

## MISSING INSTITUTIONS

ONE is bound to be impressed by the number and quality of the people who have come out for some form of world government—that is, for some sort of federal union of the nations of the world. Modern wars are so inevitably and so frighteningly "total" that discussion of any serious problem eventually reaches the subject of war, and the only mechanism that seems capable of controlling the policies of nations is that of a supra-national authority. Dr. Albert Einstein, for one, starts out by considering the growing influence of military agencies in the colleges and universities of the United States (in *Out of My Later Years*), and ends by advocating world government. His logic is inescapable, whatever one may think of world government.

I must frankly confess that the foreign policy of the United States since the termination of hostilities [this was written in 1947] has reminded me, sometimes irresistibly, of the attitude of Germany under Kaiser Wilhelm II, and I know that, independent of me, this analogy has most painfully occurred to others as well. It is characteristic of the military mentality that non-human factors (atom bombs, strategic bases, weapons of all sorts, the possession of raw materials, etc.) are held essential, while the human being, his desires and thoughts—in short, the psychological factors—are considered as unimportant and secondary. Herein lies a certain resemblance to Marxism, at least insofar as its theoretical side alone is kept in view. The individual is degraded into a mere instrument; he becomes "human matériel." The normal ends of human aspiration vanish with such a viewpoint. Instead, the military mentality raises "naked power" as a goal in itself—one of the strangest illusions to which men can succumb.

In our time the military mentality is still more dangerous than formerly because the offensive weapons have become much more powerful than the defensive ones. Therefore it leads, by necessity, to preventive war. The general insecurity that goes hand in hand with this results in the sacrifice of the citizen's civil rights to the supposed welfare of the state. Political witch-hunting, controls of all sorts

(e.g., control of teaching and research, of the press, and so forth) appear inevitable, and for this reason do not encounter that popular resistance, which, were it not for the military mentality, would provide a protection. A reappraisal of values gradually takes place insofar as everything that does not clearly serve the utopian ends is regarded and treated as inferior.

I see no other way out of prevailing conditions than a farseeing, honest and courageous policy with the aim of establishing security on supranational foundations. Let us hope that men will be found, sufficient in number and moral force to guide the nation on this path so long as a leading role is imposed on her by external circumstances. Then problems such as have been discussed here will cease to exist.

It is certainly feasible to agree that the idea of world government is appropriate to *represent* the large-scale moral problem of the world. *If* a world authority could be relied upon to administer international law justly, and *if* the great powers could be persuaded to delegate to that authority sufficient of their national sovereignty to assure it respect before the world, only the blindest of the blind chauvinists and jingo "patriots" could oppose such an organization. We say, here, only that the proposition is arguable in practical, but not ideal, terms. What seems to us more important, however, than arguing about world government is knowledge of the course of history which has led the world to its present dilemma: that an international authority seems at the same time absolutely necessary for survival, and absolutely unattainable, at least in the immediate present.

Years ago, in the *Atlantic Monthly* for May, 1920, Guglielmo Ferrero, an eminent Italian historian, wrote concerning what he called the incomplete revolution of Western civilization. His thesis has to do with the great change in the attitude toward war since the eighteenth century. There were accomplished scholars and writers on

international law in the eighteenth century, just as there are today. But their view of war was very different—more "realistic," some might say, or, at any rate, humanly practical in respect to the conditions which then prevailed. While their theories may seem to us cynical or at least backward, Ferrero finds much to say in their defense:

The great writers on international law of the eighteenth century—Vattel, for instance—maintain that, if there be just and unjust wars, the justice or injustice of war is a question which concerns only natural law, that is to say, the conscience of sovereigns, and their responsibility at the bar of history and of God. In practice and in reality, these writers advised each belligerent, as a matter of convention, to regard the adversary's cause as no less than his own, and never to claim to be the representative of righteousness against force and violence.

This doctrine, superficially considered, may well seem to us absurd and almost immoral; but by what arguments did these authors justify it? They said that, without this convention, there was neither code of law nor authority to decide the question of right and wrong as between belligerent states that each people would be the judge of its own cause; and so each would be convinced that it alone was in the right, and that all the offenses were the adversary's. Consequently wars would come to be endless and universal. They would be endless because neither party would yield until its powers were exhausted; and the one that did yield would yield only to begin again as soon as it was in a position to do so, for justice demands that all wrongs be redressed. They would become universal because every people, being convinced that it was defending no mere political interest but the supreme blessings of life, would seek to make sure of every prop it could find.

Two factors, one political, the other technological, have wholly outmoded the eighteenth-century view of war, making it almost impossible to apply, even if we should want to. First, modern wars are fought in the name of "the people." The people are sovereign, at least in name and in propaganda, if not in fact. The rights and liberties of the people are held to be at stake in modern war, so that the wars of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries have been, for the most

part, prosecuted with almost religious fervor. There is no such thing as a "worthy opponent," any more. To concede this would be to subvert the moral base of the total war operation, which always assumes the character of a crusade to cleanse the world of evil. Not only is this the political motif of all foreign policy, but the people, without such assurances and appeals, simply would not fight.

