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TOWARD NEW INSTITUTIONS

SINCE the time of Rousseau, Western thinkers have been critical of social institutions as the means by which unjust practices become embedded in custom and sanctified by usage. Institutions are thus natural targets for all rebels and revolutionists, and educators, too, in their efforts to lead the young out of the battlements of prejudice, long for the freedom of an institutionless society. When, then, a writer is found saying a good word for institutions, and when what he says gives credible form to an admittedly obscure subject, he probably deserves all the attention we can give to him.

In this instance, the writer is Laurens van der Post, whose recent book, *The Dark Eye in Africa*, was reviewed in last week's MANAS. In his discussion of the causes which lie behind the terroristic activities of the Mau Mau in Kenya, he suggests that European domination of the Kikuyu people has left them defenseless against "those overwhelming aspects of nature which are incomprehensible to reason and quite beyond conscious control and rational articulation." The resistance of the Mau Mau was the desperate reaction of the Kikuyu. Follows a general statement about the role of institutions in human life:

> No human being or society, however self-sufficient and rational it may appear, can live without institutions that deal with those aspects of life which cannot be explained rationally. No community can be left indefinitely outside in the night of the human spirit in the beast-infested jungle which lies beyond the conscious fortifications which civilization raises for *us* in life. If a community cannot get within the protection of those fortifications by fair means, then it will do so by foul. If civilized reason and conscious strength will not aid it, then animal cunning and brute force will.

If we admit, as we doubtless must, that institutions function in this way, several obvious questions press for answers. The first and most important is: Where do institutions come from?

The reply of tradition is usually that they have a supernatural source. They may arise from the Institutes of Manu, or from the Institutes of Calvin; they may be engraved on the gold plates discovered under a rock by Joseph Smith, or scribed on tablets of stone inherited from a divine visitation of early times, as with the Hopi Indians. They may originate in commands spoken from a burning bush, or in the words of sibyls who have inhaled the vapors of magic prophecy. The dietary laws of the ancient Hebrews were the mandate of Jehovah; the prophylactic camphor dance of India was a rite of religion.

In any event, the institutions of traditional societies represent a scheme of life which was devised by a higher intelligence than man's, and illustrated the reciprocal relationship between the gods and human beings—for man, a pattern of existence that brings him order and fulfillment; for the gods, worship, reverence, and obedience, which, one supposes, serves the ends of the gods, whatever they may be.

This, we may say, is the naïve or "primitive" view of institutions. Without arguing that it is false, we may add that it is not easily believed, today.

With the coming of social self-consciousness, criticism of the idea of a supernatural origin of institutions began. This criticism or explanation was a three-pronged attack on ancient belief. It was argued, for example, that priests, shamans, or medicine men, skilled in the manipulation of human fears and gullibility, invented the entire category of gods and heavenly commands, in order to get control of the primitive society and maintain for themselves the prerogatives of power and religious authority. Or, it could be said that

the invention of a divine source for social arrangements and obligations was a benevolent lie by sagacious men who saw the need of their countrymen for supernatural support in coping with the "overwhelming aspects of nature." Then, finally, the institutions sprang from the psychic revelations of abnormals whose emotional intensity and undoubted "sincerity" were able to convert ordinary folk to the idea of divine inspiration. There might, of course, be a mixture of all three of these forces at work in the shaping of institutions, as well as the influence of practical experience in dealing with the problems of physical survival—all blended together by the natural tendency in men to unify their interpretation of existence into a consistent body of doctrine or "theology."

The next stage of causation in the design of institutions began with the emergence of the doctrine of "Natural Right." There are doubtless dozens of ways to describe the meaning of an idea which has been current in Western thought ever since the signing of the Magna Carta, but one obvious significance of "natural right" is that every man is an end in himself, and not a means to someone else's end, whether of God or King. He may of course decide that obedience to God is his end, but it is his "natural right" to choose his God and define the terms of his obedience according to his own ideas.

Thus the conception of Natural Right does not of itself outlaw a supernatural origin of institutions, but it makes the question of divine authority a debatable one. A man exercising his "natural rights" may choose to be a Methodist or a Presbyterian or an Atheist. He may have logical difficulty in defending the doctrine of Natural Right after he has chosen, but that is another problem, and a problem, moreover, which it is his "natural right" to ignore.

