

## MEN IN TORMENT

RECENT events in the long debate about the hydrogen bomb, including the removal from the staff of the Atomic Energy Commission of J. Robert Oppenheimer, make one wonder about the quality of scientists—in particular the theoretical physicists—as men, and their role in modern society. Is it conceivable that the educated imagination so obviously necessary to an atomic physicist is somehow correlated with sensitive moral perception? Is there any relationship at all between ethical insight and intellectual subtlety? This question, we fear, can have no precise answer, since collecting "data" on a problem of this sort would involve many practical difficulties, such as deciding who or what is ethical and who or what is not.

Yet there can be no doubt about the fact that the more eminent physical scientists engaged in atomic research have with few exceptions revealed deep concern about the moral implications of their activities. Oppenheimer's scruples are well known—regarded, in some circles, as even "notorious." What the average citizen is less likely to have realized is that many other distinguished workers in atomic research have expressed similar feelings. *Time* for Nov. 8 reports that after President Truman on Jan. 31, 1950 announced his decision to go ahead with the H-bomb, twelve physicists signed a statement that said: "We believe that no nation has the right to use such a bomb, no matter how righteous its cause." *Time* also notes that Edward Teller, called "the father of the hydrogen bomb," had great difficulty in finding scientists to work with him after the President's decision to proceed with making the thermonuclear weapon.

In a recent editorial, the *Christian Century* (Oct. 20) speaks of the atomic scientists as suffering from "an inner torment," manifested in

various ways. The observations of the editorial writer are suggestive:

These scientists seem to us the most tragic figures in American life today. They may be the most tragic figures in the whole contemporary world, for their counterparts in communist countries give no indication of concern over the perplexities of relationship of the state or of moral responsibility which continually plague so many Americans engaged in atomic research.

We interrupt the quotation here to point out that no one in the West knew until after the war that Otto Hahn, the German scientist who discovered uranium fission (Lise Meitner, later active with American scientists in making the atom bomb, was his assistant at that time), refused to work for the Nazis. When, in 1945, Hahn was awarded the Nobel Science Prize for work in chemistry, a writer in the *New Statesman and Nation* disclosed the story of Hahn's passive resistance to Nazi pressure, learned from French scientists, and commented that "the Nobel Committee should confer its Peace Prize as well as its Science Prize on Otto Hahn." So, if a German physicist could defy the Nazis, it is at least conceivable that a Soviet physicist might refuse to work for the communists. Our argument, here, is that while there may be no necessary correlation between great intellectual ability and moral perception, the incidence of the two together is sufficiently frequent to be easily recognized. It may even be expected.

The *Christian Century* editorial continues:

The scientist is a modern figure. He had his precursors, but the scientist, as he is known and held in awe today, is a creature of the last hundred years. Our public has been taught to think of him as a mental colossus and a moral paragon—austere, dedicated and all but beyond vanities in his pursuit of truth. The scientist has so thought of himself. He has not hesitated to lecture the rest of us groundlings, including the theologians, on the moral

impressiveness of his single-minded devotion to truth. There have been occasions in recent decades when that anointed phrase, "scientific method," has seemed on the verge of acceptance as the substance of religion.

Now, to this prestige enjoyed by the scientist as a lonely individual, devoted, like the ancient alchemist, to the penetration of life's mysteries, has been added a sudden prosperity. The scientist has become a symbol of national security. He is lionized in society, given fabulous sums to pursue his researches, while the genteel poverty of scientists in the pre-war years has been replaced by salaries rivalling the incomes of industrial executives. "Today," notes the *Christian Century*, "young fellows walk straight from the commencement at which they have gained their Ph.D.'s in science to \$10,000 research posts in industry." Now comes the paradox:

Under such conditions one might expect the scientist to be the most secure man in our society. He holds almost ultimate power—the power of life or death. We others know it, and treat him with the deference such knowledge inculcates. Nevertheless, one need know only a few of these scientist-magicians, or read only a little in their literature, to discover that the most thoughtful among them are also the most unhappy. The thoughtful scientist is frequently the most insecure, the most morose of Americans. . . .

If he is the Hero of our society, he is a Promethean hero chained to the rock of his involvement in politics. No eagle from outer space but his own hands (which is to say, his partisanship) tear at his integrity while he despairs of moral judgment from the gods. To protect his sanity he disavows moral responsibility for the consequences of his work. But does he convince himself?