The technological factor supports the political factor, for modern weapons have increasingly made war mean total destruction, to civilians even more than to the military. Thus war is for the right, but it is also for survival: what more persuasive propositions could a ministry of propaganda and morale offer to create the feverish passions necessary to war?

As Ferrero reviews the consequences of the "revolution" in war-making his words become a potent argument for the advocates of world government:

Western civilization came to regard as essential to its happiness a social order in which force should respect certain principles of right and justice. But it did not know how to formulate these principles with the clarity and definiteness which they required in order to govern the world; it could not recognize any authority charged with the duty of deciding doubtful questions, and of imposing respect for these principles upon the passions and selfish interests which might have sought to violate them. In its eyes justice and right were not empty words; they were, on the contrary, living, but still sadly confused, realities, which it ardently desired, but knew not how or where to obtain. . . .

It was a tremendous revolution in the history of Western civilization; but, like all revolutions, it should have been carried to its extremest consequences. A new body of international law should have been created, with its doctrines and organs, which should have defined the rights of peoples before which force must lay down its arms. If we admit that a treaty is invalid when it violates these principles, and if we permit a people to define its own rights in its own way, then will come to pass what was foreseen by the great writers on international law in the eighteenth century: no treaty will have any value whatsoever, and a state of war will become

permanent and peace an absolute impossibility. Every state will declare to be of no effect, as contrary to right and justice all treaties which do not happen to suit it. It will simply have to adopt the definition of "right" and "justice" which its own desires and ambitions demand at any given time.

The idea behind the revolution was great and inspiring. The glow of its idealism touched the hearts of men and steeled their wills to incalculable effort. In fact, the faith of the common people in the principles of freedom and justice was far greater, as Ferrero points out, than that of the statesmen and politicians who urged them on. Even though betrayed again and again by actual events, that faith lives on, and we may be glad, even while it fails, that it continues to exist, for without it there would be no hope for the world at all. What Ferrero deplors is the notion that, since right and justice are great ideals, they will be easy to realize. This he calls "the confidence of the peoples in their omnipotence." The effect of this misplacing of confidence, he says, has brought "the consequence of a deep-seated and serious disease which is undermining Western civilization." He continues:

This disease is manifested in an impotent aspiration toward a world-order based upon justice. This aspiration is vigorous and sincere, for it has sprung, not from a morbid degeneracy of sentiment, but from a vital necessity. But for it, Western civilization would be enslaved, and would in time be destroyed by the most monstrous aggregation of elements of force which the genius of man has ever been able to create. But this aspiration is impossible of fulfillment, for the doctrines and institutions essential to such fulfillment are lacking.

Where shall such doctrines and institutions be found? Ferrero wonders if some "universally accepted doctrines—supra-natural, so to speak"—might "make it possible, and even desirable, for different races and peoples to live under the same government." Then he has this interesting thing to say:

This is what the Bolsheviki are trying to do in Russia when they seek to maintain the unity of the Empire by substituting for the dynastic principle the idea of the fraternity of the proletarian masses; that is

to say, by substituting one universal idea for another. The attempt will probably fail, but it is not, in itself, so mad as people seem to think, especially from the standpoint of the Russians, . . .

Ferrero now calls attention to the fact that the higher the ideals given political expression, the bloodier the conflicts which result:

Such has been the tragic destiny of Europe from the French Revolution to the Russian Revolution: as soon as an idea of fraternity appears, wars, within and without, break forth anew, implacable and never-ending. How is this contradiction to be explained?

Still another contradiction has appeared as a consequence of World War II: the Nuremberg Trials added to the body of international law the idea of *individual* responsibility for political actions, which, in practical terms, amounts to abolition of the authority of States in respect to all actions classed as crimes against humanity. One might almost suppose that there is some psychosocial law of human behavior which requires that the expression of human idealism grow articulate and specific in precise parallel to the fiendishness of practice in the mass destruction of war.

Ferrero believes that the idea of "brotherhood" caused the nations to run amok for the reason that the profound pessimism of Christianity, declaring the moral weakness of man, was forgotten. As he puts it:

The nineteenth century . . . told men that they were brothers, but told them at the same time that they were destined, one and all, to be monarchs of the universe. And in order to be monarchs of the universe, men and nations, instead of embracing like brothers, threw themselves upon one another, arms in hand.

Whether or not "Christian pessimism" is the missing ingredient of peace, one thing seems certain: We are profoundly ignorant of the steps which need to be taken in order to make world government work. We may not approve the eighteenth-century principle of allowing one's opponent the possibility of being right, and letting a passage of arms decide, but there is an admirable humility in this initial assumption. The trouble

with identifying high principles with the military undertakings of today is that the "absolute" character of modern war is always transferred to the rightness of our principles. They and our espousal of them must also be absolutely "right," which turns every war into an Armageddon, just as the eighteenth-century moralists feared. So, arguing from the record, the skeptic of world government might, while longing for it in principle, say that we—the nations of the modern world—have not yet earned the right to a place in the Siege Perilous of a world authority; that the higher the moral pretensions, the more terrifying and disastrous their betrayal and failure.