But once the faculty of Reason was given some authority—as was inevitable with the introduction of Natural Right—there was no controlling it. The structure of institutions became subject to review in the light of both Natural Right and the new knowledge of science, with the result that divine authority was gradually edged out of the Cosmos. For a time, Natural Right remained as a kind of first principle in itself, but since the doctrine represented a clear metaphysical judgment of the nature of man, and since metaphysics would have to give way before the rising tide of purely "scientific" authority, in time the opinion arose that "Natural Right" was no more than a pleasant fiction devised by men who still lived in the shadow of theological delusions. "It is certainly true," Crane Brinton remarks in the *Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences*, "that the logical implications of nineteenth-century scientific materialism leave no room for the concept of right." He adds, however, that "The doctrine of natural rights is so solidly rooted in human experience, its prestige so heightened by the extraordinary expansion of the western world in the last century, that, like Christianity, it will probably have to be absorbed, rather than destroyed, by a new ideology."

Most people will probably admit that the idea of natural right has considerable vindication from the private intuition. We *feel* the importance of choosing for ourselves, of enjoying equality with others, and of receiving even-handed justice from the organized community. This is what we want, with or without the authority of metaphysics, with or without the support of scientific research. The trouble, however, with an intuition is that its authority does not reach very far in terms of the practical requirements of a society that gives scope to the natural rights of human beings. What, for example, do you do about the communists, who reject the idea of natural rights—at least, as *we* understand them—and who insist that the "true" rights of the individual can only be acquired in a particular sort of socioeconomic order, in which there is no private property, and all the instruments of production and all the products of human labor belong to the State, which State will dispense the means to

"equality" and "justice" according to the judgment of political administrators?

The State, in this instance, has plainly taken the place of the old supernatural authority, providing all institutional arrangements and receiving in return the conforming obedience of the people. For believing communists, capitalist society is the "beast-infested jungle which lies beyond the conscious fortifications which civilization raises for *us* [them] in life." Inhabitants of what many of us like to refer to as the "free world" are prone to make a similar judgment of communist societies, and to take what steps they can to reinforce their faith in the institutions of the West, although in theory the Westerners are committed to free self-criticism and progressive alterations in the institutions under which they live. (Now that Stalin is a fallen god, however, and deposed Soviet administrators are no longer liquidated as "wreckers" after dramatic trials, self-criticism may gradually modify the design of Soviet institutions, and add a political resemblance to an already existing industrial likeness to Western societies.)

From all this we may perhaps conclude that the idea of self-determination—encouraging men to design their own institutions—is here to stay, whatever the death-throes of the old, authoritarian mode of life. The communist societies of the world are curious combinations of the drive to revolt with the yearning for superpersonal authority, and it is interesting to see that, whereas ancient societies could maintain conformity without an excess of violence or terror, in modern times the simple presence of the idea of self-determination, of the *right* to revolt, is enough to oblige authoritarian rulers to maintain their power by sheer force, or abdicate. Freedom, in short, is like a virus, an infection that cannot be stamped out. It can be "contained" for a time, or imitated by specious rationalizations, but it cannot be suppressed.

Let us say, then, in behalf of the self-conscious members of the human community, that these are days of experiment in the area of institutions. It is also a time of improvisation and of extremes. In Africa, for example, among the very Mau Mau who have so shocked the West, there is evidence of a sudden swing to Gandhian techniques. How deep this movement lies remains to be seen, but even if it is only superficial, the slightest experimenting in this direction may be tremendously significant. What shall we say of a people who for thousands of years have been bound by warlike customs and taboos, yet are able in a few short months to try, if only momentarily, the approach of non-violence?

The West, however, has its own institutional problems. A social institution is the maker of definitions and of rules of behavior, explicit or implied. If a society is able to vindicate the definitions offered by its institutions and to gain order from obedience to the rules, that society regards itself as having "succeeded." The great political and social documents of the West, formulated in the eighteenth century, embody the concepts of Western institutions. They define justice and, by implication, the Good Life. But life in the West is not very good, these days. Admirers of the past claim that the West has tinkered too much with institutions which were good enough to begin with, and needed only to be left alone. The old political quarrels proceed as usual, but they gain less and less attention, since everywhere there is an ominous sense that our institutions no longer protect us in the way that they used to. The "beast-infested jungle" is closing in again, whether you recognize the jungle in the threat of communism throughout the East, in the statistics of juvenile delinquency at home, or in the popularity of Mickey Spillane.

