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THE ESTIMATE OF MAN

DARE a man take a position, in relation to other human beings, like that of a teacher who has learned from experience that unless he hopes and even expects the best from his pupils, he cannot really teach them anything worth knowing? Does the wisdom of the classroom become folly out in the world?

We are obliged, we say, in daily life, to deal with "the facts." But what are the facts? If a stone wall is in your path, the height of the wall will remain unaffected whether you call it names or speak to it gently. You'll still have to climb over the wall. And while you may, by becoming angry and excited, slip and turn your ankle, the wall will not be to blame.

The wall, in other words, can be defined without reference to your attitude toward it. But you can't define human beings—most human beings, that is—without taking your own feelings into consideration. It is an old saying that if a man is called a blackguard long enough, he'll become one, and even if only partly true, it suggests that what we expect other people to do plays a part in determining their behavior.

On the whole, the social sciences try to ignore this psychological fact. They approach people with a modified "stone-wall" theory of human nature. In economics, for example, there is an attempt to define human behavior in relation to buying and selling with "laws" applying to these limited functions. And diplomacy, while far from pretending to be a science, has nevertheless its basic assumptions about the behavior of nations in war and peace. Nations are expected to act a certain way, and long-term policies of trade and national defense are established according to these anticipations. The advertising man has his set of assumptions, too; likewise the psychiatrist, the lawyer, the politician. All of these specialists practice special "theories" of human nature.

Now, obviously, there is some truth in these theories, or diplomats, psychiatrists, lawyers and advertising men would not be such prosperous people. It is perhaps natural for them, as for those who envy them, to think that they understand human beings pretty well. They are all good pragmatists who have found out what works—and, we might add, they are working it to death. For them, human nature as usual means business as usual, whether it is the business of salving a panic-stricken conscience, working out an ERP agreement that will strengthen the ring of steel around Russia, or stockpiling enough atom bombs to destroy the rest of the world.

There is some truth in these theories, and there is great power in the frames of human action which have been built up, over centuries, around them. The assumptions made by diplomats and government officials concerning the peoples of other countries—assumptions which, it may be admitted, sometimes only bring into sharper focus the vague impressions and half-formed judgments of the great majority—have had much to do with making the Western nations into great armed camps, periodically engaged in immeasurably destructive wars. But diplomatic assumptions not only get us into wars; they also involve us in extraordinary hypocrisy. At the very hour when an official emissary of peace and good will is repeating, quite "sincerely," his message of undying friendship and cooperation to the people of another country, the War College at home may be sitting in conference, planning the military destruction of that same country—wholly in theory, of course, as an academic problem—but planning it just the same. And the argument of the military is logical: they are employed by the

people to expect the worst of everybody, and to be eternally prepared to give the worst in return.

This sort of thing has been going on for a long time. It is hardly ever questioned, and when it is, there are plenty of practical answers based on the human-nature-as-usual theory to silence the questioner. It takes an Emerson, a Thoreau or a Tolstoy, to refuse to submit to "the facts."

The burden of this article is twofold. First, on philosophical grounds, we think that the practice of classifying human beings according to divided functions—as "consumers," as "nationals" of other countries, as "labor," as "capitalists," or as "intellectuals," is a grossly misleading approach to the nature of human society. These abstractions reduce men to something less than human beings. When we study them according to such divisions, we get into the habit of thinking of them as less than human, and that is the way we treat them.

Second, on historical grounds, we think that the time has come when to continue with this sort of analysis of other men will accomplish our common destruction. The various frames of "realistic" judgment of others are already producing consequences which are violently opposed, one to another. This means, for men of social intelligence, that a beginning must be made in recognizing as "real" only those things which move in the direction of cooperation and mutual understanding. It means acceptance of the view that men, both ourselves and others, are better, wiser and more faithful than they seem, and the willingness to take some risks to prove that we really stand by our belief. These risks are nothing in comparison to what will happen if we continue to count on the worst in human beings.

