere and forever, are busy doing nothing, *going nowhere.* That the longings of human beings must not merely be changed, enlarged, and deepened, but must be erased as false to the undifferentiated, motiveless chaos which they eternally affront.

The real question, so far as we can see, is this: Is there any progress in human understanding of what it means to be a man? There could be a great clamor of claims to meet this question, but we doubt if many of them would satisfy. To

obtain agreement on progress in these terms, we should first have to establish some broad consensus on the nature of man, and can we even do that?

There is a sense, however, in which an expression of human integrity seems to make questions about progress almost negligible. Each time we meet a complete realization of manhood, time seems to stand still, and the whole Promethean drama of human life seems vindicated in that single instance. All nature has a way of honoring man in the presence of his nobility, as though the poet's glimpse of a scarlet dawn can become in that instant the science of all beauty that has ever been seen.

A passage in a recent novel somehow captures the mood of what we have been trying to say. The book is *The Chain in the Heart.* The author, Herbert Creekmore, makes the simple contention that men are not free until they break away from the chains in their hearts—and while his book is about southern Negroes, this is true of all men. In this part of the story, Tobe, a Negro locomotive fireman, has been told to quit his job to make room for a white fireman. His friends speak of Tobe's need for decision:

> Silas offered no comfort or advice. He agreed with George that it would be dangerous for Tobe to continue work. "But I can't tell him to leave his job," Silas ended sadly. "It's not in me to tell him to run for his life when he's done nothing wrong."
>
> "Ma's awful worried," said George. "It'd ease her mind a lot if you could persuade 'im—"
>
> "Persuade him to be a coward, when he's just found out he's a man?" Silas finished, with a cutting look at George.
>
> 'Better'n bein' a man jus' long enough to get killed, ain't it.
>
> "Yes, if you think only of your own life."
>
> "What else think of?"
>
> "I guess it sounds crazy and like preaching—but there is something else, something in all of us that we stand up for, and we don't, our life is dirty. That's why you got to think about all of us—us Negroes, and those whites. We can remember being slaves, and they can remember we were. They can't own us now, but they make us slaves through fear. If Tobe decides he's not going to fear any more and not going to live dirty inside, I won't stop him. Because if the white men kill him, they'll know they made their own lives dirty. And kill him or not, they'll know he stopped being a slave and stood up like a man. Without that, are we getting anywhere—moving forward at all? Are we keeping the skimpy love a few whites used to have for us? Are we gaining the respect we ought to have as long as we act the slave they want to see? Will they respect a murdered Negro as a man any more than a living Negro coward?" He watched George, whose painful perplexity showed in his face, and halted his quiet speech.
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> The white men, thought George, would hardly even know of Tobe's death and wouldn't care if they did. He turned his eyes slowly from the window to rest on Silas.
>
> "I don't know, either," said Silas, as if George had spoken. "But some day the white man's guilt will be so enormous he can't bear it in the face of his own shame, and he'll begin to smother in it. Then he'll have to give respect to others, even just as human beings, and it'll be good to have a lot to hold up for their respect." He waited a moment to see if George was following his reasoning, and said, "Tobe will be forgotten by then. Nobody will hold him up for respect. But right now his decision may help and strengthen others—others who will be respected, maybe sooner because That's one way we grow, I guess. . . ."

This is the only kind of progress worth recognizing and admitting. There may have been such progress throughout human history, but it is hard to measure, since men look for it so seldom, giving their hearts to other things.

REVIEW

"PERSPECTIVES" ON EINSTEIN

THE fourteenth issue of *Perspectives USA* (Winter, 1956), meritorious cultural quarterly sponsored by the Ford Foundation, contains one of the best articles on Albert Einstein's philosophy we have yet encountered: "The Passion of Pure Reason," by Irving Kristol. Since last week's review of Fritz Kahn's *Design of the Universe* noted Einstein's leading role in the transformation of the philosophy of science, Mr. Kristol's excellent summary may be regarded as another chapter of this story. If such repeated reference to Einstein should lead to the charge that MANAS has "special heroes," it must, we think, be admitted that Einstein, like Gandhi, brought both depth and moral power to his effort to see the world in universal terms, and thus constituted a rare visitation on this planet.

