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# A REVOLUTION IN POWER?

THE contention here to be urged is that the modern world is undergoing a fundamental revolution in respect to the nature of power, and that the first consequence of this revolution is already upon us—confusion among men of good will.

The men of good will may be properly called the "liberals." They are men who believe that good for mankind can be accomplished through benevolent constraint. They seek, that is, "constructive" legislation. They want the power of the State to be marshalled on the side of justice and the rights of man. They tend to define the good things of life in economic terms, not because they are "materialists," but because economic needs are obvious, urgent, and, presumably, something can be *done* about them. Economic injustice, like political injustice, can be sharply defined. Programs to correct economic inequities can be outlined and put into effect.

Today, however, liberalism is in decline. The liberals themselves have been the first to recognize and admit it, and to wonder about the causes of this change. Dozens of articles on the subject have appeared in the serious magazines. There can be little doubt of the fact that liberals are bewildered by their lack of a clear platform. Attempting to throw light on this situation, Granville Hicks writes in the *American Scholar* (Summer):

> The main reasons are the obvious ones. In the first place, the Cold War has taught the majority of intellectuals to measure American civilization not by an absolute standard but in comparison with Soviet communism, and, between the two, they have no doubt which they prefer. In the second place, they can see as clearly as anyone else that certain major evils have been eliminated or reduced in the past twenty years. We not only produce more goods than ever before; we distribute them more equitably, so that we have probably come closer than any other society in history to the abolition of poverty.
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> Workingmen, far from being the defenseless victims of exploitation, are protected both by the nation's laws and by their own powerful organizations. The underprivileged groups—women, aliens, Negroes—draw nearer and nearer to equal rights. In short, many of the goals that the radicals and reformers of the twenties set themselves have been or are being achieved.

In other words, the liberals look at Russia and are disturbed by the thought that the ultimate in planning for economic justice turns out to be quite different from their own hopes for the good society; while, on the other hand, many of the liberal's battles have already been won in the United States.

These reasons, as Mr. Hicks says, are the "obvious" ones. We should like to suggest some others.

The liberal does not "like" war, but, given a righteous cause, the liberal often becomes temporarily the most eager of militarists. The Western tradition of freedom is a violent one. Speak of the French Revolution and you think of heroic citizens fighting for their rights at the barricades. Speak of the American Revolution and you remember the struggle of Washington's ill-clothed and ill-armed Continentals. We want justice peacefully, but if we can't have it without violence, we'll go to war.

But today it is insane to plan to go to war. How, then, can the liberal be both liberal and sane? He may try to conceal from himself the insanity of plans for war, but this weakens both his conviction and his character. Or he may become a pacifist, but this weakens his liberal determination to see justice done, for how, in a practical world, are you going to get people to do the right thing without the judicious administration of power?

Of course, not only liberals are bewildered by this situation. It affects everybody, but the liberals are fairly self-conscious people who like to think of themselves as clear-thinking as well as practical. They are also men of good will, so that their confusion is more important to understand than the

confusion of those who are worried about next year's net profits, or about the high cost of government in the atomic age.

The liberals try to do the thinking for the world. But how can anyone who believes in the exercise of State power, even to the extent of atomic war, do the thinking for the world, these days? This question arises from the grim suspicion that political power as a means to the good life is a thing of the past. Political power, after all, is at root military power, and military power, in our time, means the superbomb.

Just how much importance has political "side-taking" in a world where force is obsolete, except as the means to total mutual destruction? Discussing the current political campaign, Eugene Rabinowitch, editor of the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists,* notes the claim of a speaker "that if Americans remain true to the spirit of their forefathers and keep America strong, they will have nobody to fear," and comments:

> [This is] a hollow statement in a time when each nation, however powerful, is literally (or will soon be) at the mercy of any hostile power technologically strong enough to acquire nuclear weapons and up-to-date vehicles for their delivery; and whose leaders are rash enough to gamble with their own people's survival. It is palpably clear that in this new world, neither the American tradition of national self-reliance, nor the European tradition of military alliances—to which America has now become committed—can provide a long-range national security. In other words, history has reached a dead end from which no way out exists along the paths of traditional national policies. The foreign policy programs of both political parties show little understanding of this dilemma, not to speak of suggestions for its resolution.

In short, *the rewards of violence in history have reached a dead end.* Well, we can hardly expect either politicians or military men to declare this truth, since after it was admitted and understood, there would be very little for either politicians or military men to do. Nor are politicians and military men much given to seeking out "logical conclusions." It is otherwise with liberals, who regard it as their special capacity and task to reach "logical conclusions." But the conclusion which results from the presence in the world of the tools of atomic destruction is that power is no longer a weapon of the good. It is not even a weapon of the bad, but only of the mad.