Institutions are supposed to deal with "those aspects of life which cannot be explained rationally." But a lot depends upon whether you think those aspects of life can finally be understood, or that they are at root incomprehensible. And a lot more depends upon the importance you assign to acts of

understanding, which are always individual acts. An atom bomb is an explosive object, but its existence and use in war represents an institutional judgment. If you drop an atom bomb on a city of 100,000 people, you declare your faith in an entire value system. After you have killed the 100,000 people—or the 100,000,000, which is certainly a possibility of any future war—you will still have to live with the value system that caused you to drop the bomb. And the sort of value system which encourages you to drop atom bombs when "necessary" may be the sort of value system which opens wide the gates of the community to the denizens of the "beast-infested jungle," inviting them to wander in the streets.

Ultimately, the institutions of a community tell what the people who live there think of themselves and of others. An institution cannot help but be a definition of man. It may be a restrictive definition, or it may be an inspiring one, but, good or bad, it is a definition.

Institutions, we might say, are inevitable forms of human life and association. They are the account we give of ourselves. They either seal off mysteries with dogmas or invite us to mysteries with a sense of wonder. They either hide the unknown with a cloud of belittling denials or construct portals which announce the infinitudes beyond. They may be censorious monuments to anxiety or celebrations of adventure.

Of all institutions, the school is the most sacred. Here the child may be led to the frontiers of life by a friendly hand. Here, in secret, dwell both the agony and the glory of all pioneers of human progress. Here is the record of the courage and the humility of the great. Here, too, is the shame of the past inscribed in the memory of the race, and the tale of the iniquities of which men are capable. Here, above all, are kept the judgments of men about what is worth doing with human life.

The difficulty in teaching is the same as the difficulty in living—it is the problem of embodying the ideal in the actual, the abstract in the concrete. There are all the daily tasks, ends, and objectives, the play and the pleasure, the love and the affection, which make the flow of life from day to day and from year to year. How shall the dream of splendor be born into these crowded hours?

The world is endlessly subdivided by institutions which lay claim to goods of ultimate promise. How shall we find proportion and measure in all this? The catacombs were dark, but we live in a wilderness of brilliance, a maze of blinding lights. Yet there is hardly a glimmer of understanding as to what we are, or where we are going, or as to whether these things are of any importance. Would it perhaps be better to be a Kikuyu child, whose prime need is a community in which he can grow up with head erect, a man among men, with the same rights and duties that are common to all?

It is as though Western man, deserted by the gods, but the vanquisher of Nature, finds himself lonely and afraid. He will have no manufactured institutions to guide him, and Nature—the Nature, that is, over which he has become victor—seems to have nothing to teach, no example to set. If a man addresses himself, as with the prayers which are never repeated except in desperation, he hears no answer.

Yet it is also true that a few men who have set this sort of problem to themselves for a lifetime have found an answer of a sort. Laurens van der Post has made an answer, entirely his own, yet lucidly communicable. But the interesting thing about these "answers" of our time is that none of them can be made into "doctrines" or dogmas. They are rather distillations without creed or copyright. There may be an inward, unwritten metaphysic in them, but these are not days for elucidation of such subtleties. They mark the beginning, it may be, of the mood of discovery—the discovery of man.

REVIEW
"SHOCKING BUT TRUE"

USUALLY, a prolonged run on a book—including those in the pocket-book category—means that somebody has said something worth saying, along with whatever other appeal may have been offered. Even in the line of fiction, exceptions such as Kathleen Winsor's *Forever Amber,* a few years back, were not really so exceptional, for most such vogues are of short duration, and would probably have been practically non-existent had the paper-backs been on the scene. So much stuff of the "Amber" sort can now be purchased at the corner drug store, and when a work of fiction sells long and well, today, it must either be a bit different, or the production of some author for whom readers have formed a taste. This is also true of nonfiction. This field has grown, so that people who like the idea of picking up a bit of culture at low cost are more warily selective than they used to be.

When Robert Lindner's *Fifty-Minute Hour* first hit the corner stands we neglected to pick up a copy, thinking to do so later when the review desk was comparatively free of volumes. Two weeks later no copy could be found, and every store contacted had the book on re-order. We knew, of course, some of the reasons for its popularity, for a casual thumbing had revealed that Lindner's material was sensational enough for the most ardent "true story" fan. But to explain its extraordinary popularity, this book had also to be read by those ever increasing numbers of people who have replaced interest in religion with interest in psychology and psychiatry. Campus book stores ordered heavily—and sold out immediately. In the greater Los Angeles area, months after original paper-back publication, we finally obtained a copy from a store which had ordered fifty and received three!