In short, a lot of practical spade-work will have to precede anything more than the most rhetorical gestures in that direction. We have another quotation from Dr. Einstein, which, although written in 1947, still indicates, we think, the sort of work that will have to be done:

So far the United States has shown no interest in preserving the security of the Soviet Union. It has been interested in its own security, which is characteristic of the competition which marks the conflict for power between sovereign states. But one cannot know in advance what would be the effect on Russian fears if the American people forced their leaders to pursue a policy of substituting law for the present anarchy of international relations. In a world of law, Russian security would be equal to our own, and for the American people to espouse this wholeheartedly, something that should be possible under the workings of democracy, might work a kind of miracle in Russian thinking.

At present the Russians have no evidence to convince them that the American people are not contentedly supporting a policy of military preparedness which they regard as a policy of deliberate intimidation. If they had evidences of a passionate desire by Americans to preserve peace in the one way it can be maintained, by a supranational regime of law, this would upset Russian calculations about the peril to Russian security in current trends of American thought. Not until a genuine, convincing offer is made to the Soviet Union, backed by an aroused American public, will one be entitled to say what the Russian response would be.

## *Letter from* **GERMANY**

NORTH GERMANY (British Zone)—After a two-week stay in Bueckeberg we went to Bielefeld by taking a bus to Minden and then a train which ran through many small towns and small farms with their characteristic farmhouses, barn-and-home under one roof. Once at the station we started our long walk to the *Rathaus* (City Hall), which was bombed during the war but has been completely rebuilt. It is a beautiful edifice, and it has been renamed *Die Bruecke* by the British, meaning "The Bridge," because they want to make of it a bridge of understanding between the German people and the occupying forces.

It was in "Die Bruecke" that we attended a lecture by a Quaker of the East Zone, who had come especially for this purpose. Arriving early, we took time to look around and the first thing to claim our attention was a well-equipped lending library on the first floor, with books in three languages—French, German and English—with many of the latest publications. The library was well patronized by young and old.

The first thing to impress us as we walked the long walk to the *Rathaus* was the neatness of everything and everybody in the old streets. Bielefeld suffered much from bombings, being an important manufacturing center, but one is hardly aware of the fact now, so skillfully have the scars been concealed. Most houses have been rebuilt, and those still in ruins are hidden by a temporary facade, a sort of wall with show-windows and lights to simulate shops. The stores are well stocked with all sorts of merchandise, attractive and up-to-date, even if the prices are comparatively high. Men and women walk briskly about their business with a determined look on their faces, children hasten home from school with their leather bags strapped on their shoulders; street cars rumble by in groups of twos and threes, looking like small trains. We did not see many

automobiles, but the innumerable bicycles have special paths reserved for them on the highways, and if you walk along you had better listen for their warning bells to get out of their way, and don't be surprised if an elderly man or woman is riding behind you, for there seems to be no age limit to bicycle riders in Germany.

We took away the impression, after our month's stay, that the Germans are very determined to show the world that they can recover, even in the face of tremendous difficulties. Their industriousness, their orderliness, their punctuality, their frugality, their special gift for organizing things, their devotion to work are astounding. We marveled at the obedience of the children, the seriousness with which they take their school work, the cheerful way they leave for school at 7:30 in the morning (before daylight in winter), the neatness of their books and papers.

Could this be the land where a tyrant held sway for so long? How did they feel about him now? We asked questions. "Ach!" said one, "he was a nightmare." And another said, "We are trying to forget him, he was terrible." One big industrial leader said, "He was the devil incarnate." When we asked a bright eleven-year-old by way of testing what he was being taught in school, he answered simply, "At one time he was a very important person." That was all he knew.

Relief and welfare centers are well organized and doing a fine job. We visited two or three of some importance. The largest, Bethel, the town of invalids, is a city within a city, with a population of some 10,000 souls including epileptics, feeble-minded, those sick in body and spirit and now even some refugees. They do all necessary work, according to their ability, led by Lutheran sisters, and so everyone is made to feel useful and important. Some beautiful articles are produced by these unfortunates from scraps, old boxes, old stamps, old strings and old clothes.

Then there was the Friends' Wookroom in Bad Pymont where clothing donated by the

American Quakers is sorted and transformed into beautiful apparel. Miracles are performed with this clothing, with the aid of three tailors picked from refugee camps, paid by voluntary contributions from the Friends' group. A file of needy persons is kept in the office, and these are certified by special social workers, so that only the truly needy can apply.

German industry is growing and since the plants do not manufacture armaments, they are intensifying the production of civilian goods and capturing many new markets. The general feeling, so far as this writer could ascertain, is that they are pleased with their work of rehabilitation so far, and the main hope of every one is that they may never be involved in another war. The reluctance to rearm is evident, yet there is a movement, led by the government, to join the EDC with a number of divisions. It is frequently hinted that some former Nazi military leaders are strongly supporting this movement.