How, then, shall the liberal busy himself? He can renew his angry criticism of injustice, indict the trend to "conformity," and range himself in the ranks of those who defend civil liberties. Or he can combine his liberal interests with some phase of the new insights our culture has developed during recent years. For at least a generation, for example, the psychologists have been emerging as the pioneers of the present and the future in relation to human problems The psychologists, in particular, have approached the general area of social good that has been the traditional concern of the liberal, but from another angle. In this connection, we may quote a little more of Granville Hicks' *American Scholar* article. Mr. Hicks is discussing what has happened to the liberals, and one whom he mentions is Erich Fromm, "who has written revealing books about the problems of contemporary society, *Escape from Freedom* and *Man for Himself."* Mr. Hicks continues:

> More recently he [Fromm] has examined the economic foundation of our culture in *The Sane Society,* and the views he expresses explain the appearance of his name on the masthead of *Dissent.* [A new "radical" magazine.] He will admit that in our super-capitalism men are not so cruelly exploited as they were a century ago, but he insists that most people are slaves. Not only are they treated as commodities; they think of themselves as commodities. Their material wants may be better supplied than ever before, but more fundamental human needs—needs of the mind and the spirit—are neglected. If this neglect continues, he warns, we are headed either for mass destruction or for the kind of universal slavery described by Aldous Huxley in *Brave New World.*
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> Dr. Fromm has a remedy—what he calls "Humanistic Communitarian Socialism" as embodied in the Communities of Work that have sprung up in France since the war. Since he does not propose to abolish large-scale industry and mass production, it is hard to take his proposal seriously. But it is precisely the impracticality of his remedy that indicates the emotional intensity with which he has rejected his

and our culture.

Well, we make another reading of Dr. Fromm. He is an articulate critic of his and our culture, to be sure, but is his failure to "propose to abolish large-scale industry and mass production" evidence of "impracticality," or the reverse?

Fromm would be a dreamer indeed—even a dangerous one—if he had proposed anything like that. Mr. Hicks, it seems to us, is still thinking like an old-time liberal when he talks about "abolishing" the dominant economic institutions of our time. Does he want Dr. Fromm to lay out a liquidation program for the industrialists? This is precisely where the new liberalism, whatever it is to be, will have to differ from the old. The new liberalism will not grandiosely declaim about "abolishing" this or that social or economic evil. In the presence of atomic weapons, we had better not talk about "abolishing" anything. What we don't like, we had better plan to avoid, or to outgrow, and what we can't avoid or outgrow, we'll just have to live with. It's as simple as that.

These programs of "abolishing" the past never have worked, anyway. The revolutions which have not been able to confirm some basic growth in attitudes on the part of the rebels have turned out to be only palace revolutions. The "realist," in present-day terms, is the man who recognizes that we shall have to find another way than violence to confirm our growth.

The interesting thing about the French Communities of Work is that they can exist side by side with the "capitalistic" institutions of the past. They take nothing from anyone. They impose nothing on anyone. They are entirely *voluntary* and therefore as free as human institutions can get. Further, we suspect that Dr. Fromm was not offering the Communities of Work as a "blue-print" of exactly what to do, or what "must" be done, but only as a suggestive illustration of socio-economic activity in which human beings are released from the uglier aspects of conventional society. (No one who reads Claire Huchet Bishop's book, *All Things Common*, can fail to be moved by the achievements of the Communities of Work in this direction; and we may note, further, that the pioneer plant of the Communities, Boimondau, is a watch-case-making plant which employs the methods of mass production.)

As a matter of fact, the reviewers whose chief complaint against *The Sane Society* is that its positive proposals are not "practical" should explain to us what they mean by "practical." For this is the great question underlying the confusion of modern liberals. Usually, reformers or revolutionists mean by "practical," a way of *making* people give up their anti-social ways. The prospect of a future in which there just isn't any way of *making* people do anything may be too horrible for the liberal to contemplate, but this, it seems to us, is what the future has in store.

Harrison Brown, another writer in the October *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, makes the alternative all-too-clear:

> Hand in hand with the spread of atomic power there will emerge the ability to manufacture ingredients for atomic bombs and, eventually, H-bombs. Today there are government-sponsored groups working on atomic energy in many nations of the world, ranging from the nations of Western Europe to many of the nations of Asia, including India, Pakistan, the Philippines, and Japan. Soon we will observe the production of electricity from atomic energy in many of these areas. And not long after that time we may well observe the stockpiles of atomic weapons. The effects of these developments upon the relations between nations will certainly be of tremendous scope. And much to my own personal dismay, all of these developments are taking place in the absence of anything approaching international control over the means for producing atomic death and destruction. . .
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> I seriously doubt that modern industrial society could recover from the effects of an "all-out" war in which our modern methods of mass destruction are widely used. Clearly, in the years ahead there will be steady and, relatively speaking, rapid change in the international environment—a change which is being brought about by science and technology. Nations which are now the most powerful will no longer be so powerful. Nations which have been unable, independently, to threaten war will be able to wage it. Nations which have been poor will become relatively speaking, well off. Some nations which have been

rich will become, relatively speaking, less well off.