No doubt sensation plays a big role in *Fifty-Minute's* popularity. Here we have murder, incest, sadism, and other things which attract the sort of people who hungrily hang around the scenes of accidents. Dr. Lindner is an accomplished writer, moreover, who can make a case history sound like a mystery story, and undoubtedly prepared his material with an eye to sales, having already tasted the fruits of success with his *Rebel Without A Cause.* But there is indeed more to Lindner and the book than this. There is a level of insight, a flavor of perceptiveness, which makes the volume considerably more than another also-ran in the psychiatric field, and which quite usefully supplements such a major work as Bettelheim's *Truants from Life*—indicating that the therapy which works for children is the only therapy, sometimes, which will work for badly deranged adults.

Then there are the passages which prove, at least, that Lindner is by no means a Herman Wouk of psychology. He doesn't always say what most people would probably like to hear. Take for instance his discussion of "communist front" groups, and his forthright declaration of personal willingness to work *with* a Communist, shoulder to shoulder, in the interest of any cause in which he believes:

> For many years I have been active politically in a small way out of a conviction that the psychoanalyst belongs in the world, among men, and should participate in the life of his community. I have felt that he has a public responsibility which cannot be discharged by living the anchorite existence most analysts live, limiting their purview to the dim caves in which they practice their art like oracular recluses surrounded by the esoteric symbols of a mystic craft. Because of this belief I have, from time to time, joined movements and societies of a progressive cast, and have loaned my name—for whatever its value—to causes I've considered worthy. Sometimes these movements and causes have been called radical, and often I have known, not directly, but in a way such things are known, that their active membership included Communists. But this has not concerned me much, since my position has been that I would work for and lend whatever talents I possess toward the realization of the things in which I believe. If, incidentally, a Communist happens to want what I want, and works for it with ethical means, that does not in any way reflect discredit on the aim or end of the action. I have always regarded throwing out babies with bath water as the height of stupidity.

As Lindner elsewhere indicates, he is well aware that Communists often "use the issue of segregation for their own purposes," and that "could their purposes be served better by promoting segregation," they would "probably not hesitate to do

so." But, as a physician of the psyche, he views the victims of segregation and the victims of Communist dogma alike with dispassionate and sympathetic eye. Racial segregation is the issue he uses for illustration of his basic political philosophy—less political than psychological, really, and humanitarian:

> For example, take segregation—I am unalterably and unconditionally opposed to it in any form, to any extent, and for whatever reason. If the Communists oppose segregation I will struggle with them against such injustice. I would not tolerate segregation just because it is opposed by Communists. Nor do I care why Communists oppose segregation, or whatever part their opposition to it plays in their grander revolutionary schemes. What matters solely to me is that segregation is an evil. As a psychoanalyst I know what it does both to its victims and their tormentors: as a human being the idea is revolting to me: as a responsible citizen I know that the less there is of segregation the less there will be of Communism.

We feel a particular kinship with those therapists—from Freud to the present—who emphasize that the "cure" of mental or emotional dislocation must come from the patient himself, the analyst simply serving, as adroitly as possible, and impersonally, to bring hidden difficulties from deeply buried layers of the unconscious into the light of rational observation. Dr. Lindner, like Erich Fromm and Karl Menninger, places his faith in the innate resources of the patient, rather than in his own magic or cleverness. And for a therapist this approach is doubly important: not only does it save him from the dangers of immodesty, but it encourages great patience. The analyst who views the therapeutic process in this manner is not much concerned with *his* success as a professional, but with the patient's success. Being so, he also realizes that the time-scale of improvement must *be the patient's*, not that of the analyst. Some of Lindner's passages indicate how such patience can be rewarded. He discusses "Laura," victim of a severe compulsion neurosis, who, during therapy, first seemed to become "worse"—as the energies of her total nature were stirred by the undercurrent of effort toward eventual control and release. "On the surface," Lindner writes, "treatment was not helping my patient very much, even might be making her worse. But I knew—and so did Laura—that subtle processes had been initiated by her therapy, and that these were slowly, but secretly, advancing against her neurosis." He continues:

> This is a commonplace of treatment, known only to those who have undergone the experience of psychoanalysis and those who practice the art. Externally, all appears to be the same as it was before therapy, often rather worse; but in the mental underground, unseen by any observer and inaccessible to the most probing investigation, the substructure of the personality is being affected. Insensibly but deliberately the foundations of neurosis are being weakened while, at the same time, there are being erected new and more durable supports on which, eventually, the altered personality can rest. Were this understood by the critics of psychoanalysis (or better still, by friends and relatives of analysands who understandably complain of the lack of evident progress), many current confusions about the process would disappear, and a more rational discussion of its merits as a form of therapy would be made possible.

