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THE PATIENT PEOPLE

THIS is a review of a paper-covered book called *The People of Kenya Speak for Themselves*, written by Mbiyu Koinange, a man who, after Jomo Kenyatta, now in a British prison, is probably the leading spokesman of the Kikuyu people. What he says makes one of those few occasions when we urge readers to purchase a book.

Those who read this one will have no difficulty in understanding why, despite the well publicized Mau Mau "terror" in Kenya, we are able to speak of the Kikuyu as "the Patient People." *The People of Kenya* (115 pages) may be ordered from the Kenya Publication Fund, 600 Woodward Ave., Room 500, Detroit 26, Mich., at 25 cents a copy (add for postage).

Koinange is the son of the largest African landowner in Kenya, a man who served the British colonial administration for nearly fifty-five years as a Senior Chief, and who now, at the age of eighty-six, without teeth, and nearly blind, is held in prison as an "Emergency" measure. His land is cultivated rent-free by the Kikuyu for their own use. The only reason that his son is not also in prison is that he is not in Kenya, having been sent to England by his people to appeal to the British government on their behalf before the Emergency in Kenya was declared. Koinange is known to the Kikuyu and to some extent in the West as the principal founder of Kenya Teachers College, an institution begun in 1939 after the African leader returned from the United States and England. The inspiration for the training school came from his father:

> Upon my return my parents had organized a very big reception in my honor. At that reception I put on my cap and gown. My father looked at it and said he wondered whether I had purchased that cap and gown at an Indian bazaar or from Woolworth's. He said that he would not believe that this was in any way a University degree until I was able to transfer this power to other children. The "other children" did not mean my own brothers and sisters. It meant the African people.
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> My father was at that time 75 years old and he wanted to see in order to believe. Later on he invited several important Chiefs and members of the Independent schools together. They asked my father to allow me to go and open a teachers training school for the village schools. My father accepted on one condition, that the elders should take responsibility for the building and so forth.

Funds for the school were raised among the Kikuyu themselves. On the first day of teaching, provision was made for twenty-five students, but 225 arrived, each with a bundle of clothes, ready for instruction. The plans for the school were quickly revised and it became a place of learning for everyone, with new plans for expansion. By 1946 there were 900 students, with practically all the work of enlarging the school being done by students, teachers and African supporters. The school was financed in large measure by determination. If a student had no money to pay for his education, he might bring a pig or a donkey.

Koinange's wholehearted participation is illustrated by the fact that he gave materials purchased by his father for his own home for the college buildings. Meanwhile, the attitude of the students was often an inspiration to the teachers. "One student came to the school holding six chalks and a small blackboard, pleading that this was the only money he had and that we should accept him for that because the blackboard was used to teach his own brothers and sisters in the village." Of the teachers, Koinange writes:

> As to the question of teachers, we were to pay them more than they were paid by Government in order to attract them to come to the Kenya Teachers College. Men and women had equal status, equal pay for equal work. We asked teachers the conditions of their accepting work because the school was self-supporting and we had no money. They could request as much money as they wished but they would be the ones who would be counting the fees and depositing them in the bank. In that way they knew how much we got and how much should go to them. For the

> first five years, I, as the principal of Kenya College, was getting 6d. (7 cents) a day although the other teachers and headmasters were paid £I5 ($45) a month and over. My parents decided to keep my wife and have continued to do so until today. So although I got married in 1940 and have 6 children I have never lived with my wife more than three months continually because of the economic situation.

Something should be said of the education provided for the Kikuyu by the British. According to a summary by Koinange, the Kenya Government spends about $180 per person on each European, $42 on each Asian, and $4.30 on each African. The allotment, so far as Africans are concerned, applies only to high school and teacher training. The Government supplies no help at all to elementary education for Africans, which is left to the missionaries or the Africans themselves. Koinange comments: "Mission schools separate the people according to the conflicting doctrines of their sponsors but they all treated African practices and beliefs as heathen and ungodly." This recalls a recent *Nation* review of a book by an African, Camara Laye, in which it was said that the British colonial "educational system is embedded in a missionary world, with artificial, expatriated, and puritanical standards which they would never hope to impose at home."

Independent African elementary schools were started in 1925 and supported by the Africans themselves. Eventually these schools grew to number 400, with an enrollment of 62,000 children. The Africans paid for the schools without government aid and elected committees to manage them for the African communities. The chief problem of the schools was in getting trained teachers, which the government did not supply. In 1938, when Koinange returned to Africa, he found the Government closing these schools because of the lack of trained teachers, and this was one of the reasons for starting the Kenya Teachers College. There was also the language problem to cope with, and the policy of the colonial administration, which sought to ignore the cultural traditions of the tribes. Koinange writes:

> When the Government started to encourage Swahili language in African schools, these independent schools were the first to object. The Swahili language is a simple language used throughout East Africa by Africans and Europeans alike. It does not belong to any one of the national groups. If the Africans learned only Swahili, after some years they would lose their identity and could be challenged on the seniority basis that they have been in those areas only as long as the newcomers. However illogical their views may appear, Europeans, Asians and Arabs are not prepared to drop their own languages completely and depend only on Swahili. Africans wanted education, of course, in their own national languages. But as a language of general communication they insisted on being taught English, which is a language used by hundreds of millions all over the world.