But to get on to specific matters of philosophy: Einstein was often accused of atheism, and on one occasion bitterly attacked for his criticism of a "personal God." Among other things, Kristol clarifies Einstein's views on religion:

> There are, according to Einstein, three ascending stages in the development of religion: the religion of fear, the religion of morality, and the religion of the cosmos.
>
> The religion of fear is the product of primitive, self-centered, unenlightened men, of the kind we meet in the Pentateuch. These men believed in a personal God who was involved in their destinies, who rewarded and punished his creatures. The religion of fear not only did not free men from their bodily concerns and egocentric anxieties—it made these very concerns and anxieties an occasion for God's intervention in the workings of the world.
>
> The religion of fear is superseded by the religion of morality, as embodied in some of the Jewish prophets and elaborated by the New Testament. Knowledge itself provides only the means, not the ends of life; religion—acting through the intuition of great teachers and radiant personalities—sets up the ultimate goals of life and provides the emotional context in which they can influence the individual. Men, left to shift for themselves, would see the ends of life to be ease and happiness; such a selfish ethic, dominated by elementary instincts, is "more proper for a herd of swine." A genuinely religious person is one who has "liberated himself from the fetters of his selfish desires and is preoccupied with thoughts, feelings, and aspirations to which he clings because of their super-personal value."
>
> The religion of morality is the highest that the great mass of men can aspire to, and it is sufficient to tame their animal spirits. But for a select few there is something finer and more noble: the religion of the cosmos. For the wise man—and this is the very definition of his wisdom—ethical behavior needs no religious sanction; sympathy and love of humanity he finds to be sufficient unto themselves. His religion, as distinct from his morality, is the result of a unique event, the mystical experience of the rationality of the cosmos, in which the individual is annihilated. Of this experience Einstein wrote: "The individual feels the nothingness of human desires and the sublimity and marvelous order which reveal themselves both in nature and the world of thought."

Einstein's "God," as he himself declares, is the God of Spinoza, not the God of Abraham. Kristol remarks that "when a Boston Catholic priest took it upon himself in 1929 to warn Americans of Einstein's 'atheism,' Rabbi Herbert S. Goldstein cabled Einstein: 'Do you believe in God?' Einstein cabled back: 'I believe in Spinoza's God, who reveals himself in the harmony of all Being, not in God who concerns himself with the fate and actions of men'."

Einstein's rapport with Spinoza expresses itself in a basic theme we find running through all the great physicist's philosophical formulations: The "three ascending stages in the development of religion" described by Kristol, for instance, correspond to Spinoza's description of three distinct degrees in the attainment of wisdom—opinion, reason, and illumination. This, Kristol suggests, is the reason why Einstein was never content to accept the "thus far and no farther shalt thou go" dictum of the inductive rationalists; his life embodied a "passion for pure reason" inspired by a sense of potential grasp of absolute verities.

Though Einstein was never quite an outcast in the scientific world, he certainly was regarded as a changeling. At no time did he fit the popular image of the scientist as a meticulous technician. Instead, he began and ended as a metaphysician, and his "science" was a by-product of his philosophy rather

than the reverse. To Einstein—as to Kristol, when he writes of Einstein's "passion of pure reason"—it is ridiculous to imagine that men will ever discover a *method* of discovery. Mr. Kristol continues:

> If we examine the phrase "scientific method," we see that there is a studied ambiguity between a "method" of discovery and a "method of verification," with "scientific method" presumably uniting the two. But, as Morris Raphael Cohen properly emphasized many years ago: "Science knows of methods of verification, but there are no methods of discovery. If there were such, all we need would be discovered, and we would not have to wait for rare men of genius." The universe of scientific discovery is ruled by an aristocracy of talent, not a democracy of method. All theories are in principle equal before the bar of verification, but only a few can gain seats in the house of truth, and there is no way of determining beforehand which these shall be. Genius is not reducible—to method or to anything else—and its very essence is to be uncommon, even exotic. It is to be expected that men will be resentful of this state of affairs and attempt to circumvent it. The rise of modern science has been accompanied by an insistent philosophic effort at the taming of the mind. Bacon set up his inductive method, whereby a scrupulous attention to the facts and the relation between facts would make an intelligent man a scientist; Descartes proposed his analytic method, by which "all those who observe its rules exactly would never suppose what is false to be true, and would come—without fatiguing themselves needlessly but in progressively furthering their science—to the true knowledge of all that can be known"; Dewey sought to make science's "method of inquiry" a human habit, to divert men from "meaningless" metaphysical questions, and to encourage them to good works; and, most recently, logical positivism announced that science cannot hope to plumb the nature of things, but "can only describe and combine the results of different observations," a task for which genius is dispensable, though not entirely useless.
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> Yet in the actual history of science, discoveries have not been the offspring of any omnipotent "method." As often as not, private fancies have been more productive than the staid virtues of sobriety and skepticism. Men of genius—Galileo, Kepler, Newton, Einstein—have stubbornly gone their own way, possessed by metaphysical ideas of God and reality, perversely trying to plumb the depths of nature, passionate to the point of extravagance in their speculations. Descartes himself could be so certain of his method—and could make his mathematical contributions—only because he was convinced that the book of nature was in the script of geometry. The record of scientific thought gives us leave to say of science what Goethe said of poetry, that it "pre-supposes in the man who is to make it a certain good-natured simplemindedness, in love with the Real as the hiding place of the Absolute."
>
> So intimate has been the relation between scientific creativity and metaphysical (and theological) speculation, that even so astringent a thinker as Bertrand Russell has wondered at the possibility of the wellsprings of science drying up in an era which deprecates metaphysical curiosity. Positivists, early in this century, were too well versed in "scientific method" to believe that atoms were "real," that they were more than a convenient intellectual construct by which one could "describe and combine the results of different observations"; but the atom was split nevertheless. Afterwards, of course, the revelation of genius is taken as testimony to the virtue of "scientific method," for it is not difficult to show—after the event—that by a proper extension of "scientific method" we could have known what we did not know, and to forget that we did not know it.

Since we have borrowed so much of Mr. Kristol by courtesy of *Perspectives* USA, we shall close with an unsolicited advertisement for the Quarterly issued by "Intercultural Publications Inc." The following announcement appears on the flyleaf of each issue:

> The publication of *Perspectives USA* has been made possible through a grant from The Ford Foundation. As part of its broad program dedicated to the support of activities promising significant contributions to world peace, to the advancement of the economic well-being of people everywhere, and to the improvement of educational facilities, the Ford Foundation has in *Perspectives USA* undertaken to further friendship and understanding among peoples of all countries through cultural exchange.

COMMENTARY
GANDHI'S "PACIFISM"

THE letter from Horace Alexander (see Frontiers) arrived after we had put together quotations from him on Gandhi—one of them touching on this point of Gandhi's pacifism—that we found in the London *Peace News* for Jan. 27 (Gandhi Anniversary number). Since the letter is more complete on the subject, and is addressed directly to C.V.G.'s statement, we have naturally used it in preference; but since, on the other hand, certain other portions of the *Peace News* article are of such independent interest, we have decided to print them here. They deal with popular misconceptions about Gandhi:

> First, that Gandhi wanted a world without machinery, and was determined to "put the clock back."
>
> It was not machinery that Gandhi objected to, but the craze for machinery—as if every gadget is necessarily an improvement on the hands and feet of man. "They go on saving labour," he said, "until everyone is thrown out of work." As to machines, was not the spinning wheel, to which he was so devoted, itself a machine? He approved of machines, such as the sewing machine, which really do serve the needs of over-burdened workers; and it was typical of Gandhi that he placed housewives at the top of the list of the world's over-worked workers.
>
> Machines that put millions of pounds into the pockets of a few and make wage-slaves and machine-slaves of millions of men he condemned; and he repudiated the so-called economic law that the cheapest product is necessarily the best for humanity to use. . . .
>
> The next fallacy is that Gandhi wanted all men and women—all his own followers at least—to be celibate. On the contrary, he said again and again that celibacy is only the vocation of a very few. . . . He was not above playfully warning a young woman who had been married after working with him for some years that she was perhaps still thinking too much of the social work that she was interested in, and was neglecting what ought now to be her first concern—getting on with the family.