Enough has now been said to indicate why we think *The Fifty-Minute Hour* is worth reading, even if only as one of many bridges between excitement of the sort afforded by sensational fiction and the deeper pleasures of reflective thought. As a Buddhist aphorism puts it, "Compassion is no attribute it is the law of laws," and men like Lindner encourage the compassion of all those who read and seek to understand. Murderers, fascists and communists—to use popular associations of our time in regard to propensity for evil—are seen to be also in ourselves. Lindner fully recognizes his own human tendencies to hate and fear, to be disgusted and to loathe. That his profession requires him to work through and above these initial reactions makes it a good profession to know more about.

COMMENTARY
THE WESTERN STORY

THE Editors of MANAS bow to no man in their enjoyment of a good Western story—the *genre* of fiction which began with Bret Harte and Owen Wister's *Virginian,* with the end, glory be to these western stars, nowhere in sight. We read, recently, that Western stories are popular in Europe, too, and this brings certain apprehensions, for an incredible number of "Westerns" are no better, and possibly worse, than a host of other "cultural" items unhappily exported from these shores.

So, for the European reader, and for the Asian reader as well—who can escape the fascination of the Western!—we have some recommendations. There is one man, today, writing Western stories who seems completely at home in the language and the mood of the West of, say, seventy-five years ago. Two of his books are well known in the United States and would be good examples for readers in other lands to take seriously. The writer is H. L. Davis and the books are *Honey in the Horn* and *Winds of Morning.* (Both now in paper-back editions by Pocket Books.)

The best collection of Western short stories we know of is a Bantam book, *Cattle, Guns & Men,* edited by Luke Short, the most successful Western story writer of them all. The yarns in this collection carry the feeling of a first-hand experience of strength, courage, and humor which have made the Western so popular—the sort of stories of which most Westerns published nowadays are but imitations.

Something should be said about the books of Stewart Edward White. Mr. White spent much of his life in the West, and a lot of his time with cowboys. His *The Mountain* and *The Cabin* are authentic contributions to the literature of the West.

Well, we don't pose as experts on this subject—just enthusiastic amateurs. These tales may not have a "message," but they shouldn't be ignored by anyone who wants to understand the land and the people who used to live in the Western United States.

ADD MOURNFUL NOTES

A California reader writes:

> To us MANAS is almost unbelievably good and getting better with every issue. However, the problem of new subscribers *is* difficult. The only subscriber we have been able to get for you had to discontinue reading MANAS after a year because it made her think too much. However, her analyst may permit her to renew her subscription in the near future.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves

APPRECIATION of the comments on the recent White House Conference on Education in the Phi Beta Kappa *Key Reporter* has already been expressed in MANAS, but we wish to invite concentrated attention to the suggestion repeated by Joel Hildebrand—that school authorities might, in the face of an alarming teacher shortage, waive formal requirements and recruit assistance from available but "unpedigreed" members of the community who are quite able to teach, but lack the "M.A." or "Ph.D." which is customarily expected.

At the Conference, Prof. Hildebrand's table of conferees proposed that people possessing "natural qualifications" for teaching, "by virtue of intelligence, knowledge of specific subjects, facility in speech, personality, and sympathetic understanding of young people," should be accepted for special certification as teachers. In this connection it was pointed out that "many persons, otherwise well qualified, are repelled by courses in education that they regard as repetitive, doctrinaire, or inferior in intellectual quality," and may have excellent grounds for their disinclination to wade through dreary months of routine memory work before they are allowed to teach. Moreover, these are the same men and women, no doubt, who felt this way during undergraduate years in the University—among them a considerable number who received most of their real education after leaving college, through self-induced efforts. If an "inquiring mind" is among the most important possessions of a good instructor, one must grant that a large proportion of the best *natural* teachers belong in this group. Some of these are available in every community—and perhaps would be eager to work in a classroom if an opportunity presented.

A note from Mary Bingham's report is interesting in this regard. She pointed out that "substantial and responsible criticism, and among the school people themselves, exists on the subject of the system of teacher training," but that the recognized authorities habitually avoid bringing such views into the arena of effective discussion. "The emptiness and duplication of much of the course content in teacher-training institutions," as Mary Bingham implies, is experienced and deplored by many of those who sampled such courses while attending a university. Yet such innovations as that suggested by Prof. Hildebrand receive no official attention. Nevertheless, all the delegates to the White House Conference seemed impressed by the estimate of the National Citizens Commission for the Public Schools, "that if present and future teacher shortages are to be met, one half of all college graduating classes will have to be recruited annually into the teaching profession."