There are other, not-so-obvious considerations in this issue of language:

> The European child is taught the Swahili language in the form of commands. Come! Do this! Bring food! Etc.
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> The purpose of this is to enkindle his sense of leadership. The European child is taught "You are a leader." "You are going to lead." He is trained for responsibility, and is given confidence that he is in life to lead. His leadership is correct and should not be challenged by the persons he may be leading, should those persons be of a different racial group.
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> The African child, however, who goes to a Government, Mission school, elementary, primary, high school, and even the Makerere College, Uganda, is taught to obey, to be submissive. While in school he is warned to avoid getting into politics, and to avoid the company of people who are regarded as agitators. If he should be seen developing a firm attitude to life, he would lose his scholarship and/or be thrown out of school. This has happened on several occasions. Even today several African students in Britain are losing their scholarships not because they have joined any political groupings but because they have refused to become informers on their own people.

With a background of facts of this sort, it is easy to see why the Africans regard control of their own education as a key to their future freedom. Education of the sort they have had is part of a program of suppression and subordination to an alien culture which maintains economic domination over the African people. This booklet, it should be said, is filled with evidences of African tragedy and of

injustices which seem quite "natural" to the European settlers who impose them. It is not possible to convey the cumulative impact of what the people of Kenya have suffered at the hands of the white colonists, save through generalization or a few illustrations, and this review is based on the assumption that the booklet should be read in full. Here, we stress only the constructive efforts of the Africans to better their own condition, leaving out the almost incredible account of the efforts of Europeans to frustrate African self-help and independence. What Koinange writes on the curriculum of Kenya Teachers College should be a revelation to those who suppose that the Africans still need "direction" by European authorities. Help, they may need, if it is offered without strings, and even guidance would doubtless be welcomed, if it could be had without the shadow of ulterior motives, but the day is past when it can be argued that the Africans do not know "what is good for them." Koinange relates:

> Our syllabus did not include only the usual studies, but also African folkways. We told the Director of Education that a rapidly dying old African civilization could be kept alive only by Africans. Were we to wait for youth to take University degrees overseas and then return to do scholarly research on African folkways? Or should they study them now when the old people are alive to give them this information? We organized the school in such a way that every child was a teacher and every teacher was a student. Every child was to go during the holidays and learn some stories and legends from his great-grandparents. After the holidays two or three students with a teacher learned dances, games and songs which they taught the rest of the school. Those who spoke various languages like the Masai would teach others their songs. In the same way the Nyanza people would give their national songs. Each song must be written and part of the assistance that the teachers provided at the early stage was to enquire whether the song contained abusive language or not. If it did, then more suitable words were substituted without suppressing the quality and meaning of the song.
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> The students who came from various provinces were first of all to solve their problems of living together. . . .

What of Mau Mau? Mbiyu Koinange plainly believes that Mau Mau represents the desperation of a people who have had their cherished hopes for a better life stripped from them by the repressive methods of colonial administration dominated by acquisitive white settlers who are determined to hold the black men of Africa in eternal peonage. There is evidence to suggest that the Kikuyu were deliberately driven to revolt by "Emergency" policies which had for their long-term objective a justification of ruthless suppression. Koinange says of Mau Mau:

> Talk of Mau Mau atrocities is designed to obscure the issue of the liquidation of Africans and win sympathy for the settlers and representatives of civilization. I have not wanted to introduce atrocities into this pamphlet because for every "atrocity" that it has been proved the African insurrectionists committed, I can match a score committed by the settlers, the army, the police and the Home Guard. The army sets up scoreboards to chalk "kills" of Africans. To the extent that some Africans have reverted to outmoded tribal customs, the responsibility belongs to those who have denied them the opportunities of progress and given them a picture of the civilization of Europe composed of greed, selfishness and inhuman brutality. . . .
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> The Parliamentary Delegation which returned from Kenya in January 1954 writes in its report: "Mau Mau intentionally and deliberately seeks to lead the Africans of Kenya *back to the bush and savagery*, not forward into progress." (My italics.) Anthropologists, scientists and investigators of all kinds are now writing a lot of articles and producing all kinds of treatises, seeking reasons in the state of mind of the African people for Mau Mau and describing Mau Mau as an example of tribal degeneration and religion. They are sowing nothing but confusion and nonsense. Let the Kenya African people establish the institutions that they are trying to build. Let them have their Independent Schools and the Kenya Teachers College, let the African Woman's League and the Kenya Cooperatives and the Kenya National Bank and the Kenya African Union organize themselves. That is the cure for Mau Mau and not a lot of investigations and new theories about "back to the bush."