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## *REVIEW*

### PSYCHIATRIC REEVALUATION

THE results of a Psychiatric Research Conference held by the Menninger Foundation at Topeka, Kansas, last year, is summarized in the July *Bulletin of the Menninger Clinic*. What strikes us particularly is the noticeable philosophical tone which pervades two of the papers, and the further fact that both authors show considerable respect for ancient views of psychological problems.

Karl Menninger's introductory remarks to the Conference reveal his opinion that both he and most of his contemporaries were sadly callow in respect to philosophy when they first entered the psychiatric field:

There can be no doubt that there is a change now in all sciences in the directions of seeing the process rather than the type, the tendencies rather than the state. This is true in biology, chemistry, evolutionary theory, and in general medicine. We psychiatrists who should have led the way are almost in the position of bringing up the rear of the scientific procession. We still talk about schizophrenia and neurosis and the ego as if they were things, or the names of things, when it is most certain that whatever they are, this they are not.

I am not sure, either, just when it was that I became aware of the hypothetical nature of many of the assumptions upon which my early faith depended. I did not realize, for example, that there is no way in which to demonstrate philosophically that disease is bad or, in the broad sense of things, undesirable. I did not realize how strictly hypothetical and presumptive it is to assume that any doctor ever cures any illness. I did not reflect very seriously upon the extent to which *post hoc propter hoc* reasoning was used to justify procedures, the specific relationship of which could not be sustained by analysis. I was an empiricist of the blandest and blindest sort, and I was possessed of a faith that permitted no questioning of my convictions that what I had said or done to the patient was responsible for the patient's prompt and vast improvement.

We have elsewhere noted the "becoming humility" evidenced by Menninger-trained men, and it is not difficult to locate one source of this inspiration to open-mindedness in Dr. Karl

Menninger himself. He considers that both personal soul-searching and the habit of continually questioning what any currently favored psychiatric technique is accomplishing are "necessary for the good of medicine":

Sometimes we have had the illusion of success and sometimes the illusion of failure. Sometimes perhaps these were not illusions, but both the humility appropriate to good medicine, and the self-inquiry characteristic of good science cannot but have made us all reflect from time to time on the question of just what we were accomplishing.

The same issue of the quarterly contains a paper by Jules H. Masserman, professor of neurology at Northwestern University. Here, again, is intensive self-criticism and further evidence that the modern psychiatrist, unlike most of his forebears, feels something of an obligation to acquaint himself with ancient philosophical and religious traditions, and to review his "new science" from the horizons thus afforded. Dr. Masserman says:

We may venture to admit that much of mysticism and unscientific empiricism remains operative in the theory and practice of modern psychiatry. On the basis of a few clinical observations, often superficially interpreted, we will starve, choke, electro-coagulate or slice up irreplaceable brain tissue with a crudity strikingly out of proportion even with our present limited knowledge of the finesse and complexity of cerebral functions. And when the final results of such procedures are undeniably adverse, we say *post hoc* that the patient must all along have belonged to some category of untreatable "mental disease."

Equally illogical, though perhaps less immediately harmful to our patients, is the seductive use of typically mythological thinking in lieu of more precise formulations and operational deductions. This is exemplified in attempts to explain fundamentals of human behavior on the basis of highly selected parables such as those of Narcissus or Oedipus, without recognizing (a) that if the complex interrelationships among other inhabitants of these fables (such as the nymph Echo and Narcissus' lover Almeinas, or Laius, Jocasta, Chryssipus et al v. Oedipus) were analyzed, nearly every human relationship would also be epitomized, whereas (b) other, more ancient myths (such as the Egyptian saga

of Seth, Isis and Osiris or the Mesopotamian legend of Gilgamesh, Engidu Ishtar and Uta—Napishtim) are paradigms of filial loyalty, fraternal devotion and social sacrifice that are, culturally speaking, as highly significant to the mores of Western man as are Greek exemplifications of autistic, self-seeking, or murderous rivalry. And so too, in seminars supposedly devoted to the discussion of unconscious dynamics, we are sometimes treated to serious accounts of how in one case "the ego bribed the superego" while "really in secret alliance with the id," whereas in another instance the "id masqueraded as the superego" and thus "gained an advantage in a bitter battle with the ego" in which it also succeeded in "splitting" the latter neatly in two—all this until a casual visitor might think he were really listening to a quasi-Homeric tale of how three Fates plotted and fought among themselves inside some poor mortal's skull for the control of his body. I am not opposed to poetic license in exposition, but perhaps even in our modern thinking the bright seductive spirit of mystery and fable still shines through the thin, drab Mother Hubbard of pseudoscience in which we pretend to clothe her.