One comment might be added on the question of India's response to Gandhi's pacifism. While the Indian Government of today may not, as Gandhi said, "believe in the principle of non-violence," the world has nevertheless been taught a great lesson from its use by Indians as a political expedient. A movement of immeasurable potentiality for good has been born in the modern world—a movement, moreover, which can do nothing but grow. The lesson is that non-violence will *work*, and that its power increases in direct proportion to the inner moral conviction brought to its support.

CHILDREN
and Ourselves

THREE KINDS OF DEVOTION

THE "goods" of this world are apparently of two sorts. Our appreciation of material things usually grows in proportion to their scarcity, while a surfeit pleases us least—the savor is lost in overabundance. So, as we have previously remarked, in respect to children's possessions, too many toys, too many indulgences of any sort, soon lead to discontent rather than heightened pleasure. We like to make the most of what we have, and if we have too much, there is no game. Part of the undying appeal of stories of hazardous adventure stems from the fact that we experience, vicariously, the ecstasy of the first drink of water when the desert has finally been crossed, or the first nourishing food after long days of wandering and struggle. So, of "goods" that appeal to the senses, there are usually too many in our world for keen personal enjoyment.

The other sort of "goods" are psychological, and are usually labeled "love," "affection," etc. As psychologists have been telling us for some time, the parent who attempts to substitute toys and candy for affection can never balance the books, and succeeds only in worsening the response of the child. This is particularly apt to happen, of course, when a society is too rich for its own good. In America today, many parents can overindulge a child in terms of material things, no matter how relatively small their income, and the temptation to substitute gifts for attentiveness to the child's real needs is a constant threat. The parents of bygone epochs—and parents in other portions of the globe today—are likely to be better parents, because they often can give little *more* than affection, and this puts them on their mettle. Having seldom been able, themselves, to substitute worldly treasures for the lasting treasures of mutual human concern, it does not even occur to such parents that such substitution can be attempted. Then, too, societies not overly rich are apt to be quite "well ordered," with the families composing them used to cooperative activities. Affection of parent for child is stirred by mutual practical concern, and then, perhaps, constancy of affection and love comes more easily—as living response to need. In such circumstances, at least, "devotion," "love," and "affection" are much more naturally expressed. A certain conformity in such cooperative endeavor may be seen as moral obligation.

But our culture is fragmentary, and our conformities are of an entirely different nature. The cult of sameness of which David Riesman accuses us has nothing to do with cooperative function, being based instead on callow assumptions as to how "happiness" may be attained—and there is nothing especially cooperative about millions of human beings endeavoring to please themselves in identical fashion. For if *originality* be lost, what of inspiration remains? Demands for psychological conformity induce a turbulence of emotion far different from and far more destructive than the demands that other societies have made for the functional cooperation of the individual. Our rebellious youths reject a prevailing mood and temper far more than they reject the work we set them—and perhaps for good reason. "Devotion" to our children, then, necessitates sympathy for their predicament as they view a world which *works* well enough, but which fails really to please itself.

All of this is by way of introduction to two worth-while pieces on "wayward adolescents," both appearing in *McCall's* for February. A "book-length novel" by Melvin Levy is accompanied by an essay of Robert Lindner's—"Raise Your Child to be a Rebel!" The psychoanalyst author of *Rebel Without a Cause* here drives home the point that "devotion" to a youth's interests means, now more than ever before, respect for and interest in his unique qualities of individuality. With this meaning, "devotion" becomes a very good word indeed—perhaps better than "love" or "affection."