There is no sentimentalizing in this booklet, nor any special effort to show that Africans are nice people who are adopting Western customs.

(Koinange's father has six wives, his son remarks in passing.) But neither is there any angry black nationalism or padding of the accounts between the races. *The Kenya People Speak for Themselves* has the ring of simple honesty. We have done what we can, here, to help it gain a wide circulation.

REVIEW
OTHERS—AND OURSELVES

THERE are two pages in Richard Neutra's *Survival through Design* which add several degrees of subtlety to the questions of human differences recently discussed in these pages (MANAS, June 29). The pages are interesting for what they say about human beings, but also for what they reveal of the things that architects think about. Here are observations developed from a study of Japanese homes:

> Anyone who travels in Japan notices that Japanese speech and behavior are less noisy, more subdued than the corresponding occidental expressions. Japanese children are trained early to delicacy of sound and touch. In a Japanese interior of oiled paper and thin silk, stretched over those incredibly slender frames of cryptomeria wood, an American child would seem noisy and destructive.
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> Japanese privacy depends on hushed voices in rooms which can be closed off temporarily by sliding screens—rooms not acoustically insulated. Secret conversations are better held visually, in writing, as in a play by Nakamura: a few quickly brushed characters are in a mysterious way shown for a moment to a conspirator and then silently thrown into the *hiabashi*, the charcoal brazier. The Japanese home with its acoustical and other specific properties is the nucleus of a broad culture, with modes of living intricately dependent on architecture and its many sensory realities. Other structures, such as the store, the tea house, the Japanese restaurant with its *chambres particulières,* opening broadly onto lightly constructed porches and subtly landscaped yards, closely imitate domestic interiors and repeat their acoustical and other characteristics.

Only a few sentences of this sort are needed to make one reflect on the coarse-grained inadequacy of theories of environmental "conditioning" to explain the individuality of peoples and cultures. It is natural, perhaps, for men to long to "explain" practically everything—to provide, that is, at least a theoretical "cause" for what we observe, but surely it is better to accept many things, especially mysterious and wonderful things, without any explanation at all, than to supply ourselves with explanations which drop out or ignore as negligible those qualities in life which cannot be touched by current scientific hypothesis.

We need not forego the hope of explanation, but simply admit to ourselves that there is something wrong with theories which inevitably reduce to physics, chemistry, biology, or conditioned reflexes matters which have evoked the genius of a man like Lafcadio Hearn, or have gained for us the fascinated study of Richard Neutral There are times, in short, when *analysis,* however acute, seems deadly, simply because its employment seems to suggest that the flash of human origination is not there at all, but that all these things have somehow been "produced" in people.

Neutra continues, showing the web of consistency in Japanese culture:

> By way of adaptation, all Japanese living spaces are small compared with ours, proportioned to the small stature of the people. The subtlety and precision in dress, of feminine makeup, building finishes, and joinery, the daintiness of *kakemonos* and roll pictures, of cherry twigs and chrysanthemums tenderly arranged in equally tender pottery of manifold refined glazing detail—all this appears as concession, to even myopic eyes, at any rate for close-range visual enjoyment. To see a few Japanese sitting in a small, almost empty 10- or 12-mat room patiently watching the dance of *maikos,* young geisha novices in flowerlike costumes, is to realize that they need to belong to a people of especially blessed eyes whose surroundings had been liberated by plan from visual clutter and interference.

Now the dimension of sound is added to this question of space relationships:

> Still, all this has its definite and significant acoustical correlate. Acoustics, too, are intimately built into this civilization. The subdued quavering, twittering sounds of stringed instruments, such as the *shamisen* and the *goto,* the vocalization of Japanese songs and lyrics, are similarly designed to carry no distance at all. Their *vibrato,* where it occurs, means something entirely different from that of the Italian *primo tenoro.* He, by straining his vocal chords, tried to reach customers in the fourth gallery of the Old Teatro del Verme or La Scala. He actually moves stones as Orpheus did through his music, because his singing fits a structure of resounding masonry, to which the tradition of *bel canto* is coupled. The

> Japanese house has no such resounding quality. Its shell consists of paper membranes in dull tension. The floors are covered with thick straw mats on which the dancers' feet, in padded cotton socks, produce no audible impact. And no such impact or acoustical stimulus is intended. The dance is almost stationary, almost silent. The movements are flowing, not staccato. They do not call for rhythmical noise.
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> In a Japanese house, a fandango garnished with Spanish castanets would be a destructive turmoil and at the same time a frustrated performance acoustically crippled. Equally incomprehensible and puzzling would be a Japanese lyrical poem of a few short, whispery lines, recited to an American after-dinner party in a heavy fireproof apartment with glass windows vibrating from Park Avenue traffic.