This rapidly changing scene will present enormous problems to the United States. How can we preserve in the years ahead our standard of living and our democratic way of life in the face of the tremendous forces which are working in the direction of destroying them?

I doubt that any one of us knows the answers. . . . But if we refuse to look squarely at the future and to recognize these problems, I fear that our civilization will perish and we may descend into another, and perhaps permanent, Age of Darkness.

Plainly, the liberals have something to learn from both the psychologists and the atomic scientists. The men in these professions have at least a nodding acquaintance with the forces which are likely to shape the events of the immediate future. The liberals, on the other hand, are still speaking in terms of the old vocabulary of ideological commitment, or are saying nothing at all.

There is reason to think that the ominous circumstances which have produced confusion for the liberal are contributing to the apathy of the general public. An article in the *Nation* for Oct. 13 details various opinions on the question, "Why Voters Don't Care." The writer, Eric Josephson, takes for his text the statement from a nineteen-year-old girl, "They try to make democracy almost a religion in the public schools and this hasn't worked out. . . . This democracy business is not going over too well." The problem of public apathy is well recognized. The Ford Foundation and other philanthropic organizations are strenuously endeavoring to stir interest in national issues, but the prospect is not promising. According to the *Nation* writer:

This campaign against creeping political indifference based on the premise that participation can be "sold," is itself a striking commentary on the political state of the nation. Presumably, the Presidential election will generate some excitement, but not for long. Despite the earnest pleading of candidates, some thirty-five million potential voters will stay home on November 6.

What breeds mass apathy? There is no scarcity of issues. This is an age of world revolution, when empires are tottering and new political balances of political and economic power are being formed. In many ways the nations of the world are bound more closely to each other than ever before, whether as friend or foe, and in the process domestic politics have become increasingly "internationalized." Politically and economically, the earth is shrinking. But numerous public-opinion polls reveal monumental ignorance of and indifference to international affairs.

After reviewing the relative failure of labor organizations to interest their members in public affairs, Mr. Josephson comments:

In large measure, mass apathy stems from the individual citizen's feeling of powerlessness. Two social psychologists, Ernst Kris and Nathan Leites, have observed: "Individuals in the mass societies of the twentieth century are to an ever increasing extent involved in public affairs; it becomes increasingly difficult to ignore them. But 'ordinary' individuals have ever less the feeling that they can *understand* or *influence* the very events upon which their life and happiness [are] known to depend."

One wonders if the situation is quite as depressing as it sounds; or if, perhaps, the popular sense of powerlessness is not an accurate measure of the relation of the individual to "political" issues. We are not here coming out with approval of "apathy," but asking whether the apathy may not be a more "realistic" response to political decision than eager-beaverish politicking.

The apathy itself is not admirable. But the refusal to become involved in politics—in some cases, at least, from a strong feeling that contemporary politics totally ignores the actual human needs of our time—will leave the way open to other types of involvement. Men may at last become tired of their feelings of powerlessness and look around for some means besides politics of changing the pattern of their lives.

The present has endlessly been called an age of Revolution. Chiefly, those who write in these terms are pointing out the awakening to political consciousness of the underprivileged and long exploited races in so-called "backward" and under-developed lands. But the more significant revolution may turn out to be the revolution in Power—the passing of violence as an instrument of gaining

power, and, therefore, the complete redefinition of power itself.

It would be a mistake, however, to assume that the right way to redefine power is to substitute Gandhi's *Satyagraha*, or the power of non-violence, for the power of violence. While non-violence is obviously better than violence, a major preoccupation with the techniques of moral pressure which are needed, actually, only on rare occasions—would distort the human situation.

The main thing, it seems to us, is to get used to the idea of living without that ace-in-the-hole feeling of being able to resort to violence when we need it. The resource of violence is really an illusion, so far as we as individuals are concerned. We don't have it, except in a very minor way. The power of violence is possessed by the State, so that "we" have it only symbolically. It is supposedly used by the State in our behalf—"for the public interest"—but *we* don't use it. And most of the time, we don't like the way it is used.