Speaking of the countless children who are victimized by "a vicious piece of propaganda—the notion that the 'well-adjusted' child, the child who conforms, has the key to a happy life"—Dr. Lindner says:

> Without questioning this idea we have subscribed to it and have, indeed, placed it at the very

center of our system of beliefs. For many families *You Must Adjust!* has virtually become the Eleventh Commandment. In every area of our life today individuals are forced to conform. They are commanded to distort their personalities, sacrifice personal freedoms and fit themselves into a prevailing pattern. Certain religions encourage unprotesting acceptance of the world's obvious wrongs before they grant us passports to Heaven. Our schools demand uniformity in thought and behavior, the destruction of individuality and the surrender of personal uniqueness in favor of a flat group image before they declare us educated. Industry and commerce reduce each of us to a statistical unit and insist upon our acting like robots, both as producer and consumer. Politics, fashion, popular art and literature all proclaim not only the necessity but the virtue of behaving, looking and feeling just like everybody else.

Subjected to such enormous pressures from all sides, it is little wonder that parents whose sole concern is for the welfare and happiness of their offspring give way to panic when their children don't seem to "fit in with the group." Aware that in our society the nonconforming person is suspect, that the failure to adjust is regarded in some quarters as sinful, in others as criminal and in still others as perverse or abnormal, most mothers and fathers are appalled and unnerved by the spectacle of the child who stands out in any way from the crowd.

The truth of the matter is conformity is not a good but an evil. It represents a travesty on human nature, and our insistence on it today is responsible for a good deal of the distress of our time.

Man is by nature a rebel. The entire career of the human species points to this very fact. Where other forms of life adapted themselves to prevailing conditions and stresses, and thus remained static, man overcame them. He did not *adjust* himself to the world as he discovered it, did not *conform* to the environment as he found it, instead, by using a God-given instinct to master, he surmounted all obstacles to his progress. The course of evolution as well as recorded history reveals that human beings owe their pre-eminence on this planet to the fortunate fact that they have always been restless, discontented and unsubmissive. Where animals lower on the evolutionary scale changed *themselves* in order to survive, *man changed the world.* In this fundamental sense, because he is a protestant life form, because he is diverse and spirited, impelled to challenge the universe and assert himself rather than to resign and surrender to apathetic self-distortion, he must be thought of as a rebel.

The effort to reduce the human animal to the undistinguished mass, the effort to rob him of his birthright of rebellion must, in the long run, prove to be in vain. There is no conceivable force or combination of forces powerful enough to root out—or even submerge—the instinct of rebellion.

If man is forced into conformity—a condition alien to his very biology—his instinct of rebellion will nevertheless continue to seek an outlet. Since it cannot express itself in the ways that result in the continuing progress of the species toward evolutionary goals—the energies contained in the instinct will seek other pathways. These pathways, unhappily, are likely to be the negative, the reverse of those that lead toward personal and social fulfillment. Where the instinct of the positive rebel would be to respect life and personality, negative rebellion leads often to contempt and defiance of both. Here, perhaps, is one explanation of such inexplicable phenomena as war crime, intolerance, bigotry and brutality on the social scale, and neurosis, psychosomatic illness, psychosis, delinquency and failure on the personal.

While Dr. Lindner's case for non-conformity is nothing new among psychologists, these days, he has given its statement philosophic balance—with roots in some premises concerning the nature of "children, and ourselves." This is one excuse for the unusually long quotation from his article, and another might lie in his implication that a parent's relationship to a child, considered in these terms, cannot reach fulfillment without recognition that "love is not enough." A child needs our devotion—but to *his* vision of himself as a being of worthy potentialities. A child may be smothered with possessions, or with a kind of affection usually labeled "love,"—but may starve for signs that we try to see him as he does himself. And truly "seeing" him in our fragmented society is a task of some magnitude.

FRONTIERS

Gandhi's "Pacifism"

IN MANAS for Jan. 4, C.V.G., a contributor, writing from Madras, remarked that "Gandhi was by no means a pacifist," a statement which, while partially explained by its context, has brought several objections from readers. Since one of these is from Horace Alexander, an Englishman who spent many years in India, and who enjoyed close contact with Gandhi, we are glad to print his letter of comment on this statement.

DEAR MANAS: May I comment on the interesting contribution from your Indian correspondent, C.V.G., on "The Folly of Political Absolutes"? With his general thesis, I find myself largely in agreement, but I am troubled at some of his references to Gandhi. To some extent you have yourselves commented on these points, but perhaps you can find space for a further comment from one who can claim to have been very close to Gandhi during the last twenty years of his life, and who discussed some of the matters referred to by C.V.G. with Gandhi a short time before his death.