There is what seems a sad confirmation of this judgment in the tragic suicide of John Gilbert Winant. It would be difficult to find a more conscientious official in public life than the late Ambassador to Britain. His *Letter from Grosvenor Square,* published last year, reflects an extraordinarily simple and direct sense of responsibility in high position. At his last public appearance before his death, he asked his audience: "Are you doing as much today for peace as you did for this country and this civilization in the days of war?" Speaking for himself, he said, "I'm not," and two weeks later he killed himself. Here was a man, we may think, who could no longer bear the hopelessness of the world. His very simplicity, perhaps, prevented him from seeing the terrible inconsistencies in the manner of the world's management, until, when their effects became self-evident, it was too late.

A man has to understand the nature of evil in order to believe intelligently in the good. He has to see how the onslaughts of malignant events were born in the thoughts of men, long before they emerged as impersonal forces of history. Mr. Winant was twice a victim of a low estimate of mankind: first, in his depression at the plight of the world, which suspicion and distrust did much to bring about; second, in what must have been his own opinion that he, a single man, could do nothing to make the world better.

For a long time, Nature held off the disaster that is upon us. For centuries, the good earth absorbed the impact of ruthless acquisition—the gutting of the soil, the ravage of the forests, the periodic slaughters of war. Armies came and went, but the village and the hearth survived to bring another cycle of civilization to birth. The struggle for existence was itself a natural corrective of delusions, bringing men back to at least material realities.

But now, with industrialization of the farm as well as of the city, with a denaturing mechanization overtaking every phase of modern life, time and the wilderness can no longer heal. No longer do men gain from the land a sense of their wholeness. The earth is no more a mother—it is matériel.

The dictate of history is plain. Either we find a new balance in life—devise, consciously, some principle of resilience to restore our faith—or we shall be unable to survive. How do we know that

there are not deeps in human nature, as yet untapped, that can water the soil of human relationships just as artesian penetrations have made gardens out of and plains? But in order to reach those resources, we shall have to set aside the familiar, negative judgments of human beings and expose them as unreal shadows, projected from a deluded past. We shall have to change our combative reflexes to friendly ones, our suspicions and resentments to patient, unbiased questioning. There will be need to reject as false and unrepresentative those grandiose and pompous expressions made by the heads of States in the name of national security. Nor does one become either foolish or visionary by refusing to accept, any more, the fragmentary picture of man—of man in stolid mediocrity, or at his worst—as though it were the whole of human possibility.

If we are Indians of Asia, we will recognize that when a diplomatic representative of the United States speaks before an economic conference in India in the hated accents of imperialism, demanding "cooperation" with American foreign policy as the condition of receiving American dollars, there are millions of Americans who are silently ashamed of such a speech. And if we are Americans, we will express that shame, directly, to the Indian people.

The iron curtains of the world exist because men have put their faith in iron. It is possible to have faith in other things. No man is under any necessity to accept without protest a despicable act or declaration, done or made in his name. No people need dignify by silence the voices of spokesmen who would destroy the future by continuing the past. The people have the power to create the fabric of a new society. As a beginning, they can show what they believe in, individually. There are other modes of communication between peoples than the diplomatic pouch.

More than a century ago, Emerson wrote:

> . . . it is a lesson which all history teaches wise men, to put trust in ideas, and not in circumstances. We have all grown up in the sight of frigates and navy yards, of armed forts and islands, of arsenals and militia. The reference to any foreign register will inform us of the number of thousand or million men that are now under arms in the vast colonial systems of the British empire, of Russia, Austria and France; . . .
>
> Thus always are we daunted by the appearances; not seeing that their whole value lies at bottom in the state of mind. It is really a thought that built this portentous war-establishment, and a thought shall also melt it away. Every nation and every man instantly surround themselves with a material apparatus which exactly corresponds to their moral state, or their state of thought.... We surround ourselves always, according to our freedom and ability, with true images of ourselves in things, whether it be ships or books or cannons or churches. The standing army, the arsenal, the camp and the gibbet do not appertain to man. They only serve as an index to show where man is now; what a bad, ungoverned temper he has; what an ugly neighbor he is; how his affections halt; how low his hope lies. . . .

It is time to raise our hopes. It is time to endow something besides atom bombs and an aggressive foreign policy with reality. To recognize the desirability of giving our allegiance, our deeper faith, to an estimate of man that will make peace possible is not a coward's flight from war, but a brave man's reading, at last, of the inseparable unity of the moral and the practical.