So the loss of the resort to violence will not be our loss, but the loss of the State. This does not necessarily mean no police force or anything like that. The British police have maintained excellent social order for many years without the use of firearms. The point here is that the police may use the force of restraint without acting with a violence that seriously injures others. The police can deal with social pathology in much the same way as the psychiatrist deals with psychopathology in mental hospitals. There may be restraint, and protection of the public from irrational behavior, but no deliberate harm need be inflicted upon the offenders.

The question of what is to be done when an entire nation goes berserk—as for example in Nazi Germany—is an obvious one. There is no real answer to this question; not at any rate, in the terms that it is asked. All one can say is that the Nazi rise to power came in an international environment of complete reliance on military force. It was a climactic development of nationalist paranoia. If you are prepared to insist that the Germans would have produced the Nazis, and that the Nazis would have matured their psychosis in exactly the same way, and to the same degree, in the entirely different environment of a Europe in which the other nations had renounced violence, then the matter cannot be argued at all. For the postulate, in this case, is that we must always anticipate that a nation of demons will emerge to destroy us. There is no way to meet this depressing prospect, except to propose that we *all* become potential demons together. This is our present policy—the policy, in current diplomatic language, of maintaining "a balance of terror."

If there were a way to guarantee that, given ruthless aggressors like the Nazis, we could always whip up enough lethal violence to dispose of them quickly, and do it without upsetting the equilibrium of an otherwise peaceful world, there would be no problem. But the problem exists, and the people who insist that violence is the only "practical" solution are really believers in *magic*. They cherish the dream that if they let the *djinn* of violence out of the bottle, he will be a well-behaved *djinn* toward everyone except Our Enemy. The dream, however, is false. That is why we need to think about a life conducted without hope of resort to violence.

But it is not only a life without violence. It is also a life without fear.

# *REVIEW*
## THE CHILDREN'S CRUSADE

THE great Crusades launched by Christendom against the infidel Saracens who held the keys to the Holy City of Jerusalem were as great a madness as can be found in European history, and the Crusade of the Children was the maddest of them all. David Duncan, in *The Trumpet of God* (Doubleday, $4.50), has made this event the backdrop to the awakening to life of an adolescent boy. Ulric, a youth of medieval Germany, runs away from home to avoid the wrath of his free-thinking father, and, impressed by coincidences which he mistakes for "miracles," is overtaken by the idea that he has been appointed by God to lead a crusade to the Holy Land. The story follows him and his childish companions all the way to Rome, where he encounters Pope Innocent III—the same Innocent who ordered the crusade against the Albigenses of southern France—and leaves him disillusioned with himself, but free to begin a new life with the Franciscans, some of whom he has met along the way.

Why this book about the Middle Ages? Perhaps, because we are so distant from the Middle Ages both in time and in sense of reality that there is value in a story which shows that human beings more or less like ourselves lived in those days. In one sense, *The Trumpet of God* is a book about the terror and tragedy of orthodoxies. While there is essential gentility in the story, we dare not overlook the dreadful compulsions which warped the lives of the people of the thirteenth century. But what Mr. Duncan also makes plain is that, within the formal declarations and definitions of faith, the ever-moving flow of human feelings continually changes its course. Most men are better than their creeds. Most men, hardly realizing it, reinterpret their beliefs to accommodate ethical intuitions which are no part of the dogmas they have ostensibly embraced.

Wondering about the historicity of the Children's Crusade, we turned to the *Encyclopædia Britannica.* There we came across this passage, remarkable for a crescendo of feeling seldom found in the *Britannica's* learned prose. It is something to share:

> . . . in 1212 there took place one of the most ghastly tragedies that has ever happened in the world—the crusade of the children. Fifty thousand boys and girls were persuaded by some pestilent dreamers that their childish innocence would effect what their immoral fathers had failed to accomplish, and so left their homes on an expedition to capture the Holy Land. The vast majority never returned; the happiest of them were drowned in the Mediterranean.

Mr. Duncan's book, to the lay reader, seems accurate enough in background. While there was no Ulric, there might have been. Ulric's delusion that he has been favored by a miracle—several of them, in fact—is confirmed by those who gather round him, resolved to accompany him to Jerusalem. The crusade, for Ulric, is also a way of breaking out of the dreary world of the peasant's life. Magic and mystery combine for him with an ideal of religious consecration. Ulric's conviction of his calling converts even a severe Cistercian monk to his mission, and Father Adolphus watches over the horde of children all the way to Rome.

But the book is almost entirely the story of Ulric. It is Ulric's odyssey. Mr. Duncan seems to be saying that if a youth of the Middle Ages were capable of high dreams, this is what might happen to him. If he were to become aware of the follies in his dreams, yet hold on to their inspiration, this is what he might do.