Inconclusive? Perhaps, if the uniqueness of people and their cultural creations are matters of small importance. What is troubling about such passages is the fact that they make us realize that we think of such things very seldom. Our science, even our sociology, our commerce, and most of all our politics include no reckoning of these values. More than troubling, the fact is actually frightening, for it means that our theories of "reality" take no noticeable account of the treasures of civilization. There is nothing in our public life to lead one to think that we give any greater notice to the quite different treasures of our own civilization. A people prepared for peace and international understanding would think of these things first, not last, and would not need any urging to appreciate the rare and inimitable beauties which other peoples have to give to the world. Instead, like small boys, we insist upon comparing and arguing, as if admiration of others were somehow a depreciation of ourselves.

Doubtless the Japanese—and the Chinese, the Russians, the British, the Germans, and the French—do this, too, especially when they have won a war or two, and this makes another instance of the all-too-familiar paradox, that we usually kill the things we are supposed to be fighting for. When we are at war, we are obliged to paint the enemy in the darkest colors, ourselves a lily white. And thus we get the habit of odious comparison, as the quickest short-cut to justified hostility. How simple is the crime of killing men—and even their families—in war, when contrasted with this habit of destroying our own sense of justice and appreciation of others!

Fortunately, the human spirit has an incalculable resilience. While weaponless in the terms of popular arenas, it always fights back. It may even find expression in the voice of a general—General MacArthur at Los Angeles—or be heard in the words of a President of the United States. President Eisenhower declared, more than two years ago:

> Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired, signifies, in the final sense, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and are not clothed. This world in arms is not spending money alone. It is spending the sweat of its laborers, the genius of its scientists, the hopes of its children. . . . We pay for a single fighter aircraft with 500,000 bushels of wheat. We pay for a single destroyer with new homes that could have housed more than 8,000 people. . . . This is not a way of life at all in any true sense. Under the cloud of threatening war it is humanity hanging from a cross of iron.

The human spirit speaks accusingly when it comes to the corruption of minds by the habits of war. In the *Nation* for June 18, Kathleen Lonsdale, a British scientist, writes:

> We are afraid that if communism spreads, our children's minds may be conditioned, but we are conditioning them ourselves. When we teach them that truth must be defended by the use of spies and secret agents whose job it is to live a lie, that freedom can only be maintained by conscription and military bases while in many countries people are starving, medical supplies are inadequate, and education is rudimentary, that justice may necessitate the use of weapons that will affect the bodies and the minds of generations yet unborn, then we are ourselves deliberately confusing these young people so that they do not know good from evil.

These are desperate days. There is the desperation of those who fear an enemy with bombs like our own, and there is the desperation of those who, like Kathleen Lonsdale, fear the final confirmation from history that we do not know good from evil. In which camp of desperation shall we take our stand?

COMMENTARY
WHAT KIND OF "EMERGENCY"?

A DISINCTION should be made between the attitude of the British Government and the people of England toward the tragedy of Kenya (see lead article) and the policies provoked and instituted by the white settlers in Africa. While the people of Kenya have vigorous representation in Parliament, especially in Fenner Brockway, who, with Lester Hale, another sympathetic MP, visited Kenya recently, the settlers do not approve of this sort of interest. Today, Mbiyu Koinange tells us, "if any African is found in Kenya with the picture of Mr. Brockway and the KAU [Kenya African Union] leaders he is subject to six months imprisonment."

But despite the support of individual Englishmen, the Kikuyu have been unable to exert much influence on the British Government. As Koinange says:

> In Britain there are a few people whose financial interests are closely allied with the settlers. Some are in both Houses of Parliament. But they are few. The settlers by their incessant and vigorous propaganda give an impression of strength so long as they are encouraged by the British Government. But it is difficult to believe that the British people as a whole feel anything but uneasiness and shame about what is going on in Kenya.

The chief complaint of the Kikuyu is that the settlers are determined to prevent the Africans from helping themselves. When they organize their own cooperatives and banks, they are stopped by the colonial government. Their schools have been closed and their initiative is aggressively and brutally suppressed. Koinange lists the measures taken against the Africans during the Emergency:

> arresting leaders, banishing leaders, summary justice, shooting on sight, corporal punishment, collective punishment, touching the African pocket, make every African poor, confiscate property, close down shops and trade, mass evictions forced labour, rounding up, fencing in, collective impoundment. . . .

This indictment of the settlers includes charges of other crimes paralleling the "atrocities" attributed to the Mau Mau, which should, however, be examined in a context of supporting evidence. It is enough, perhaps, to add here that the number of whites who have lost their lives during the Emergency is only a fraction of the total of eight thousand men, women and children who have been killed. The sponsors of Mr. Koinange's booklet assert that "a few thousand settlers . . . are trying to liquidate the five and one-half million Africans in Kenya as the Indians were liquidated in the United States." This is an accusation which ought not to be ignored.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves

EDITOR, "Children . . . and Ourselves":

Dear Sir: Last week, as the parent of a six-year-old girl, I attended a meeting of kindergarten parents on the subject of "reading readiness." The kindergarteners and first and second grade teachers of our school were present and talked to the parents on this subject. While I found aspects of the meeting instructive and helpful, I am considerably bothered by the firm "directive" from these teachers not to try to teach our little girl how to read. This seems to me a species of nonsense. Some of the most intelligent people in the world learned to read in the bosom of their families. It is the most natural thing in the world to work with one's children in the matter of words and reading, especially when the child manifests an irrepressible interest in such things. Our child, for example, has literally demanded such help for at least two years. Actually, she has learned to recognize many words simply by questioning her parents while driving past advertising billboards. She learned the alphabet by herself, with the merest of suggestions.