The concluding sentences of the following passage recall the themes of Joseph Campbell and Erich Fromm:

In *Principles of Dynamic Psychiatry*, I stated that psychotherapy, like other arts and sciences, had passed through two of its stages of evolution—the mystical and the taxonomic—and was now entering its final "dynamic" phase. Since an infinity of statements, all true in some sense, can be made about any subject this, of course, left our knowledge of psychotherapy in a state of incompleteness measurable by the number infinity minus one.

But what is more disconcerting is that a dialectically antithetical statement can be made with equal validity: namely, that man has always been more or less keenly aware of his desires, capacities and limitations and has therefore in every age epitomized their dynamic interplay in his poetic fantasies, whether these took magico-religious or scientific form. Thus in every developed culture, from the Euphrates to the Arctic, man has projected three categories of gods, representing his own triune nature.

This sort of rumination represents one aspect of the vast "transformation of mind" which MANAS editors feel to be taking place. Everyone

is familiar with the attitude of the intellectual reactionary, who inclines to the view that nothing can be good, true or beautiful which is *new*. But it has been a peculiar characteristic of modern thought to adopt a position which is the superficial opposite of this—namely, that nothing *old* in the way of philosophy, psychology, or science is worth investigation. When the modern psychiatrist begins to view the philosophers of old with respect and appreciation—in fact, when he begins to read them and think about them at all—the prejudice of almost an entire century has been overcome, and it is precisely in terms of an intellectual's capacity to break out of the circle of status quo opinion that his value to the future may be gauged.

One seldom encounters, today, the unconscious snobbery of the psychological orthodoxy of a generation ago, wherein a respected representative of that "science" was heard to deny the possibility of extra-sensory-perception on the ground that to admit such phenomena would undermine too many painfully constructed notions about the world!

Perhaps it is the fate of man in his present stage of quasimaturity to founder upon sandbank after sandbank of prejudice before he discovers that flow of genuine knowledge pertaining to the soul, a flow which may run from antiquity to the future, and reveal the meaning of the human odyssey. As Emerson remarked, the mind tends to be "disparted," to see only one aspect of a problem or situation at a time. But both philosophy and psychology are now increasingly concerned with ushering in those broader views which reduce the areas of disparted vision.

## *COMMENTARY*

### TWO VIEWS OF FEAR

WILLIAM SEIFRIZ account of Goethe as philosopher—"often wrong in fact, but never in principle"—is a phrase to conjure with. It comes very close, we think, to what last week's lead article, "Testing 'Absolutes'," was trying to get at. To be right in principle, even if wrong in facts, means that one's methods are sound, and a man with the right method will eventually get his facts straightened out. This matter of being right in principle causes us to set side by side two statements about the threat of atomic weapons, one by Reinhold Niebuhr, Christian thinker, quoted here last week, the other by Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, Indian philosopher and Vice-President of the Indian Republic. Niebuhr said:

The Communists are unscrupulous foes and they press every advantage. It is not possible, for instance, to relieve tension by refusing to go ahead with the development of atomic weapons. Peace is preserved by the fear of these atomic weapons.

Radhakrishnan takes another view of the role of fear:

. . . the perils of atomic and hydrogen developments dominate our thoughts and trouble our consciences. We feel that their incalculable destructive power will act as a great deterrent to war. But by these threats of limitless horror, we are appealing to the baser instincts of human nature, fear, greed and hate. . . . Of all the emotions, the least compatible with freedom and most degrading to man is fear. We are planting appalling fear in men's hearts. By so doing, we corrupt their morals and destroy their minds.

This is an odd comparison, not only for the reason that Niebuhr, a Christian spokesman, takes no note of the ethical weakness of his advocacy of fear as a means of control, and Radhakrishnan, an Indian—who, a generation or two ago would have been called by Westerners a "heathen"—calls attention to the degrading effects of fear as a weapon. The most interesting thing about the comparison is that Niebuhr holds no political office and is thus free to speak in the authentic

accents of the Sermon on the Mount, while Radhakrishnan is Vice-President of India, yet feels under no compulsion to justify the use of military might as an instrument of policy.

The trouble, of course, with high principles, is that being consistent with them in *all* cases is sometimes very difficult. Someone might argue, moreover, that it is easy to decry the threat of the atom bomb if you don't happen to have one. But this is not the point. India, for all we know, may have an atom bomb or two. She certainly has atomic scientists. The point is in the fact that every nation needs to have clear voices which command attention to say that national policies which are founded on the intimidation of other peoples are degrading to both, and most degrading when most successful. It is a pity that Mr. Niebuhr found no occasion to point this out.

## CHILDREN ... and Ourselves

PURSUING our qualified defense of Plato's "censorship of the arts" for youth, we present ideas from Isaac Rosenfeld's "What Should My Child Read?" in the August *Commentary*. Mr. Rosenfeld, who teaches Humanities at the University of Minnesota, and doubles as a novelist, chooses as his point of departure Josette Frank's *Your Child's Reading Today*, which *Commentary* editors consider to be "typical of the attitudes to cultural values shown by our best-regarded children's experts." What this means to Mr. Rosenfeld is that the author of *Your Child's Reading Today* bogs down in her devotion to current dogmas regarding "permissiveness." Miss Frank is chiefly worried about the psychological effects of a strict prohibition in regard to reading matter or television programs, and proceeds, throughout, on the assumption that "the effect of parental denial must be as harmful or nearly as harmful as the effect of the thing denied."