There is of course a "common sense" explanation of why the idea of "recruiting" uncertified teachers receives little enthusiastic response. And even if one grants that teacher-training course units are imperfect criteria, how else can school administrators proceed? What is to prevent an administrator from having bad judgment, and securing as teachers men and women who are much less adaptable to teaching than the present "professional" crop? Or, for that matter, what is to prevent him—or a committee—from giving positions and subsequent tenure to relatives and friends? Who will judge the judges? Are not routine academic requirements, however inadequate as means of establishing qualifications, safer than practices which open the way to nepotism?

Much of this argument, however, seems wide of the mark. No one is proposing that presently incumbent teachers be replaced, but only that the most sensible means for augmenting their number be immediately employed. Only two methods seem open. Either the State Boards of Education, with possible aid from Federal funds, make teacher's salaries so attractive that large numbers of the college graduating classes will desire ardently to get in on a good thing, or uncertified persons must receive an invitation to work in the classroom. The first proposal would certainly work, if getting enough nominal teachers is the objective. If college students learn that they can make as much teaching as they can in industry, with those nice long vacations and holidays thrown in, there should be quite a rush of applicants. But while this is undoubtedly a rich country, easily able to afford $600-a-month high-

school teachers if it can afford A-Bomb and guided missile projects, we have some doubt as to whether this would be a desirable solution, supposing legislators would respond. As things stand, comparatively few go into teaching from simple self-interest. Many of our teachers may be unimaginative, but most of them seem to have an urge to aid children. Given a generation of time-servers in the classroom and no one would like school!

We are, then, chiefly interested in possible ways of implementing the second proposal. How are the "natural teachers" of a community to be located? If they are to be selected by a superintendent, that man, certainly, must have the trust of the parents in the district. And to have the only sort of trust that counts in this sort of situation, mental contact, through regular discussion, is necessary between parents and school administrator. If your district superintendent participates in a "Great Books" series, for instance, and if in this way you come to know and respect him, a first-hand estimate of his judgment is possible.

The very fact of his—and your own—participation in any program requiring persistent philosophic evaluation could assure a measure of confidence. A superintendent is a professional man, presumably able to judge as to the fitness of available members of the community, for meeting the technical requirements of teaching. But any man who thinks philosophically can sense the *quality* of another's thought. And the school superintendent would find a discussion group an ideal environment for evaluating prospective teachers. All that we are suggesting, in this fragmentary fashion, is that a community possessing plenty of vital discussion groups would have little trouble in finding good teachers among their number.

A truly percipient superintendent could find one good ground for considering applicants—on the basis of their library records. The books borrowed, and the consistency with which they are borrowed, may reveal far more than a competitive course in education, for reading is a clear indication of sustained interest, while competitive exams, even if passed with high marks, may indicate little more than another manifestation of the competitive spirit.

A loosely knit association, composed of "friends of the schools," might be formed, with the focus of weekly discussion the general topic of education itself. Any superintendent who lacks interest in such a gathering is not the man needed for the sort of task we have been describing; a natural inclination to talk over the problems and philosophy of education so far as that goes, exists in almost anyone who thinks seriously at all. But, on the other hand, when the right official is in the job, he should be given *carte blanche* in the matter of picking supplementary teachers. He must be trusted, and the new teachers he selects must know and trust him. To satisfy those who fear such an innovation, it could be stipulated that each "non-professional" teacher would join the school for a trial period, providing for his evaluation by fellow-teachers, and by pupils as well, and their judgment would be taken into consideration before renewal of, say, a seasonal contract. We should imagine that the best potential teachers among the available will not be much interested in tenure, anyway, but only in the opportunity to discover what they can do in the classroom.

Actually, there are people in every community who are well qualified to teach some subjects in universities, let alone elementary and secondary schools. These are the men and women who have done the most vital reading and thinking since their own school days, whose lives have matured around a pattern of meaning. To allow such persons to teach is less a favor to them than to the community as a whole, and, incidentally, might release young certificate-holders for other communities which need teachers but are unable to inaugurate such a plan.