Today, it is from the defeated lands of Europe that we hear the voices of individual men. They are stateless men, who have, therefore, a kind of freedom denied to the rest of the world. But it is a freedom mingled with the bitterness of despair—for this is a world which does not recognize individuals as really existing. Only states, with armaments, are "real," according to the current definitions. Must peoples of other countries wait until they, too, are defeated, in order to be heard as individuals? Can not a man in a country not yet laid waste by war be believed without reference to the pretensions of his government?

There is nothing to prevent individuals from beginning to live in a world of moral reality, and letting the vital flow of their interest become the

common sustenance of that world. There are never any real obstacles to doing what we can—which is to set the sights of feeling and thought in the direction of human fraternity.

Most men who read the more-than-somewhat rotten commercial press don't have to read it. When they do, they confirm the bondage of other men who produce the newspapers that still other men imagine the "public" wants to read. You can't boycott the whole universe, it is true, but you can start with the corrupting psychological influences. So many are about, that to pick one and stop nourishing it should be an easy task.

The vulgarity, the cynicism, the deceit and the acquisitiveness of the age could all fall away from our lives like an old dead shell, if men would begin to place their interest and their energies in other things. This, as Emerson said, "is not to be carried out by public opinion, but by private opinion, private conviction. . . ." Public opinion is only a ghost, an echo of yesterday's slogans, a partisan dogma, in most cases. We need, not "public opinion," shaped by demagogues and by frightened and desperate "leaders," but resolute private opinion, built of the granite of individual moral decision, shaped slowly, by quiet reflection, and sustained by the conscious respect of man for man.

Letter from **ENGLAND**

LONDON.—One of the editors of the London Communist *Daily Worker* recently resigned his position and his membership in the Party in order to join the Roman Catholic Church. He believes that Catholicism is the "answer to the problems of our day" and a way out of world chaos. It seems that susceptibility to the totalitarian view of life is not easily overcome. So far as we can see, this man has rejected economic determinism only to embrace ecclesiastical determinism—a trade in determinisms which can hardly be described as "progress." Perhaps a well-known educationist (Mr. Robert Birley) was right in declaring in his Burge Lecture for 1947 that "the most obvious symptom of the disease of our civilization is the wide-spread feeling among men that they have lost all control of their own destinies." The universal hunt for scapegoat or saviour is evidence that the world has still to start in earnest on a process of inner enlightenment.

If our destiny is ever to come under our control, rigorous self-examination is necessary. There are not many signs of this particular discipline. The Church of England has tried to make the conventional and easy, if illusory, blending of the values of two worlds, the moral and the practical, in its Report, *The Church and the Atom* (April, 1948). From the standpoint of moral theology (we are informed), the use of atomic bombs must be considered in conjunction with other acts of mass destruction, such as "obliteration" bombing. Fortified by this view, the Commission making the Report believes that, in certain matters, defensive necessity might justify the use of atomic bombs against an unscrupulous aggressor. Meanwhile, frightened by a glimpse of spiritual, as distinct from theological values, the Report proceeds: "There are those who would say that the solution is to counter aggression by love. Ultimately, it may be true. But is it applicable to the problem that confronts us?" It would need a Dostoievsky to do justice to this conception of Christian morals.

Meanwhile, the outlook for the world, as Bertrand Russell sees it, is dark indeed. Writing in a recent *Horizon,* he finds three possible historical developments which might evade war—(1) the creation of a Communist world empire by peaceful penetration, (2) the conversion of Russia to capitalism, or (3) the partitioning of the world into two zones. He believes in none of them, and foresees that the nations will not avoid a third conflict. Having accepted that as inevitable, his chief hope lies in an American victory, after which, he considers, a unified world under American military control would at last provide the conditions for enduring peace and human recovery. There is no reference here to ultimate moral sanctions; only a cold appraisal of contending interests.

Turning to the domestic scene, there has been a debate in Parliament on the subject of the death penalty. While the House of Commons, by a free vote, decided to suspend the death sentence for a period of five years, the Bishop of Truro in the Lord's debate supported the death penalty as a great deterrent; he looked forward to modern science making the process less crude, "so that the final act of hanging was an act of duty like that of an artillery man bombarding the enemy in battle" *(Times,* April 28 and 29, 1948). It was left to Air Chief Marshal Lord Dowding to say that many in the House of Lords believed "that the spirit of man was immortal and continued his life on the other side of the grave, and that was an argument against hurling a murderer precipitately out of physical existence." Lord Darnley went even further. He said that "ethical orders on the subject of taking life were absolutely direct: it was forbidden. There were no qualifications whatsoever. They should make an act of faith here, without evidence." The Archbishop of Canterbury later on improved the occasion by a tortuous interpretation of "An eye for an eye," and left his hearers in a state of moral paralysis. It now appears that some uneasy compromise will be worked out, involving the restriction of the death penalty to offenses of certain types.