Like all assumptions that float around in what may be only a temporary climate of opinion, this one should be questioned—and along with it the belief that all "conflicts" can be avoided in child-rearing. Mr. Rosenfeld, for one, does not plan to allow these hopeful theorizers to brush away the facts so easily:

Parents must be forbearing, they must not push culture at their children, or force them at good books, lest they provoke a negative reaction. Miss Frank feels it is best to offer unobtrusive encouragement, and to see to it that the environment is stocked with good books and other repositories of the values one should like to inculcate. But of course the modern environment is bound to furnish more movies, radios, television sets, and comic magazines than quiet libraries with fireplaces and shelves of excellent, leather-bound books. So what are the parents to do? They must trust that the child's native good sense will eventually assert itself, they must practice forbearance, they must not push culture at their children . . . and so on.

But what is one to do in those cases where the child's native good sense fails to assert itself, and the preoccupation with bang-bang, vrrroooooom, ack-ack-ack-ack, and eeeeeek shows no sign of relenting? Then, says Miss Frank, it is a psychological problem: the reason the child is glued to the TV set or immersed in the comics for hours at a time, neglecting the other interests a healthy child must have, is that he has some underlying problem. Comics and TV are never the cause of the child's disturbance, they are merely a symptom.

Now this is quite true, children are beset with psychological problems that are not traceable to horrors. But in the present context, it is passing the buck to say so. Healthy child or neurotic, there is still a *literary* problem and a *cultural* problem, and how does one tell the difference between good books and bad, and how does one make the difference clear to his children without defeating his own purpose? And of course one must be forbearing, but how does one combat the modern environment to the extent that it must be combated—after all discounts have been made and all the requirements of permissiveness have been met?

Mr. Rosenfeld now comes to his main point:

If we are to observe some standard in guiding our children through reading and TV (otherwise, why talk of guidance?) and if these standards are to have even a remote relation to the ones we follow in our own life and work, the first principle of judgment must be that by far the greater number of things the child reads in the comics and sees on the screen are absolutely worthless. But wouldn't it disconcert him to be told (gently, tactfully, in terms appropriate to his grasp) that he lives in a box-top culture where he is constantly bombarded by commercialism and kiddie-*Kitsch*? Of course it would disconcert him, it might even make him feel insecure. But shouldn't we *all*, man, woman *and* child—be disconcerted by the quality of our commercial culture? And honestly now isn't it far worse to be secure in the love of junk than insecure?

The truth is, we must often struggle and always be prepared to struggle, tactfully, gently, with as much kindness as possible—still, *struggle*—with our children and the world that surrounds them to keep alive their inherent sense for what is lively and good in art. How to conduct this battle joyously, in such a way that we will enlist our children's love and not alienate them from the life of the mind, is a problem which it may take genius to solve. But it is a fact that

we have such a battle on our hands, and it will get us nowhere to pretend that we don't.

In our opinion, there are two immediate causes of the confusion Rosenfeld attributes to Miss Frank. In the first place, neither permissiveness nor strong direction will help our children unless they are also furnished some help in reaching adequate standards of value. In a culture wherein the ends and aims of man are lost in confusion, permissiveness does not offer real alternatives for the "free choice" of the young. For they, like most of us, drift along in the current of whatever commercial amusement is available.

To put the matter in another way, it is all very well to say that what a person likes is what is good for him, but it is much better to say that no one really *knows* what he likes until he has experienced the difficulty of trying to reconcile contrasting or conflicting values. If the contrasts are smoothed and smothered over in that vast and horrible compliance called the "popular," the critical faculty has no opportunity to develop.

Another illustration of the sort of "permissiveness" Mr. Rosenfeld dislikes is supplied by many of the progressive classes in art. While no one will deny that the proper way to teach the meaning of art is not to encourage children to duplicate the drawings of others, but rather to encourage free experiment, it is easily forgotten that the secret of art, as of everything else, is in a creative *idea*. A helter-skelter daubing with paint may, for all we know, be better than formal training, but it fails to teach children that beauty and culture come from qualities of thought, and not from "experimental" caprice.

So the question of "standards" is inescapable, no matter how diligently Miss Frank and those of like opinion try to ignore it. There are indeed, as Mr. Rosenfeld writes, "occasions in which it is much better, and others in which it is much worse for the parent to deny the child than not to do so. . . but to make the right decisions, and to make them consistently, the parent must have some standard, of justice or taste, to go by."

Any standard is, upon occasion, a cause for verbal struggle, and we see no reason why strenuous argument with our own children need be regarded as other than natural. Furthermore, no one actually knows the meaning of a "standard" unless and until he has been witness to battles in its name. How often we censure our nineteenth-century predecessors for their overbearing opinions, yet perhaps both they and their children were better off than they would have been with no opinions at all!