FRONTIERS

Concerning Civil Liberties

ONE of the things the Fund for the Republic is doing, these days, is to send copies of the latest (1954-55) annual report of the American Civil Liberties Union to a wider circle of editors than normally receive it. Having received a copy, and to press this good work a little further, we hereby suggest to readers unacquainted with the report, titled, *Clearing the Main Channels*, that they send fifty cents to the ACLU, 170 Fifth Ave., New York 10, N.Y., for a copy of their own. The report is a liberal education in democracy and a considerable object lesson in the good citizenship and self-sacrificing activities of ACLU members and attorneys throughout the country.

The work of the ACLU, an organization of 40,000 members—five times what it was in 1945—is reflected in the first paragraphs of an editorial in the May *Progressive:*

> It has become increasingly clear in recent years that the branch of our government most removed from the people has become the staunchest champion of the people's liberties. Month after month the federal judiciary restores fragments of freedom chipped away by the other two coordinate branches of government. It is no idle hope, it seems to us, to reckon that if the present trend in the courts continues, we may yet regain much of the ground we lost in this dizzy decade of believing we could whip communism by emulating some of its most repugnant characteristics.
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> The courts' ringing affirmation of the Bill of Rights is all the more striking when contrasted with the ragged records of the executive and legislative branches. In the area of civil rights, for example, the Supreme Court has wiped out the legal sanction for segregation in the schools, but neither the President nor Congress has displayed a faintly comparable courage in measuring up to their responsibilities in the same or related fields.

The activity of the ACLU is primarily in the courts. The 1954-55 report concerns the victories and defeats encountered by ACLU actions in the courts, under the three broad headings of (1) "Freedom of Belief, Speech, and Association," (2) "Justice under Law," and (3) "Equality before the Law." Since brief description can convey very little of the complexity of the struggle now going on in these fields, we shall limit our "review" to the observation that a reading of this report gives a realizing sense of the meaning of democracy at work, and may lead readers to look up their local branch of the ACLU to offer it their support.

In his introductory article, however, Patrick Murphy Malin, ACLU executive director, speaks of the obstacles confronting those who work to preserve a free society that is ruled by principle in the United States, and what he says is worth repeating:

> One fundamental and permanent trouble in meeting that constitutional challenge [the challenge of resisting "totalitarian security methods" in American life] is that the American people, like all other people, have a great many other intense desires besides the three civil liberties—freedom of inquiry and communication, fair procedures, and non-discriminatory treatment on the basis of individual merit, blind to race, color, or religion. All of us, to some extent or other, want bread and circuses; every dictatorship has been able to count on that for cruel exploitation, and every democracy must reckon with it for minimum survival. Even above the level of bread and circuses, we Americans specialize in wanting too much too quickly.
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> So we are always tempted to endanger ourselves by neglecting, or actively blocking, those three main channels of political liberty. But that imperils not only the enjoyment of the civil liberties themselves, but also everything else. If we have freedom of inquiry and communication, fair procedures and equality before the law, we have the best chance to achieve or defend or retrieve other values. On the other hand, even if we possess everything else our hearts desire, but are losing those primary and central liberties, then we stand in peril of losing all else too—sooner or later. Therefore, all of us would better keep clearing those main channels.

The problem, in any self-governing society, lies in maintaining the alertness of the people to the principles of government. Mr. Malin quotes from an article in *Fortune* by Chief Justice Warren, in which the Chief Justice comments on this problem:

> Solon, asked how justice could be secured in Athens, replied, "If those who are not injured feel as indignant as those who are." This is especially good advice at a time when our Bill of Rights is under subtle and pervasive attack, as at present. The attack comes not only from without, but from our own indifference and failure of imagination. Minorities whose rights are threatened are quicker to band together in their own defense than in the defense of other minorities. The same is true, with less reason, of segments of the majority. . . .

But how are the uninjured to feel as wronged as the injured? This is the fundamental question, since if they don't, rational methods of persuasion seldom have very much effect.

Two factors, at least, need to be at work in this situation. The first is the culture of the home environment. If children grow up among parents and other adults for whom the rights and feelings of others are regarded as important, then the children acquire moral sensibilities naturally, from the example of their elders, Children need not be "drawn into" the issues which confront adults, as an overt educational measure. They will hear and see that certain things are not to be tolerated, as a matter of course, and the attitudes of justice and equality will tend to be organic expressions of their lives.

The second factor lies in the cultivation of the imagination by the individual. This is not a "conditioning" process, but a deliberate work of the mind. Loss of rights, as Justice Warren points out, comes from a failure of the imagination.