The link between these attitudes toward totalitarianism, atomic bombing, and capital punishment may not be entirely obvious, but, summed up, they indicate the complete oblivion of the modern world to that "reverence for life" which Albert Schweitzer has called the ultimate significance of any true philosophy, science, or religion.

ENGLISH CORRESPONDENT

REVIEW

MISS DETZER AND THE LABYRINTH

NOT many MANAS readers will envy Dorothy Detzer's twenty-odd years of lobbying in Washington for the Womens' International League for Peace and Freedom, but all should enjoy reading about her adventures in *Appointment on the Hill* (Henry Holt, 1948). The book is personal. It tells about the kind of people who make the laws and the policies of the United States. It shows that, very frequently, a gathering of international diplomats is no better than a meeting of ward politicians, except that the diplomats wear striped trousers and execute their betrayals of the people in accents of tired refinement. In fact, all through Miss Detzer's book, we kept thinking of Lincoln Steffens' *Autobiography, and* that the reader of one should know also the contents of the other.

What is impressive in *Appointment on the Hill* is the writer's courage and rare persistence. This review might have been called "The Unappeasable Miss Detzer," because she seems to have been just that when it came to confronting Government officials, from the President down, with the moral principles for which she stood. A soft voice might turn away wrath, but not Miss Detzer, when she was trying to rescue the Negro Republic of Liberia from the imperialistic designs of the Firestone interests, or to save the life of an Austrian student, threatened with forced return from Switzerland to his Nazi-controlled country and almost certain death. So long as good causes need representatives in Washington—and they will need them, we suppose, for many years to come—one may hope that they have the good fortune to find people like Miss Detzer to do the job.

Some passages in this book are deeply moving. One tells of an interview with President Hoover in 1930, at the time of the five-power arms conference in London. Miss Detzer had been sent for by the President, after delivery to him of a detailed appeal by the WIL, in which it was charged that the American delegation to the conference was failing to carry out the policy of naval reduction which President Hoover had himself proclaimed for the nation. (Another reason for Miss Detzer's call on the President was probably the desperation of the State Department, which the members of the WIL were flooding with letters and telegrams from all over the country, in response to the request of that organization's indefatigable secretary—Miss Detzer.) President Hoover allowed her to see private decoded cables reporting to him the elaborate futility of the conference, and revealing its certain failure. She read for nearly an hour while the President sat waiting. Then, when she had done, she told him that she still thought that the American delegation must be held responsible, that the difficulties described in the confidential dispatches had not changed her opinion. The President asked her, wearily, "What would you do now if you were President of the United States?" Miss Detzer drew a deep breath, and told him.

Perhaps Miss Detzer has a romantic streak, and looking back seventeen years to a late afternoon in the White House, has given this episode a king-for-a-day atmosphere which it did not really possess. But we prefer to think the report is faithful, and that President Hoover's "I can't," to each of her proposals, came from an honest but sad and heavy heart.

There are lighter moments, as when at a Madison Square Garden meeting of the League Against War and Fascism—with which the WIL "cooperated" for a time—Miss Detzer, helped by another diminutive amazon, attacked Earl Browder bodily to make him stop his rioting communists from smashing the heads of the delegates of a Trotskyist union. She beat her fists on his chest and, without knowing it, jumped up and down on his feet, shrieking, "Make them stop!" A little later, after Browder had complied, a drunken *Daily Worker* editor knocked her sprawling on the floor for interfering with "a good fight."

The WIL withdrew from the League Against War and Fascism, but for some time thereafter Miss Detzer had to defend herself against the "Communist" label. One evening, following a speech in a Pennsylvania town, she was interviewed by six members of the local American Legion Post, who fiercely demanded "proof" that she was not a Communist. When her quiet assurances that she was not had no effect, she took the offensive, ending a challenge to their scepticism with the words, "I should think you would shrink from even coming into the presence of a respectable woman—you—you nudists."