## *FRONTIERS* Science and Romance

IN *Science* for July 16, William Seifriz, botanist of the University of Pennsylvania, describes his dream of a "new university" in which there will be the spirit of "unfettered liberalism," genuine respect for learning, with no one, not even the president, possessed of "the power to wield a whip hand over his colleagues," and finally, "belief in the meaningfulness of the universe."

These are high and ennobling conceptions. They come from a man who, some years ago, offered vigorous defense of what is usually called the "materialistic point of view." In fact, the spirit of this article is such that we are beginning to wonder if the time has not come to abandon altogether the use of the word "materialist," at least as an epithet. If Mr. Seifriz still calls himself a materialist—and it doesn't much matter what he calls himself—then there are some critics of materialism whose outlook could be vastly improved by borrowing from whatever it is that he believes. The following is from the closing paragraphs of his article:

People expect goodness from the church, justice from the state, and enlightenment from the university. Enlightenment is more than knowledge. It is knowledge softened by understanding, and in this respect science has failed.

The stupid expression, "the scientific way of life," is meaningless. Science does, to be sure, seek the truth regardless of the consequences, and to this extent it is good, but of what did it boast during the war? Printed in red letters across its journals was, "Science is Power." If this is all it is, then the less we have of it the better. The pursuit of science is a wonderful experience, but we have degraded it by the use to which we have put it. At best it is not a way of life.

Can we not have, somewhere in our society, a center, or many centers, from which will emanate a culture that man will respect, an intelligent biological system of ethics? The more biological it is, the more intelligent, the more kindly it will be. I know of no institution that can house such a way of thinking other than the university, but it will have to be a new

university. Perhaps you will say, "Men will no more respect it than they now respect anything in heaven or on earth, for do not churchmen make the Deity partner to their chicanery and do not city politicians pray?" Just so do men of learning use their status in science and the university as proof of their superiority, a conceit that often leads to vicious acts. This is all true, and yet I say you are wrong. I have not taught students for 30 years without noting how quickly and well some of them judge their teachers, and how great is their respect for the scholar. This is, of course, not true of all, but the students who are capable of such judgment will set the standard for the rest. I have seen older men, those who once held power in a college where they had absolute and tyrannical control, become, literally overnight, quite decent men when they entered an institution of higher learning.

Here, we think, is a wise definition of the social institution, conceived at its best: it is a place where men of integrity may gather and implant attitudes which, gaining focus and clear identity, become a potent influence for good on other men. Thus the institution is not a "thing," but a function, and it is of no value unless the function proceeds as it is intended. Without the students and teachers who "set the standard," the university soon becomes a pretentious fraud, its ivied walls and hallowed traditions serving to hide the fact that it has become the enemy of education—a place where mediocrity flourishes and timidity is honored with security.

But the really interesting thing about Mr. Seifriz' article is the way it starts out. He reaches the idea of a new university only after showing the lifeless methods which have been encouraged in the name of science and scientific education, particularly in the universities of the United States. Seifriz is disgusted with the infallibilist mood of the editors of American scientific journals. They are not interested in how scientific discoveries are developed, but only with final conclusions, and this, Seifriz thinks, may be both dull and misleading. It is dull because it suppresses the human side of the scientific exploration of nature, and it may be misleading for the reason that the current "finality" in science may not last out the

year. Seifriz submitted a paper of his own on water of crystallization to a colleague, and was asked: "Why tell the students what Bragg thought 20 years ago, instead of telling them what we now know to be true?" Often, Seifriz points out, "what we now *know* to be true" is still undecided, and he quotes from a current authority on water of crystallization to show alternative views. He comments:

What these critics wholly miss is that the student, in hearing the historical background, is better prepared to accept new ideas, which are sometimes resurrected old ideas. If the student of 30 years ago had been told that light was once thought to be corpuscular but is now believed to consist of waves transmitted through the "ether"—that "imaginary substance postulated to convey a physicist's misconceptions from one place to another"—then that student is better prepared to accept, when he is 30 years older, the "new" corpuscular theory of light and with it discard the ether.

Apparently, human nature is such that, in becoming a scientist, one makes oneself either a collator and computer of data or a visionary dreamer in the false belief that the two characters are wholly incompatible.

The dullness of a colorless compilation of scientific conclusions—a mere handbook or manual of "facts"—is not the only objection to this sort of writing. It also conceals the intensely human character of the quest for knowledge. A student of physiology is quoted by Seifriz: "For me the most exciting papers are those which describe exactly what the individual scientist experienced from the beginning to the end of his experiments, the mistakes he made and how he learned through them what the answers were." It should not take much reflection to suggest that the elimination from scientific literature of the romance of discovery will eventually impart to "Science" an authoritarian facade. Unless students become thoroughly acquainted with the susceptibility of scientists, like other humans, to mistakes, they may never really learn what it means to *be* scientists, actual participants in the drama of discovery.