Both Ulric and his cohorts commit crimes of ignorance. They gain entrance by stealth to a peaceful town of the heretic Waldensians and kill the inhabitants. An angry distrust of heresy turns the Waldensians into victims of the peasants who have joined with Ulric's band. On another occasion, in fright, Ulric kills a leper in the last stages of his wasting disease.

Two experiences deepen Ulric's perceptions and prepare him for his awakening. The first is at

Ravenna. There his followers expected him to part the sea, so that they could march across the floor of the Adriatic and on to Jerusalem. Gazing at the rippling green, Ulric suddenly realized that this was not to be. His failure was his salvation from delusion:

> The vast throbbing sea was the bosom of God. Though it might wear a thousand aspects, it was eternally the same, forever mysterious yet infinitely reassuring in its promise of fidelity to self. God indeed could tear it asunder—and by doing so rend past all repair the garment of his own perfection. But perfection was God's promise, and His majesty endured in the abeyance of His powers. The universe lay balanced in the palm of His hand, and His fingers never closed; the sun gleamed from His eye and He winked not; the waters lifted up to the sky and He joined them there in perfect union. The seam was tight; the circle was complete. Within its circumference God's will was law and the law was unalterable. Should the sea split asunder, the path between the walls of tormented water could only lead to the corpse of God. The thought was sheer terror. To expect God to achieve this was inconceivable blasphemy!

So Ulric became a man. When his followers cried out against his failure, he told them:

> Cling to your faith and do not berate God when He saves you from this folly. For I say to you that the waters He parted for Moses were but a small pool compared to the vast tide that lies before you. Nor do you have enemies at your back threatening you with death. Where then is the extremity to urge Him to set aside the order by which He governs the universe? Is God a juggler that He should perform tricks to please the fools who stand along the shore?

A deep disappointment fills Ulric, not that the waters would not divide, but that he could not explain to the others why—that it was good and fitting that they did not divide. Ulric had lost the God that was a magician, but gained a new God of formless immensity—"so vast that it was the height of absurdity to suppose that He took cognizance, or had ever taken cognizance, of anything Ulric had ever done."

The other decisive experience which comes to Ulric is his encounter with the Franciscans. From them he learns the lesson of love of life—or, as Albert Schweitzer might put it, of a joyous reverence for life. Ulric listens to a dialogue between his mentor, Father Adolphus, and the Franciscan brother Marco. Adolphus insists that life is corrupt and that the duty of man is to flee from the world and its wickedness.

> "But Our Heavenly Father did just the opposite," protested Marco. "For His love came to mankind through Christ, that men might learn to love one another perfectly here on earth."
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> The earth is our temporal dwelling, a brief resting place between heaven and hell. It is unsubstantial and without consequence and falls only as a veil between us and God. Ignore it."
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> "Nay," said Marco softly. "The earth and its creatures, the skies at night where dwell the stars and Sister Moon, the skies of day with the glory of Brother Sun—these are the very face of God! Study them."

Ulric felt the faint stirrings of a new birth for him. Adolphus had taught him of an awful path "between hedges of sin." He was not to fear being cruel for the sake of Christ! Marco preached another doctrine:

> "And yet you can't deny," Adolphus was saying, "that you yourself have given up the world. Why else your rags and crusts and stern code of poverty which must bind you to a life of misery? Nay, I do not condemn. It is holy to suffer for Christ!"
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> "But I do *not* suffer! I rejoice in poverty because it sets me free. What does a man do with gold? Why, he must have a strong box to put it in. And then his box needs a house around it lest thieves carry the box away. Next he must put a wall around the house to protect its doors, and a moat around that to protect the wall. When all men do thus the world is so divided that no man can clasp the hand of his brother."

From a religion of dogma Ulric passes to a religion of mood. The change is imperceptible, so far as words are concerned. Yet it is as certain in its coming as Ulric's nascent manhood.

Ulric is a type of medieval mankind, struggling to break out of the dark cavern of fear—seeking a miracle only so long as life was

itself a denial of the good, the true, and the beautiful. When, through the Franciscans, Ulric found life to be good, he sought no more miracles. He learned contentment and rejoiced in the labors which lay before him.

Yet the long and well-nigh unspeakable agony of the Children's Crusade remains to haunt our memory. They are Ulrics all, but in this story only a part of the fixed pageantry of the drama. They help to build the web of Ulric's delusion; he loses them in becoming free, and they fall back into the nameless mass of the blind, the halt, and the lame—the massive tragedy of mankind. It is so with every tale of human awakening; the protagonist mounts upon the very darkness which surrounds him, yet in him lies a promise of the light that may come to each one.