The leader of the Legionnaires was nonplused and started, unconsciously, to button up his coat. All of them chorused protests against the charge, defensively "swearing" they were not nudists.

"Prove it," said Miss Detzer, triumphantly.

The Legionnaires saw the point, and from then on the conversation was moderately intelligent. But an hour's talk could make no bridge "across the burning pits of race prejudice," from which her interrogators derived their certainty of Miss Detzer's "communist" sympathies. Reporting the incident, she says: "I was sure that they were the kind of Americans who would be good to their mothers and kind to animals. Yet on the subject of race they were vicious—pathological."

One must admire Miss Detzer's inexhaustible optimism, through the years. She was one of a tiny handful of Davids in Washington, opposing the Goliath of War, but unlike the Biblical hero, these Davids had no slingshots. The wonder is they accomplished anything at all. There is a side of Miss Detzer's story which can only be described as hideous—the side which reveals how the diplomatic version of "the national interest" seems always to triumph over the interests of justice and peace. As a matter of course, legislation intended to control or prevent the outbreak of war is made to serve expediency rather than principle. The arms embargo provision of the Neutrality Act of 1935 could be applied with a great show of legality to the war between Italy and Ethiopia, but not to the war between China and Japan. And when it seemed "desirable" to apply the embargo to the Spanish civil war, the Neutrality Act—which had exempted civil wars from the embargo provision on the ground that otherwise the law might assist domestic tyrannies—was quickly changed by a Senate Resolution demanded by the Administration. The effect of this resolution was to cut off military supplies from the Spanish Loyalists, while permitting Germany and Italy to continue to give Franco the tools of war. And, at this time, both Italy and Germany were receiving substantial munitions shipments from the United States.

The WIL had advocated giving the President as well the power to embargo arms to nations *supplying* arms to nations in civil war, which at least would have equalized American policy toward the opposing sides in the Spanish civil war, but this proposal failed. In Miss Detzer's words:

> We could no more move the Administration to take this action than we could secure its support for an amendment to the Neutrality Act for embargoing raw materials in the Far Eastern war. To our question "Why did the United States embargo arms to Spain and not to China and Japan?" the Secretary of State, in a letter dated December 21, 1937, replied: "Our rights, our interests, and our obligations in China differ greatly from those in Spain."
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> The moral implications of this reply seemed to us as confused as its present political implications, for between 1937 and 1941, the United States had bought from Japan 702 million dollars worth of gold, thus creating a purchasing power which permitted Japan in turn to buy from the United States the following percentages of her total imports:

	1937	1938	1938
Scrap iron and steel	87.56	86.76	91.00
Aircraft and parts	70.19	71.92	63.45
Petroleum and products	62.71	65.57	61.16

So in spite of "our rights, our interests, and our obligations in China," our scrap and steel went into Chinese bodies. But not only did the United

States follow this indefensible policy. In 1938, the British Government, while embargoing arms to Spain, approved a German loan of 750 million pounds to stabilize the Nazi economy.

> And on Armistice Day that same year, Winston Churchill—looking like a proud pudding—paid a touching tribute to the German people. "I have always said," he announced, "that if Great Britain were defeated in war, I hope we should find a Hitler to lead us back to our rightful position among the nations."

Having watched close at hand for nearly a generation the development and application of such policies, Miss Detzer is naturally a little impatient with people who accuse "the pacifists" of endangering the national security with their appeals for disarmament and other peace measures. The pacifists, perhaps, have not understood very well the nature of the forces against which they contend, but the attempt to fix upon them responsibility for the disasters that have overtaken the world is laughable—and contemptible.

The difficulty, for one who reads Miss Detzer's book carefully, is in justifying to himself a continuing faith in the processes of self-government. No man wants to feel alienated from the land of his birth; no man wants to believe that the great democratic tradition is now a sham, a mere facade to hide the arrogant maneuverings of power politics. But there seems no escape from the conclusion that the lobby for peace, in the future, will meet with even less success than was possible during the twenty years between the two world wars of this century. The latter period was an interlude in which a scattered few in Washington could be found by people like Miss Detzer to listen to arguments from principle and appeals to conscience. But today, postwar “realism" and atomic fears have made even the 30's seem as though they belonged to another age—-an age with hope, however small.