She will still learn to actually read in school, but it will be easy for her. Incidentally, I find there is nothing remarkable about this. One or two children in our neighborhood read better than some ten-year-olds, before they came to the first grade, picking it up at home. My point is, a rule made by teachers which says: "Don't try to teach your children to read," may sometimes be absolutely ridiculous.

It doesn't take much effort to sympathize with the reactions of the writer of the foregoing letter. Most parents we know would rise up and protest if instructed to adopt a "hands off" policy in respect to any part of their children's education—whether or not they ever found time or inclination to teach them. But, we thought, let's hear the other side, too. So we asked a teacher of considerable experience to comment. The following is her reply, to which we shall attempt to add a few thoughts in our next issue.—Editors.

First of all, I should like to suggest a distinction between *teaching* a child to read, and *helping* a child learn to read. And I am inclined to agree with the teacher who suggests to parents that they do not try to *teach* their children to read. When parents come together for such public meetings as the one mentioned in the question, they are likely to be addressed as the average parents of average children. Therefore the suggestions given by teachers are directed to the parents of average children—those children who will probably begin to read at about six years, six months, and whose physical, mental, and emotional development indicates an optimum readiness to read at that age. A teacher is obliged to teach a class, all together, and naturally wants to get the most from both her time and her methods.

On the other hand, the parent asking the above question is the parent of an exceptional child, judging from the progress indicated. For such children, reading develops with such ease that it seems to the child, and to his parents, that it is effortless, and takes no particular skill or judgment to promote, on the part of parents and teachers. Furthermore, these parents have evidently done a good job of helping the child learn to read. This kind of help is important and necessary, but let us differentiate between it and the teaching of reading.

Learning reading is a complicated process for the average child, though it may not seem so to those of us who learned to read with ease. Therefore, when reading is taught properly—to groups of children, especially—it requires skill and training. Helping children learn to read is also important, but chiefly hinges upon providing a favorable emotional climate in which the learning can take place, plus the offering of special help *when the child demands* it. Let us illustrate: A gardener plants a sweet pea seed. He provides good soil, water, a proper amount of sunlight. As

the seed begins to sprout and grow, tendrils appear. These tendrils "demand" that the gardener provide a trellis on which they may climb. Some children learn to read the way seeds grow. Only the necessary environment must be provided by adults. But just imagine how difficult it would be (if possible) to teach seeds how to grow! Yet this is the job of the teacher when she "teaches" reading. She must give specific kinds of treatment, help, drill, experience to those children who lack in reading ability.

But parents need not feel that modern teachers see no value in their interest or help in this process. There is a great deal which they can do to assist maximum development of "reading readiness," to bring a child to that moment when he is ready in all ways to begin to read, and thus make the schoolroom task easier for child and teacher alike.

First, parents must needs insure their child a healthy body, with eyes and ears ready to hear sounds and see symbols. Parents provide experiences that are basic to a child's understanding of life, his environment, and himself. And, most important, as these experiences are provided, parents should use, with the child, a vocabulary that illuminates the ideas, facts, and values of the experience.

Parents, because of their close relationship with the child, are the best fitted to provide him with the emotional readiness for reading, which he needs. By providing attractive books, by reading to him, by showing their own interest in and enjoyment of books, they arouse interest and develop in him a lifelong love of reading. As he grows older, and begins the actual process of reading, they encourage him by their interest in what he reads.

No strain is involved in such development. Yet teachers know from sad experience that some parents will become over-anxious. They will want their child to read sooner or faster than he is able. They will expect and demand of him reading skill beyond his physical, mental, and emotional level of maturity. They will drill and drill, repeat and repeat, force and demand, until the child rebels inwardly and develops a permanent distaste for reading. Some critics of our schools urge that parents take the matter of teaching reading into their own hands. One belligerent author has recently roused considerable furor with a book which urges the "return" to phonics—*Why Johnny Can't Read*. This writer claims that since schools do not teach the phonic method, parents should do so themselves. Such advice can be cruelly confusing to the child who is also trying to learn another way—also frustrating, since parents therefore ask for special concentration on just *one* aspect of reading skill.