Seifriz finds in the *Annual Review of Physiology* a passage by Otto Loewi on this trend:

A scientific worker nowadays rarely finds it possible to publish papers which have a personal touch; [he is not permitted] to discuss the origin and development of his problem, to draw conclusions of hypothetical character . . . such revelations are not found in the ordinary papers which fill the scientific journals.

Loewi's interest in the color and humanity of science is regarded by Seifriz as, "in reality, a groping for something of basic moral value." This, we think, is exactly right. For if there is any one thing proved by the endless stores of data accumulated by many branches of modern science, it is that they do not help us to be more intelligent human beings. "Enlightenment," as Seifriz put it, "is more than knowledge," and what the modern world needs is enlightenment.

The point, here, is that enlightenment is not the result of an additive process. It is more like an *alchemical* process. A mere array of supposedly fixed conclusions in the name of scientific knowledge tends to suppress the qualitative character of real discovery. Seifriz is not contemptuous toward the "handbook" sort of scientific knowledge. It has its place, but it ought not to be confused with the sort of knowledge which can satisfy the human yearning for enlightenment:

I do not mind our medical schools and colleges of engineering being trade schools, for this is what they are intended to be. When a surgeon ties up my hernia or an engineer builds a bridge that I am to cross, I want no philosophy to enter the work. But have you ever noticed how beautiful a well-built bridge can be? Goethe knew this—which reminds me of an article recently rejected because Goethe was quoted. The author commended Goethe's concepts of the meaning of form. I wondered whether the critic condemned the article because of antebellum resentment, or because he could not comprehend Goethe—many persons cannot—or because he felt that philosophy had no place in science. Goethe, as a philosopher, was often wrong in fact but never in principle. His insight is well shown in the first part of the following sentence, and his good sense revealed

in the last phrase: "Your poetic sense should always accompany you, but never lead you." There arises in scientific work, says Loewi, "a feeling which can only be described as religious."

The sort of attitude which Seifriz condemns is very common in current scientific literature. We make bold to describe it as a species of sophomoric conceit, an arrogance of plebeian minds which enjoy the false status of doctoral degrees earned by a specified number of hours of burrowing—not flying—time. Again, it is a result of the additive theory of knowledge, producing a brash contempt for all the subtleties of learning and of life with which the philosopher is primarily concerned. On the other hand, it is the perception of paradox and subtlety which supports the ultimate value of democratic philosophy—the inviolable worth of the individual. If only "facts" are important, then individuals are easily reduced to statistics, and liquidations become of no greater importance than a thorough weeding of the garden.

What Seifriz is telling us is that modern scientific education—and higher education in general—has lost the temper of genuine cultivation. The idea that science and the quest for knowledge may be wholly absorbed by technology may not seem so terribly important on the surface, but Seifriz is able to explain his apprehensions from intimate personal experience:

Research technicians are often very able men, and their contributions are the technical foundation of science. . . . let me give full credit to the young and enthusiastic workers full of high-energy phosphate bonds. What I deplore is their attitude of mind. Science has become tough, and the students learn to accept it that way.

Recently three of my former students called upon me and recounted their experiences under new professors. One of these new intellectual guardians was a "swell guy, he called the dean a bag of peanuts." My heart sank as I realized what a failure I had been, for I could not remember ever having called our dean a bag of peanuts. Another boasted that his professor "swore like a trooper"; and the third told how his new chief was the first on his feet at every meeting to ask a question, no matter what the subject.

This might all seem trifling, but is it so very different from the type of hero worship prevalent among our high school students who, today, are a serious community problem? Are we, the teachers, not worshipping false gods and presenting false values to our students? Enthusiasm is high, but where are the broadmindedness, imagination, humility, and deep devotion for which Loewi pleads?

Our scientific congresses are a hodge-podge of trivia. The conversation is that of men on the defensive. An incident that made a deep impression on me recently was the sudden change in the voice of a fellow-scientist when I spoke to him. He was, as were most others at this large gathering, very busy speaking loudly and vigorously as if to maintain prestige through sheer force of voice. As I approached, he addressed me in the same manner, but when I asked a question in a subdued tone, his voice suddenly dropped to that of a normal man. The next 15 minutes was an intellectual treat, for he is a brilliant man. His previously forced and artificial manner was in keeping with the times. Science has become tough.

Loewi pleads for an education that will acquaint students with principles that transcend the boundaries of a special field. He expresses a hope that is impossible to fulfill in a modern university, where conformity dictates behavior and definitions define teaching. The average man is cautious and dull. Little things are important to him—definitions, correct pronunciation, the proper verb for *data*, the species of a genus written large when it should be small, or should it? His life is guided by them. "In science we define our terms!" All right, my good fellow, define *time*.

We should not end this long review without noting that the human enterprise of Science, with which Mr. Seifriz is able to find so much fault, is nevertheless the institution of our time which has given such critics their training and background. With all its defects, Science remains the most free cultural environment of all, within which such critical expressions can occur without reproach.