# *COMMENTARY*
## THE AGE OF "SELF-CONTROL"

IN this week's Frontiers, Lionel Trilling is quoted as saying:

> . . . there are moments in literature which do not yield the secret of their power to any study of language, because the power does not depend upon language but on the moral imagination.

The basic issue of our lead article is very similar. The prospect of being citizens of a nation which can no longer exercise violence in their defense is a frightening one chiefly for the reason that the only substitute for violence is "the moral imagination." Tolstoy, whom Mr. Trilling is discussing, wanted no violence exerted in his behalf, but Tolstoy was a master of the use of moral imagination. The same may be said of Thoreau, and of Gandhi.

Men may say that they don't care for the life that Tolstoy and Gandhi were prepared to lead. They may say—and be right in saying—that a security defined by somebody else doesn't give *them* any security; that they want security as *they* define it. The point, however, of the revolution of the atomic age is that reliers on violence can't have security as they define it. It was never very reliable, but now it no longer exists.

What are the consolations? Well, this sort of security—security assured by extraordinary military armaments—is a development of very recent history. Nobody had this kind of security in the days of absolute monarchs. Nobody, that is, except the monarchs themselves. All the rest of us were then as impotent against organized violence as we would be in some future society which refused to arm itself with atom or super bombs. People who lived under absolute monarchs had to *trust* their kings. They had no choice.

In a society which rejects the use of violence, we should have to trust one another. Would this be any worse than trusting an absolute monarch? Would having to place this trust in our fellows mean "the end of civilization"?

What sort of imagination is it, on the other hand, that sees the darkest kind of doom waiting in the wings of history for the moment when some people or nation is fool enough to lay down its arms or unfuse its atom bombs?

A curious thing, this pathological dread of being without the means to the instantaneous destruction of millions. The pacifists, in the superficial talk of the sophisticated, are accused of being cowards. Is it then courage to be *for* the things the pacifists oppose?

We have the suspicion that the people who are most insistent upon a great and threatening stockpile of H-bombs are people who have a deep longing for a Big Brother to depend upon. They can't stand the thought of not having a vast nihilistic Force on their Side. It's not so much a matter of being right as of being protected no matter who or what is right. And a great big bomb that doesn't care who is right can be a comforting thought. In fact, the people who have the impudence to weigh matters of international righteousness, as though there were something to discuss, are the people who are automatically regarded as "subversive" by those who want to be defended by atomic bombs.

It is true, of course, that some of the pacifists are pacifists because they think they have a big Brother on *their* side. *Their* Big Brother is God, who ordered his children never to kill. We have no particular admiration for the Big Brother psychology. It seems to us that if it is wrong to kill in war, a man ought to be able to figure that out without any Big Brother to tell him. But, as between the Big Brother of the Old Testament and the Big Brother of the Omnipotent State, we prefer the pacifist kind. It seems much less dangerous, these days.

The important thing to realize, however, is that considerations of preference no longer matter very much. The great problem is no longer how to control the Bad People. If the atomic scientists

are to be believed—and we think they must be—we have to face the fact that there is no hope of controlling the people who are determined to be bad. All that we can control, now, is how we ourselves shall behave, in a world where some people may decide to be bad no matter what we do. That was the situation of people who lived under absolute monarchs because they had no choice. And that was also the situation of the Tolstoys, the Thoreaus, and Gandhis, because they *made* a choice.

The problem of the menace of atomic warfare is not really a military problem. It is a psychological problem—the problem of the Intolerable Situation. The typical human reaction to it is not a normal one. Faced with an Intolerable or Impossible Situation, men often strike out blindly or wildly, without much regard for whom they hit. This, then, is what we shall have to learn—to live in an Intolerable Situation until we realize that the intolerability is mostly in ourselves.

# CHILDREN
## and Ourselves

WE have a letter from a new subscriber which should be of interest for two reasons: First, the discussion of "guns and children," begun Sept. 19, is worth pursuing intermittently. Second, this communication states forcefully a contrasting view. So now, the letter.

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Editors: "Children...and Ourselves": I would like to comment on your column in the Sept. 19 issue of MANAS. It may be that I have not thought this matter through, but it seems to me that it is foolish, wrong-headed, and downright silly to attribute crime and juvenile delinquency to the fact that parents allow their children to play with toy guns. It seems highly probable to me that children may have always played with toy weapons; if not toy guns, then toy swords, toy knives, and such. I do not doubt that many children who did play with toy guns, toy swords and such *did* grow up to be delinquents and killers, but it is quite apparent that these were the exception rather than the rule. In all probability the subscriber who now worries about how to keep toy guns out of the hands of his children was himself as a child exposed to their influence. The whole business seems to me to be a case of mistaking, or at least confusing, cause and effect, plus a very human tendency to find scapegoats.