In order to make clear what the teaching of reading entails, I will outline in brief the developmental processes seen and used by successful teachers of reading. The teacher carefully observes each first-grade child in her class. Some are eager and alert, speak in distinct, complete sentences. These children observe pictures carefully. They are able to distinguish colors, sounds, tone of voice, various changes in inflection. They are able to distinguish similarities and differences in objects and pictures. Generally speaking, such children are ready to read. Other children, the teacher observes, use single words or very brief sentences, are careless in observation and listening, have less background of experience, have a smaller speaking vocabulary. And the teacher sees a few children who are mentally below par, or emotionally distraught, who speak (if at all) in monosyllables, who never *really* see or hear anything. This teacher must provide for each group what it needs—more real experiences, more opportunity to speak, to express ideas in words, more chances to listen and observe. Besides this, for the children who are ready, she begins the first step in the reading program.

That first step, generally speaking, is to develop a sight vocabulary of about one hundred and fifty words. That is, the children should be able to recognize instantly on sight, in any context

(just as you and I do), that many words. After such a sight vocabulary is well established, then the children are introduced to the various ways of analyzing words, and thereby developing skill in learning them without adult help. The first step in such analysis is to see that words may be recognized by their contours and configurations, (as we recognize a familiar landscape); for example: "way" looks different from "little." One word has level places and long places; the other word has tall places in it. The next step is to learn that one may discover the new word by the way it is used in context. Example: "It is raining hard. If I go outside I will get—." (Wet.) Then the teacher helps the child discover that long words are often made up of root words whose forms are changed by added endings, or are made up of a combination of words. Example: rain, raining, rained, raincoat. The last, and most difficult step in this word analysis is to discover that words are made up of letters whose sounds vary in many ways, and to be able to hear the differences in those words. It is true that a very young child may learn his letters—that is, learn to name large letters individually isolated. He may also recognize pictures of animals and objects, and be able to name them (rote memory), though he may have no idea of meanings or associations. But to recognize, or even to see, a series of small letters *in combination* is not an easy function of the undeveloped physical eye of the small child. *Such a skill should not be forced.*

I have listed certain processes or steps. One of these does not necessarily follow the other in a rigid pattern. The skilled teacher introduces each child to another way of attacking new words and developing reading independence as soon as the teacher sees that the child is able to master this procedure. The teacher provides a variety of drills, sometimes called "games" by the children, to develop the habitual use of all reading skills. This is what it means to "teach reading" in the primary grades. Yet all of us know that no two children grow, and approach new needs, at exactly the same pace. No two first-grade children will begin to read at the same time. Therefore, when a parent says, "My child is in the first grade. Why isn't he reading?"—the teacher is overwhelmed by the enormous task of explaining this situation. The questioner is certainly correct in saying that some six-year-olds, not yet in first grade, read better than other ten-year-olds. I would ask, "What was the development level of those ten-year-olds when they were six?" Perhaps they had not even acquired a normal speaking vocabulary at the age of six.

No, I do not think that parents should feel it is "absolutely ridiculous" for them to refrain from teaching a child to read, because *they* have the equally important job to do—that of helping their child learn to read, and to enjoy reading. Let the teacher use her own skill, training, and experience to instruct in the reading process. Parents can often do what the teacher cannot do, so that the parent's place cannot ever be regarded as well filled by the teacher; nor can school and its educational experiences really substitute for the unique world of home and family and the subtler learnings derived through family affinities. Yet few parents have the training, or the skill, or the patience to *teach* reading. What we appreciate the most is the parent who desires to send his child to school with an eager mind, alert eyes and ears, a keen power of observation, a willingness to put forth effort, a responsive attitude toward our language and its uses, an enthusiasm for the job to be done, and a genuine respect for his teacher.

FRONTIERS

"Pacifist" Footnotes

AN article on "Military Phraseology in Presidential Campaigns," appearing in the Winter edition of *ETC* (Review of General Semantics), is apt reminder that the analysis of militarism—even the modified militarism of democratic nations—is perpetually important. The gist of the *ETC* article is that people are seldom aware of the extent to which their political thinking and campaigning is impregnated with the language and psychology of war. If this is so, then we should welcome the presence of pacifists who tell us that popular ways of thinking need revision. Let's improve our language, a language that betrays the tendency of so many to accept hostility as inevitable.

The *ETC* writer, Kathryn Anderson McEuen, begins by quoting Richard Grant White, whom she calls the *arbiter elegantiarum* in matters of language during the second half of the nineteenth century. Even in those days, when the average citizen was not worrying about the possibility of overseas service, our political vocabulary had become set, fixed in feeling tone. Mr. White exclaimed:

> Is it not time that we had done with this nauseous talk about campaigns, and standard bearers, and glorious victories, and all the bloated army-bumming bombast which is so rife for the six months preceding an election? To read almost any one of our political papers during a canvass is enough to make one sick and sorry. The calling a canvass a campaign is not defensible as a use of metaphor, because, first, no metaphor is called for, and last, this one is entirely out of keeping. We could do our political talking much better in simple English. . . . An election has no manner of likeness to a campaign or a battle. It is not even a contest in which the stronger and more dexterous party is the winner: it is a mere comparison.