Statesmen, after all, are traders of a sort. Even the best of them must deal with the moral capital that is at hand. They cannot manufacture it. A Lincoln or a Gandhi is limited in his decisions by the moral resources of the people he represents. When those resources are dissipated, the Lincoln must return to the log cabin, the Gandhi to his ashram, there to begin again the long, slow process of replenishing the soil of civilization, of feeding the roots of moral regeneration and rebirth. So, Miss Detzer's book, the work of a woman endowed with immeasurable goodness, deep honesty, and a dauntless spirit such as one sometimes fears has died out altogether from the land, still leaves an unanswered question with the reader—the more insistent for being isolated from all lesser inquiries. On what shall we place our faith? Where shall we work? How renew the struggle for the peace of the world? We owe it to people like Miss Detzer to try to find out.

COMMENTARY

A PRACTICAL TASK

IT is a suggestive coincidence that a communication from a Hutterite Brotherhood in South America arrived at about the time when the review of Dorothy Detzer's book was being prepared for the printer. The review ends with a question, and the letter from Sociedad Fraternal Hutteriana begins with the same inquiry:

> There must ... be many of your readers who are asking the question, "What positive and practical task is there for a lover of peace to do, in the face of threatening total war?" We of the Society of Brothers, living at Primavera, alto Paraguay, would welcome opportunity through your paper to get into contact with such seeking people.

The Hutterites, of Mennonite origin, represent the other pole of effort on behalf of a peaceful world. While Miss Detzer tried to influence the heads of States, the Hutterites are non-political communists who work on the land. They say:

> Here at Primavera are more than five hundred people of different nationalities whose lives are devoted to a peaceful, brotherly way of living. Over eighty families and a number of unmarried men and women live and work in community. All property is held in common, as it was among the early Christians. Each one works to the utmost of his or her strength or ability, and receives, in accordance with his or her need, what the simple means of the community can supply. No wages are paid. All work is done voluntarily, the urge to work being the social, economic and religious need of our time.

Briefly, this Hutterite colony will soon welcome 130 displaced persons from the U.S. Zone of Germany, including some destitute widows with their children. Houses are being built for these families at Primavera, and land cleared for the production of additional food. The letter concludes:

> Here is a constructive task to be done, and people and means are needed to do it better. We should welcome letters from men and women among your readers who want to help us to build a brotherly order of society and to experience community life for themselves. We should also be glad to hear from people ready to help financially with the burden that providing for so many newcomers has placed upon us. We invite inquiries from interested friends and will gladly give them more detailed information.
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> The Brotherhood at Primavera

We advocate no migration to Paraguay, but it seems to us that if 500 Hutterites can take on 130 displaced persons from Germany, they are living at the height of their capacities, which is more than can be said of most communities, communist or otherwise. The Hutterites know their capacities for mutual aid, and are using them.

CHILDREN
. . . AND OURSELVES

". . . . and the reason that I got two F's is because I don't want to go to school anyway. Why *do* I have to go?"

"You don't really have to go, son. Of course, there is a law in this State which says you have to go until you are eighteen. When you don't go you are breaking this law and the State authorities will prosecute me unless I force you to attend. But that doesn't mean that you *have* to go."

"What business has the old State got telling you what I have to do?"

"That, son, is so long a story that it would take more time than all the bedtime stories I ever told you when you were younger. Besides, I'm not quite sure about it, myself. The government has a lot to do with your life, today. It tells you that you must take nearly two years of military training when you are eighteen. Of course, in that case it is the Federal Government instead of the State Government."

"One of them lets go of me when I am eighteen and the other one grabs me?"

"Why, son! What an attitude! There's always the Air Force.... Of course, it all depends on the way you look at it. If you should happen to like school and think it is a good thing, and if you should happen to like military training and think that is a good thing, you wouldn't have the feeling you were being grabbed so much as that you were cooperating with something that interested you."

"Well—I don't mind trying those things, if I can see a good enough reason, but if I am not ready to do something, and someone tells me I have to anyway, it makes me mad. Father, would you do anything the State told you to do?"