It may be that being country born and bred has given me a slightly different slant on this gun business. Frankly, I like guns and I like to hunt. This doesn't mean that I'm a sadist or that I hate animals or that I want to kill people—it doesn't even mean that I'm indifferent to the pain and torment of animals or human beings. Here's what I think it does mean: It means (and this may surprise you a lot) that I enjoy nature, that is to say, the outdoors, and accept it for what it is. I enjoy tramping the woods and fields with my gun and my dog in search of game. Getting game doesn't matter; it's the going after that counts; however, I am reasonably certain that it is the "getting" part of it that the author of "Children . . . and Ourselves" objects to. How, I can hear someone say, can anyone possibly justify the cruel killing of innocent animals and still claim that he likes animals and is not indifferent to their sufferings? Well, it seems to me that the point of view has a lot to do with it. On a farm you learn to accept the fact that man is a part of nature; you learn that life feeds on life the same as in the jungle; you learn that all of nature is cruel and yet that there is no cruelty in it. Is it any worse for me to shoot a squirrel or a rabbit (which I will use for food) than to wring the neck of a tame fowl, or castrate a steer that I may someday use for food? Is it any crueler that I kill a squirrel with a bullet than that the squirrel goes his natural way to be killed and eaten by an owl or a fox or, worse yet, to die from starvation due to overproduction of the squirrel population? If the answer is yes, what would be the result if there were no hunters? Suppose we just let nature take its course for a few years—can't you guess what would happen? Many species would starve as a result of overpopulation. Predators would first become a menace to domestic livestock and then to human beings. It wouldn't matter a lot if we all became vegetarians—surplus deer, rabbits, and other animals would soon put an end to farming and eventually to the human race.

So much for my somewhat biased views on the manly sport of hunting. You can call it cruelty if you like, but I think you will have to agree that cruelty is in this sense an entirely relative term.

In conclusion, I would like to say that it seems to me that the author of "Children . . . and Ourselves" and also the subscriber who brought the subject up both suffer from the mistaken idea that guns are in themselves evil. I do not think that this is so. Children who become interested in nature or the outdoors or in guns would be far better off if their parents would make an effort to understand this. I believe that the teen-ager who has learned a love for the outdoors, respect for life

and property and the safe handling and proper use of firearms is a very poor candidate for juvenile delinquency.

Before I close I would like to state that I am against militarism and war; against needless cruelty to animals as well as people; against the indiscriminate slaughter of wildlife; against the conception of justice that holds that an eye for an eye must remain always the rule. I am for conservation of natural resources; peace; kindness; and most important of all, understanding.

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At this point, we should ask interested readers to turn back to the Sept. 19 issue, for some basic misunderstanding seems to have occurred. When MANAS spoke of "dislike for the associations of toy guns," and of the violence of firearms as employed by man against man, we were not attempting to evaluate guns *per se*, but certain psychological associations in the use of them. As we indicated, the use of guns by the frontiersmen or by anyone else for whom hunting bears an organic relation to livelihood belongs in an entirely different category. The present writer, like our subscriber, once spent a good deal of time in the country and "hunted" the season around. The farm or ranch boy who learns to hunt in a properly responsible fashion learns a great deal else at the same time, and in many respects is far more fortunate than the city youth. In other words toy guns we do not like, for they are almost invariably associated with killing *people*, but the genuine article, learned about and cared for in connection with hunting, can have an entirely different psychological effect. We did deplore the "secretive shooting of harmless birds," which often takes place in suburban areas by children with air rifles, but will agree with our correspondent that the care and possession of genuine firearms usually brings with it enough sense of responsibility so that a teen-ager will have a distaste for completely useless or "whim" shooting.

It was not our intention, in other words, to place the entire hunting fraternity beyond the pale, so far as MANAS is concerned. The points made by our correspondent are good ones, and we hope he will concede that a dislike for toy guns and a certain respect for genuine firearms may easily go together. A gun is no plaything, and to grow up thinking it is has led to many a tragedy.

# *FRONTIERS*

## Patterns of Anti-Culture

IF "culture" grows from the creative surge of active human intelligence, there is, indeed, a variety of influences which may be called "anti-cultural." Opposition to free thought and free expression, authoritarian censorship of the arts, belong in this category—and to these must be added any pressure toward nationalist conformity. Philosophy, literature, politics and religion will soon, in times of fear or negation, find themselves tarred by the same psychological brush.