First, C.V.G. writes, "Though he was a staunch advocate of non-violence, Gandhi was by no means a pacifist." C.V.G. is not the first Indian to say "Gandhi was not a pacifist"; I have heard one or two of his close associates make the same statement; but it is not true, whoever says it. I believe, however, that the main point is that many Indians use the word "pacifist" in a sense which is not current in the West. They think that a pacifist is the same as a non-resister; in other words, one who will not fight in any way at all. But that is not what most Westerners mean by the word. A "pacifist" in the sense that appears to be normally current in the West is a man or woman who is resolved never to use weapons of violence even in self-defence. When he is faced with evil he may do many things: he may run away; he may shrug his shoulders; he may try to argue with the agents of evil, or he may find a number of ways of bringing to bear the matchless weapon of truth. But whichever response he chooses, provided he does not take up weapons of violent force, he is, by definition, a pacifist. Gandhi was, of course, the kind of pacifist who uses to the utmost the matchless weapon of truth. But so, according to their abilities and insights, do many western pacifists.

C.V.G. continues: "He insisted that his non-violence was that of the brave and the strong. He did not rule out force completely; and even approved of it under certain circumstances." With the first sentence, I most wholeheartedly agree. But the others are, I think, based on a misunderstanding. C.V.G. seems to think that in some situations the brave and the strong are obliged to use physical force, and that Gandhi thought so too. This I must seriously question.

The confusion arises, I believe, from a very simple conviction of Gandhi's that surprisingly few people wholly appreciate. Gandhi asked all men to follow *the best that they knew*, not to try to copy him. He held that a man or woman who had achieved the purest possible kind of courage would never use violence either in self-defence or in the defence of others. But he also held that a man who was not of that calibre, who was not an adherent of nonviolence, as he himself was, on principle, must certainly take up arms on occasion. Not to do so would be cowardice. The soldier was better than the coward.

This is well illustrated by his attitude when the Afridi tribesmen invaded Kashmir in 1947. Gandhi, says C.V.G., "approved of India's dispatch of troops." The truth is that he did and he did not. Let me explain. When it was announced in the press that Gandhi had expressed his "approval" of the dispatch of troops, correspondents in Europe wrote to me in India to ask if Gandhi had really said this, and if so what did he mean by it? How did he reconcile it with his teaching of non-violence? This led to a long conversation. I did not write down his answer at

the time; but I remember the gist of it very well, and it was roughly as follows:

"Yes, I did say it, and I stick to it. The invasion had to be resisted. There was no possibility of the Kashmiris offering non-violent resistance; nor does the Indian Government today, the Government of Jawaharlal Nehru and Vallabhai Patel, believe in the principle of non-violence. On the contrary, they have an army for the express purpose of resisting invasion; so, when an invasion occurs, they must use it. It would be wrong for them not to do so. Moreover, it was particularly important for me to speak out plainly. Pakistan and other parties to the Kashmir fighting might have assumed that, because of my known principle of non-violence, I should persuade the Government of India to offer no armed resistance. Of course, if India was prepared to follow me and to accept my principles, it would be quite different. But I know very well that they are not yet ready to do so. Therefore, they must do what they think best, and I must approve of their action. That does not mean, however, that I consider it the best possible action that could be taken. Non-violent resistance would be better; but today it is not possible, for the people are not ready for it."

Gandhi suffered so often from misrepresentation while he was alive that it is sad if we are still to misrepresent him after his death. What I have here written is not written I hope, in any spirit of controversy, or with the desire to assert that "I know better"; even when one knew Gandhi very well, one could still mistake his meaning. But on this matter of his convictions as to non-violence, I do not think I can be far wrong.

In summary I should say that to the statement "Gandhi sometimes approved of violence or force," the qualification must always be added: "On the part of those who had not learnt the power of the matchless weapon of truth." To him, non-violence was an absolute for all who had become convinced of its potency, in all circumstances. And if the further question is asked, Did Gandhi believe that reliance on truth alone was possible for all men or only for the few? the answer must be: "It could be, it can be, learnt by all.')