"No, to tell you the truth, I wouldn't—which is also why I don't think I have to 'get mad' at the State. To get mad at something means you are a bit afraid of it. I try always to think pretty carefully to see if I can find a good reason of my own for doing what the State wants me to do, or a good reason for not doing it, before I make up my mind. For instance, I don't think it would be right for me to force you to go to school. And if you wouldn't go, and I wouldn't tell you to, they might put me in jail. But I would rather be in jail and feel that I was right than be outside jail and feel I was wrong."

"Father, I don't think I'm learning anything important in school. I can already read and write and add and subtract, and I'm not much interested in anything else that they want me to learn after that."

"Well, if you are going to live with other people in this country, don't you think it's a good idea to know what they have been taught—even if, right now, it doesn't seem worth anything to you for yourself? There is an advantage, sometimes, in knowing the way people think about things, in order to understand the way they act. "

"Maybe, but I don't think anybody has the right to make anybody do anything. When they make me learn, I don't really learn. I only try to think of ways I can do something or say something so the teacher won't bother me any more."

"Well, son, I can't tell at the moment whether you are just complaining about something because you are lazy, or whether you have the makings of a great man. It is true that nearly every great man has been pretty annoyed at the old ways of doing things and has tried to find better ways. Since I would like to find out which you are, would you let me give you a sort of preliminary test? I want to see whether you would be willing to spend some time working out a better way of doing things than to have the State 'make' people do them.

"For instance, well, let's see, there are about fifteen families on our side of the street in this block. Suppose 'The State' decided to take part of

our land away from us for widening the street or something, and promised us a nice ocean voyage so that we wouldn't be too unhappy about it. Try to see it in your mind. Everybody on our side of the street on our block is sailing to Tahiti at Government expense in a specially chartered boat. Let's say we are blown far off our course by a very large storm and run aground on the reefs of an island that has not been visited for a long time. Just to make the story really good and get rid of all complications, let's pretend that the last message we get on the radio, before the wreck, informs us that all the big cities have just been blown up by carefully planted atom bombs, leaving only the location of our broadcasting unit in Washington, D.C., and that just after making the announcement, *that* station blanks out. So here we are on an island with fifteen families. We have no more laws, no more 'State,' no more school. There is just some land in front of us—we don't even know how good it is. So we hold a meeting as soon as we reach shore, to see how to go about running things on the island. Imagine us standing on the shore. What are you going to say to the other people about how we should divide up the land and about the rules we should have for ourselves? First, about the land—what should we do so that people can decide where to build houses or shelters?"

"Why can't everyone go and take whatever piece of land he wants? Is it a big island?"

"No island is ever big enough, son, nor is any continent big enough for everyone to have just the piece of land he wants. Do you think it would be good to have, first come, first served, with everyone running to get to the best spots the quickest?"

"Maybe we should decide to divide it up equally."

"Well, that sounds fine, son, but after you have it divided equally you will discover that someone has an important metal or mineral deposit, or maybe a spring—anyhow, something that everyone else needs or wants. That particular piece of land will be more valuable than any of the other pieces of land that happen to be the same size, won't it? And won't that landowner become a rich man, able to hire other people to work for him?"

"Well, father, why couldn't everything under the ground be everybody's property?"

"Why not everything on top of the ground, too, son? Of course, I realize that a lot of people don't like this idea because they would say that it is 'socialism'."

"Is socialism like in Russia, father? Is it a good thing?"

"No, son, socialism isn't like in Russia, but it *is* always a good thing, *if you have it.* Yet practically no one has really had it, except very small groups of people from time to time. You see, you can have this good kind of 'socialism' only when everyone is in sufficient agreement about education and everything else. Without that kind of agreement, you have to make a lot of compromises between different people's desires. The laws we have now are made out of those compromises. So really, son, you don't have any right to get away from laws like having to go to school or into the army unless you feel you have your own desires under control. Do you think you have you desires completely under control, by the way?"

FRONTIERS

THE CASE OF THE NATION

WHETHER or not the *Nation* is back in the libraries of New York City's public schools for the fall semester, as Freda Kirchwey, its editor, optimistically predicted last July, the banning of the *Nation* by the New York Board of Education because of a series of articles on the Catholic Church will remain an ominous symptom of the growing power of organized religion. A similar suppression in Newark, N.J., last January, caused little comment, for in that city, as Miss Kirchwey points out, "the domination of its schools by the Church is notorious." The significance of the New York ban, however, is measured by the fact that soon after the action of the School Board, the *Nation* was similarly withheld from the libraries of eight Massachusetts teachers' colleges. Quite possibly, still other communities and institutions have followed suit.