The following paragraphs from Kathryn McEuen's article are self-explanatory, illustrating the supersaturation of language with military terms:

> During this period, General Eisenhower, *facing* the political *firing line, fired* his *opening gun, drew blood, won* his first *skirmish* in the *battle*, but was warned his *forces* must *wage a hard-hitting campaign.*

Since every war involves captives, Senator Nixon described Governor Stevenson as a "helpless captive" of Truman, of the bosses, of the C.I.O., and of Wall Street. Whereupon Stevenson replied, "It's not too uncomfortable to be captured by most everybody except the Republican Old Guard," and the Democratic party countered with the accusation that Eisenhower was the *captive* of a party in which old-line Republicans are still a dominant *force.*

At long last the campaign proper began. The *high command* of G.O.P., assured that its candidate's knowledge of *strategy* would be used skillfully in the campaign, *aimed* its *campaign guns* and *fired a volley* of *campaign artillery, launching* its first *major offensive* of the campaign on two *fronts* (issues). Simultaneously, Stevenson opened up his *heavy artillery* under the direction of his *board of strategy* and the guidance of a *veteran* party *strategist.* Both candidates were then committed to a "no-quarter attack." The *firing positions* of the campaign leaders were, of course, important at this juncture, as were the *battle cries* they provided: "The Democrats torpedo bipartisanism"; "The Democrats are an entrenched enemy"; "The Republicans must wage a vigorous, fighting campaign to win"; "Yours is the task to stop this retreat; to lead the attack and recapture the citadels of liberty."

Soon came the invasions. Nixon *hit* at Stevenson in his *invasion* of Illinois, and Eisenhower *invaded the stronghold* of the South. This was the first time, according to the newspapers, that a Republican presidential nominee ever staged a "full-scale campaign deep in Dixie," and so Eisenhower *loaded up with ammunition* (carefully prepared speeches) for his *expedition* and went "with his big guns loaded for another blistering barrage" and "withering blast" for his first *foray.* The result was termed a *blitz.* The General was also said to be planning "to invade the historic Democratic labor fortress" and "to crack the hold on the vote of organized labor."

It may be objected that some of the words and expressions given as examples are no longer figurative, but quite literal, in accounts of the procedures of a presidential campaign. Such an objection may be sustained regarding such a word as *crusade* for example. The meaning which most readers are likely to attach to it is a military expedition carried on by Christians to recover Palestine from the Mohammedans. The QED, however, offers as one definition, "An aggressive movement or enterprise against some public evil"

(1776), and the *Webster New International*, "Any remedial enterprise undertaken with zeal and enthusiasm." A presidential candidate may, therefore, carry on a crusade against what he regards as an evil in government, just as men of the Church may carry on one against what they regard as immoral practices. The fact remains that in the minds of most, if not all, people, the terminology of a political campaign has military connotations. This was almost inevitably so in the case of the 1952 campaign, for—frequently in columns side by side—the presidential contest and the "police action" in Korea were described in identical terms.

Acceptance of militarism, just as of military terminology, seems definitely to be a matter of conditioning. So, at any rate, the pacifists would argue.

A passage from a somewhat unpleasant novel, *The Lost Men*, by Benedict Thielen, repeats the psychological story of many who were taught to kill during wartime. A sergeant turns back to review the psychological transition which occurred when killing became his business:

> His mind coiled downward through the layers of the present and slowly sucked up the past. He thought with a tolerant amusement of the fear that had come to him when he had first been forced to kill a man. He thought, even before that, of the fear that had gone through him as he thrust the bayonet into the bag of sawdust and shouted "Blood and guts!"—as they had been told to do to give them courage. He thought of men being sick and of himself almost being sick at this mere practice. It was strange how reluctant men were to kill before they had been taught. It was strange how men recoiled from the thought of inflicting death. It took a little time to become accustomed to the idea. Like the feel on the body of the uniform, the hard exact lines of it after the softness of civilian clothes, the idea of killing was a thing to become accustomed to. But like the uniform you became used to it. After a time the uniform began to fit. The person in the uniform grew into it and, growing into it, he grew into the body of which the uniform was only a part. He entered into the shielding anonymity of the uniform, of the rows of uniforms, of the squads, platoons, companies, battalions, regiments of identical uniforms. He drew his courage from the courage of those around him, from the shoulder that touched his, the broad back ahead of him, the solidity and the rhythm of marching feet. The strangeness of learning that what was once a crime was now a fine and noble thing to do gradually wore off as a thousand men with one accord did the same thing, as they went forward together, no longer as individuals but as parts of a great whole that was each man's well of strength.