We may not see, for example, how the expression, "under God," added to the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag, can affect our civil rights or curtail our liberties. But among other things, the expression implants the idea in young minds that the national State enjoys the guidance of the deity, and somehow lends an atmosphere of sanctity to whatever actions the Government undertakes. This idea alone is capable of becoming the seed of moral disaster. It breeds conformity and brings support to the notion, already far too popular, that dissenters from the prevailing religion are probably "un-American." Liberty and justice are undoubtedly suitable objects for a child to pledge himself to, but is the idea of God of a similar quality? Whose God? In the minds of the contestants of many wars in the past, "God" has always been on their side—on both sides, in fact, in a single war. Prayers are supposedly offered to the same God by the leaders and chaplains of Christian nations which are at war with one another. Are we to bring up our children to see nothing wrong with this? Or shall we tell them that our side is *always* right?

Then there is the question of the linkage of Church and State implied by the phrase. It is true that the great majority of the citizens of the United States are nominally Christian. Neglecting the multiplicity of denominations, each believing it has the appropriate channel to reach the ear of God, there is the fact that many thousands of citizens are not Christians at all. There are 63,000 Buddhists, hundreds of thousands of Jews, and an undetermined number of freethinkers and humanist agnostics, none of whom embrace the Christian idea of God. The Buddhists would probably agree that the affairs of the nation are conducted under the rule of the moral law, or *Karma*, but that the immoral acts of the nation, should there be any, will bring the retribution of that law. The atheists and humanists perhaps doubt that there is such a thing as a moral law, yet are often among the country's most valuable and law-abiding citizens. It was to guard against the imposition of any such program of "collectivist" religion that the Founding Fathers took particular care to omit any reference to a denominational or even a "Christian" deity in the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence. "Nature and Nature's God" is the phrase employed in the Declaration of Independence.

But what *harm* can it do? This is a question which may often be heard in connection with the new Pledge of Allegiance. Worst, perhaps, of all, is that it teaches little children to suppose that the existence—if not the nature—of God is a settled

matter. It suggests that the great questions of life have been met and solved by a previous generation, that the spirit of inquiry, typified in the Declaration of Independence in the reference to "the pursuit of happiness," has been thoroughly mapped by previous inquirers, who are competent to instruct the young in their conclusions. But this is false. The adults of this generation are not competent to instruct the young concerning the existence and character of the Deity. Darkness is about his pavilion, now, as two thousand years ago. The worst thing we could do for our children would be to induct them into a mood of spiritual complacency. It is a question whether anyone is competent to instruct anyone else in the matters of the highest religion. Hearsay, on such subjects, may be the greatest enemy of both old and young.

There is the matter of partisanship. Children taught that they "believe in God"—they don't, of course, know enough to believe in anything, as yet—are likely to suppose themselves more virtuous than unbelievers. Thus the phrase fosters prejudice among the young against more modest spirits who confess ignorance as to whether or not God runs the country, or even the universe.

But if you don't tell a child about God, how will he know right from wrong? One might reply that, from reading certain portions of the Old Testament, it is difficult to be sure *God* knows right from wrong, but the best answer is that the true moral geniuses of the world have usually gained the knowledge of right and wrong from within themselves, and not from some outside authority. A child who feels he must turn to God for guidance in morality is a child at the mercy of competitive claimants to knowledge of God's will.

Finally, it is disrespectful to the spirit of true religion to allow a child to suppose that a faith to live by can be so cheaply bought—by repeating phrases taught him mechanically by his instructors. And if they are *not* taught mechanically, then public school teachers are in the awkward position of giving instruction in religion, making the whole affair doubly offensive to the Bill of Rights.

Americans quickly deplore the beliefs which are made to prevail in the Soviet Union, overlooking the fact that the beliefs are a small matter compared to the prejudicial atmosphere of uniformity. Then, having sighed our regret, we take satisfaction in the spread of uniformity in our own land, through such sly devices as meddling with a perfectly good pledge of allegiance to the flag (as such things go), and assuring ourselves that the Battle for Truth has been well served by such monotonous recitals. This is indeed a petty and misleading faith with which to bolster our moral security.

The present discussion may seem overburdened with attention to a relatively minor threat to religious liberty, but we have attempted to illustrate, by the instance of the change in the Pledge of Allegiance, what Justice Warren meant in saying that a "failure of imagination" makes the Bill of Rights vulnerable to attack. There is a sense in which the Bill of Rights is chiefly a protection to those who wish to use their imagination freely. For those who undervalue this right, a threat to the Bill of Rights is likely to seem of small importance. Thus, in the end, an active imagination is the strongest weapon for the defense of human freedom.