The threat of war or the fear of the penalties of ideological differences not only inspires witch hunts; today, articulate writers are increasingly alert to the life-and-death struggle over psychological freedom which consequently takes place. Picking at random from critically observant articles appearing during the past year, a general consensus is evident. When John Cogley exposes the degradation of the popular arts by "blacklisting," when Lionel Trilling discusses contemporary literature, when Santha Rama Rau reviews the efforts of Chester Bowles in behalf of global understanding, and when Joseph Wood Krutch discusses the Humanities, they all seem to be saying the same thing.

Let us start with Mr. Cogley. Since MANAS reviewed his two-volume report on blacklisting, sponsored by the Fund for the Republic—and simultaneously took note of criticisms leveled at this study—it is encouraging to encounter Brooks Atkinson's appreciative account of Cogley's work in the *Reporter* for Sept. 6. The drama critic of *The New York Times* says in a concluding paragraph:

> In the mass entertainment mediums, blacklisting is an accepted procedure. Invisible to the public, elusive to most of the people concerned, it represents part of the basic frustration of our time. Fear of Russia has produced in us an ingrown civilization. Blocked by the Iron Curtain, unable to act normally in an outgoing fashion, we transfer our fears to our own kind and look under our beds for the great conspiracy.
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> If our nation has a happy future, some day we will look back on this psychotic period with the same incredulity and horror we have for the religious persecutions of earlier centuries. Those explosions of passion, bigotry, and self-interest look primitive now. Blacklisting is primitive today. But if, as some alarmists believe, the United States has already passed its peak, blacklisting undoubtedly will be regarded some day as both a sign and a cause of national decadence.
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> In the innocent days of 1947, when the motion-picture producers were still resisting the Un-American Activities Committee and feeling noble, their attorney, the late Paul McNutt, spoke some traditional American truths. Characterizing blacklisting as "a conspiracy without warrant of law," he said: "It does not require a law to cripple the right of free speech. Intimidation and coercion will do it. Freedom simply cannot live in an atmosphere of fear."
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> These statements may have sounded like platitudes in 1947. They sound like Holy Writ today.

Prof. Trilling does not discuss blacklisting, nor the present "Cold War," but he is markedly acute on the subject of "preoccupation with evil." The failure of most nineteenth- and twentieth-century literature, he maintains, is the failure to make ethical affirmations which are vital—failure to develop an anatomy of the "good" to compare with brilliant dissections of the corrupt. In an essay on Tolstoy, Trilling says: "It may happen that our preoccupation with evil will lead us to lose our knowledge, or at least the literary confirmation of our knowledge, of what goodness of life is." He continues:

> The literary production since Tolstoy has been enormously brilliant and enormously relevant, yet it is a striking fact that, although many writers have been able to tell us of the pain of life, virtually no writer has been able to tell us of pain in terms of life's possible joy. . . the characteristic criticism of our time is the psychological analysis of language. This is a technique of great usefulness, but there are moments in literature which do not yield the secret of their power to any study of language, because the power does not depend on language but on the moral imagination.

Mr. Krutch asks, in a series produced for *The Saturday Review*, "Are the Humanities Worth Saving?" This much-quoted writer remarks that "unless we are willing to admit also that in this area doubt and dispute must rage, perhaps forever, because what is included within it cannot be measured or subjected to controlled experiment, then there is little use in 'defending the humanities,' because there is little left to defend."

Here, again, is the emphasis on free thought and free debate, which passes entirely out of the picture whenever fear of Communist influence takes over. And all these attitudes have international consequences. When Santha Rama Rau admires Chester Bowles for his labors in behalf of her native India, she is obliged to adopt one of the former Ambassador's criticisms of the United States. In *Perspectives USA* (Spring, 1956), she remarks:

> To any Asian who has lived for any length of time in America, at least one tragic fact has become depressingly clear—that America, whose history should give it an inestimable advantage in leading and grasping the nature of the revolutionary changes in the world, is steadily losing ground in the battle of ideas and ideologies in Asia. . . . What Mr. Bowles calls America's "oversimplified arithmetic of the Cold War—'You must be either for us or against us'," is not only meaningless but dangerous.

It is precisely because the "either-for-me-or-against-me" psychology blocks off what Lionel Trilling names "the moral imagination," that we cannot afford to be basically factional about anything—not even about Communist aggression. We may be partisan, but if we are wise we will always retain perspective on our own partisanship. To be "basically" factional is to lose perspective altogether, and the unfortunate consequence of this, as related by Santha Rama Rau, is that we inevitably cause others to lose perspective upon us. We are not suffering, then, from the threat of Communism, but from the multitudinous effects, at home and abroad, of delayed maturity. The "moral imagination" sees beyond a *particular* set of attitudes, because imagination defines itself by a crossing of psychological boundaries. We may retain our opinions, in other words, but we are provincial if we confuse opinions—or even our right to defend them—with either fact or truth.