The most impressive passages in *The Lost Men* occur when Mr. Thielen describes the tremendous impact of a wartime killing upon a sensitive young Swede. "Chris" was a gentle giant. His dominant instinct was to shelter and protect—never to hit out in anger. But he went to war, killed a man, and could never forget it. Finally, so strong was the hold of this experience upon his moral sense, he began to believe that he must be punished. He went to a police station to confess his "crime":

> He turned his head and saw two policemen who had come in and were leaning against the rail that ran in front of the desk where the sergeant was sitting. He looked at them, then raised his eyes again to the desk.
>
> "I want to confess a murder," he said. "I killed a man."
>
> He stood there quietly, his hands folded in front of him, and looked up at the sergeant. He heard his words, although spoken, still in his mind and he felt them on his lips.
>
> He began to hear the voices vaguely around him. He listened with a kind of mild curiosity to their mixture of harshness, unbelief, and scorn.
>
> He nodded his head slowly and with his eyes still fixed on the light said, "I killed him. It was just at dawn, and I killed him."
>
> "He was young," he said dreamily. "He was just a kid. Just like I was."
>
> "Weapon," he heard, "I said what did you use for a weapon?"
>
> Chris Lindstrom smiled up at him.
>
> "Why, a gun. A gun of course. A rifle."
>
> "How should we know?" the sergeant said, and the men standing around him nodded their heads and looked down at him disapprovingly, as though he had just committed some social blunder.
>
> "Well, that's what we had." He turned to the man with the notebook. "It was just at dawn. You remember in the Bible how Christ said when the rooster had crowed three times Peter would deny him.

'Thrice,' He said. Yes. And that's what I did. I denied Christ. I. . . ."

"Hey, listen," the sergeant called down to him. "Never mind the sermon. We're all good Catholics here but get on with it. Leave Our Lord out of it," and around him all the men frowned at him disapprovingly.

"It doesn't matter now," Chris Lindstrom said. "It will all be all right now. But I knew the day was coming and then just as the sun came up I saw him and. . . ."

"Where was all this?" the sergeant said. "Back in Minnesota?"

Chris Lindstrom shook his head.

"I saw him. The fog lifted and I saw him and I had to shoot him."

"What do you mean, had to?" the sergeant said. "Why did you have to?"

"Motive?" someone near him murmured.

"Motive?" he shook his head. "There wasn't any motive."

"Well, for God's sake!" the sergeant shouted down at him. ;Why did you do it? Just because you didn't like his

"I liked his looks," Chris Lindstrom said. "He was nice looking. A young fellow, he was."

The sergeant threw up his hands and the others all raised their eyes and looked at him and then back at Chris Lindstrom.

"Don't make sense," someone at his elbow said and Chris Lindstrom turned toward him.

"No. There's no sense in it. That's just it. Why should I have to kill this young fellow when. . . ."

"Hey, are you asking us riddles?" the sergeant called down to him. "You tell us."

"There's no sense to it," Chris Lindstrom repeated. "But I shot him. He was just climbing over the fence and I saw him when he started to climb and I had to shoot him because. . . ."

"What fence?" the sergeant said. "On a farm? Were you lying for this guy all night? What was he doing, trespassing?"

"Yes, on a farm," Chris Lindstrom said. "It was in a wheat field. Like at home, only it was smaller. Everything was smaller, sort of, over there. They hadn't cut the wheat yet. Nobody had been through there till we came. There hadn't been any fighting there. We were near a place called Fismes, a place. . . ."

"In France?" a voice said and another voice said, "For Christ's sake!"

There was a silence that hung suspended as if suddenly let down into the room at the end of a cord and then a rippling rising and a burst of laughter.

"You mean to say," the sergeant said, "you mean to say you shot a guy in the war and now you claim you're a murderer? Is that what you mean?"

"Yes, that's what I mean. Listen to me, will you? If a man kills another man he has to die, doesn't he? He's a murderer and has to die and that's what I did. That's why I came here because I. . . ."

"Take it easy, buddy," someone said in his ear. "Come over here and sit down. You'll be all right."

"I know how it is," someone else said as another hand grasped his arm. "You get to thinking about it and. . . . It's no fun but it's war. If you hadn't killed the guy he would have killed you."

"Kill or be killed," a voice said.

"Self-defense," another voice said. "You come on over here and sit down."

He started to pull away from the hands that were holding him, but the hands tightened their grip on his arm and he was led over to a bench on the other side of the room.

Mr. Thielen's pacifist sentiments are certainly apparent here, as were Mary Borden's in the prize-winning novel *You the* Jury—a story of Christ's return to the earth in a military society, and the hostility he evoked. We do not, of course, improve matters directly by pointing out that our common language accepts militarism, and that we also commonly accept the half-truth that killing in war is not killing at all. But these are things about which we can always stand some reminding, as of the point made by Nevil Shute in *The Breaking Wave*—that many men come to *like* war, cannot help liking it at least part of the time, because of the challenges it proposes. Well, you can't change a temper and way of thinking unless thoroughly aware of their presence, with all attending complications, and therefore, all but genuine "warmongers" should be grateful for reading such as we have quoted.