A hearing sought by the *Nation* resulted only in confirmation of the Board's decision, and Dr. William Jansen, Superintendent of the New York Schools, declared that if a magazine "is offensive to any group, then it will be banned." Both the superintendent and the other members of the Board scrupulously deny any pressure from the Catholic Church to lead them to their decision. The principal objection to the *Nation* articles (written by Paul Blanshard) seems to be to the treatment of the views of the Church in connection with science, constituting, in Dr. Jansen's view, an attack on the Catholic faith.

If only because of the portent of the ban, Mr. Blanshard's articles deserve careful reading and wide circulation. They appeared weekly from May 1 to June 5 (the ban began on June 8), and deal with the activities of the Church as censor of books, magazines and movies, with the Catholic view of Evolution, the policy of the Church in regard to relics, miracles, apparitions, and they conclude with a discussion of the Catholic Church and Democracy. The importance of this latter subject may be gleaned from the following passage:

> . . . most Catholic arguments on church and state seem to non-Catholics utterly confused and hypocritical. The Catholic bishop who discusses church and state has a ready-made world from which he draws his definitions. The words "church and state" do not mean the same thing to him that they mean to non-Catholics. He begins by including in the concept "church" large areas of political, social, and educational life which the non-Catholic regards as part of the normal sphere of democracy. The bishop, *after* he has included these special ecclesiastical preserves in his picture of his church, can honestly say that he believes in some separation of church and state *from that point onward.*

Obviously, the contention that political and social and educational life ought to be affected by religion is perfectly sound doctrine: a religion which had not this aim would be worthless. It is the claim to the right of *coercion* in these fields, in the name of revealed Truth, that makes the theory pernicious. Catholics condemn and inveigh against the so-called "secular state." It should be evident that the secular state is the natural and necessary offspring of compulsion in religion, just as the aggressive atheism of nineteenth-century science was born of the aggressive dogmatism of the religion of that and previous centuries.

The record of the Church as a coercive power in the Western world, since the days of Constantine, does not make pleasant reading. This record, unfortunately, is rapidly being forgotten, due to just such influences as that exercised over the New York School Board, and in countless less obvious ways throughout our national life. It is worth noting that although the Church is avowedly opposed to greed, all those institutions of modern society which are principally concerned. with the acquisition and preservation of wealth are in hearty alliance with the general outlook of the Catholic or some other established religion, while effective criticism of the Church comes only from quarters notoriously poor by comparison. Except for the *New Republic, the Nation,* the Masonic press and the

Christian Century, no well-known publication in the United States ever discusses critically either religion or religious institutions. The profit motive and such criticism do not mix. Consistent with this conclusion, the movies now seem to be an important vehicle for Catholic propaganda, if the number of films containing scenes of Catholic piety or pageantry is any indication.

A recent volume, published in England, examines in particular the recent political activities of the Catholic Church. It is called *The Catholic Church Against the Twentieth Century* (Watts, London) and takes for its text the judgment of Macaulay, "that among the contrivances which have been devised for controlling mankind, it [the Church] occupies the highest place." We do not know anything about the author, who calls himself Avro Manhattan, but his book seems carefully written, and the chapters on Spain, Italy and Germany contain facts which suggest that, if anything, Macaulay understated the case.

The problem of what would happen to the Catholic Church if it should renounce all coercive power is an interesting question, although one doubtless distasteful to the hierarchy. The Church would then have to depend for its life on the moral worth of its members, and, instead of Roman splendor and priestly authority, the work of such groups as the Catholic Workers would lose its obscurity and become, for Catholics, a model of the good life. Instead of deriving from a central authority, with power to dictate the meaning of conscience, the voice of religious inspiration would revert to the people themselves, and Catholicism might eventually resemble the Society of Friends, or some of the lay brotherhoods of the late Middle Ages. Of course, we expect no such miraculous evolution of the Catholic Church, but the comparison is instructive, both morally and historically. It is, in fact, the test of acceptable religion, whether the Catholic or any other.