Birmingham, England

We now return to C.V.G. After his article appeared, we sent him the pages of an article in *U.S. News & World Report* (for Dec. 2, 1955) in which the editors of this weekly printed a dramatic account of the spread of Soviet power and influence during the past eight years. We did this because we wanted him to see how many Americans regard this problem, since he had said, in a footnote to his article, that "at present Communist aggressiveness is by no means so obvious to India as it is to the Western powers and the United States." We now have a series of comments on the *U.S. News* feature from C.V.G., which we print as illustrating the attitude which an intelligent Indian observer may take toward developments which have produced extreme anxiety in the United States.

I read through the tear sheets from *U.S. News & World Report* very carefully, but frankly, I am disappointed at the "evidence" of Communist expansionism.

Non-American readers will be perplexed by the statement in the report that "War as waged by the Soviet Union avoids shooting by the armed forces of Russia. It is conducted by infiltration, subversion, revolution, diplomacy—by bluff and bluster—and, on occasion, through actual war waged by satellites." Why should the United States whose material resources match and perhaps excel those of the Soviet Union find herself at such terrific disadvantage when confronted with such novel warring technique? Curiously enough, the report itself provides the answer a little further on. "Russia's technique is to wage war with ideas, not directly with guns or atomic bombs or hydrogen bombs or guided missiles." The immorality of a war with ideas not

being very clear, this reads like a distressing admission of the tragic bankruptcy of ideas in the United States, although the great values established and championed by America in the past still stir emotion. The same page carries a photograph. It is not pretty and the caption beneath still less so. "In Morocco nationalists carry the fight. . . . in an area where things are going well for Russia." This seems to me unedifying self-pity.

Morocco is a French colony and students of colonialism know that things have gone haywire in colonies on account of the purblindness of the colonial powers to resurgent nationalism. When America has not been able to influence her colonial allies to follow enlightened policies, it is indeed depressing rumbling to moan about things "going well for Russia." Nothing has stultified America's stature so much as her alliance with colonial powers—sensible Americans and friends of America will be distressed to note that of late this alliance is becoming an alignment, as will be seen from Mr. Dulles' recent extraordinary statement that Goa is a part of Portugal in a joint declaration with the Portuguese Foreign Minister, Mr. Cunha.

How can a war of ideas be successfully waged with Russia so long as the United States fails to realise that colonialism is too outrageous an idea, from which she should thoroughly dissociate herself?

I—and for that matter you will as well—fail to see anything immoral or alarming in "Burma, through its premier U Nu making known its interest in closer ties with Russia" or in "Cyprus agitating for freedom from Britain" and "Soviet agents helping to incite that agitation." "Egypt, arming, has turned to Communist countries for arms." May I point out that Egypt is just *purchasing* these arms from where she pleases? How can the United States object to this commercial transaction when about two years ago she concluded an arms *aid* agreement with Pakistan, in complete indifference to India's protests—and did not bother about the effects on the "cold war" between India and Pakistan? Arms game is one at which two can play.

Indians will not understand that the economic and diplomatic connections that Russia seeks to establish with her are "beach heads"—at least they do not know yet. In my first article to MANAS, dated April 6, 1955, I referred to India's position with regard to Tibet and I need not go over it again. I wish that the *U.S. News & World Report* had given more details relating to "China's nibbling invasion" into India. Neither the Government nor the people of India are at present aware of such invasion and if evidence of it is forthcoming, then no adherence to neutrality, however determined, will persuade Mr. Nehru to be passive.

"Still losing, after nearly ten years, the U.S. is realising it must learn to fight World War III, Russian style." We hope she does, in good time. President Truman once referred to the "battle for men's minds." It is unfortunate that Russia should have been the first to realise that this battle is waged with ideas—and rush to a starving world with hers, which the United States knows to be spurious. Nothing will please India and the uncommitted Asian countries more than to know that the United States alone can offer the real thing.

I have chosen only a few points from the Report for discussion. I apologise to you if I have inadvertently sounded pedagogic—you will surely be tolerant of such orientalism!

Madras, India C.V.G.