This is why the scientist seems to us a profoundly tragic figure. Does he represent another instance of the blind leading the blind? He would reject such an intimation with indignation. Nor is it true, for he is not wholly blind. He would be happier if he were. It is more nearly a case of the tormented leading the tormented. As a ravisher of nature's secrets, one may regard him with awe, but as a man in pursuit of happiness, one can only pity. For he is a man in an implacable trap in which his service of

national loyalties—a service what little moral light he has forbids him to reject—has caught him. Has the church no perception of his tragedy? Has religion no easement for his torment? If it has, he does not yet know it.

These are lines worthy to set the problem, even if they leave wholly unanswered questions. Of course, the *CC* writer might have named or spoken in general of the scientists—such as Hahn in Germany, Norbert Wiener in the United States, and doubtless others—who have refused to work on modern weapons. These are men whose "moral light" gives another direction. But for the majority, the issue is much as the *Christian Century* states it. However, as for hoping for guidance from the church, this seems something of an anachronism. There was a time, centuries ago, when the church enjoyed the power to put its moral judgments into effect. The record of its decisions during that period gives little indication that it ought to be listened to, today. No man or group, we think, has much right to counsel others concerning a moral decision, unless its own record is unblemished; and those who have had this sort of record have usually been extremely reticent about telling others what to do. It seems certain, also, that the champions of the "national interest" can have little to say of value to the scientists. They have already said all that they can, and the torment still exists. The fact seems to be that *no one* has the moral right to give direction to the atomic scientists—for there is no one (in terms of groups, or professions) who gives evidence of being able to meet this responsibility with better success.

The most that anyone can do for another who is confronted with fateful decision is to *help him to be free*. The scientists are having their hour as Olympians, and if they bear this ordeal in the posture of tormented men, this is more than others have done. When the church was running things, it brought into being the Holy Inquisition to enforce its moral decisions. When the statesmen and the generals dominated the scene, they created the national State and inaugurated the

epoch of armament races and total wars. When the radicals and revolutionists finally gained seats of power, they went further, designing the Totalitarian State, complete with secret police, concentration camps, and thought-control. Now it is the scientists who have a measure of power, and they, at least, are not proud and arrogant. For the first time in history, men with power are torn by moral indecision.

One communication recently addressed to scientists speaks fairly, we think, to their condition. It is by Albert Schweitzer, written in the form of a letter, and has appeared in the London *Daily Herald*, the *Saturday Review*, and in *Science* (Sept. 10). We quote it in full:

The problem of the effects of the H-bomb explosions is terribly disturbing, but I do not think that a conference of scientists is what is needed to deal with it. There are too many conferences in the world today and too many decisions taken by them.

What the world should do is listen to the warnings of individual scientists who understand this terrible problem. That is what would impress people and give them understanding and make them realize the danger in which we find ourselves.

Just look at the influence Einstein has, because of the anguish he shows in face of the atomic bomb.

It must be the scientists, who comprehend thoroughly all the issues and the dangers involved, who speak to the world, as many as possible of them, all telling humanity the truth in speeches and articles.

If they all raised their voices, each one feeling himself impelled to tell the terrible truth, they would be listened to, for then humanity would understand that the issues were grave.

If you and Alexander Hadlow [who has pleaded for a United Nations conference of scientists on the H-bomb] can manage to persuade them to put before mankind the thoughts by which they themselves are obsessed, then there will be some hope of stopping these horrible explosions and of bringing pressure to bear on the men who govern.

But the scientists must speak up. Only they have the authority to state that we can no longer take

on ourselves the responsibility for these experiments; only they can say it.

There you have my opinion. I give it to you with anguish in my heart, anguish which holds me from day to day.

With my best wishes and in the hope that those who must advise us will make themselves heard.

ALBERT SCHWEITZER

This, we think, proposes a fair and honest sharing of responsibility with the scientists. If we can help them to be free to speak their minds, larger duties than those of "national interest" may gradually become evident to all. Clear sight of what is at stake should lessen the torment, if not end it altogether.

## THE ARTS OF PEACE

FELLOWSHIP, the monthly magazine of the Fellowship of Reconciliation, has launched a campaign to urge the Government of the United States to send food to China's hungry millions. Many Americans are ignorant of the fact that last summer the high flood waters of the Yangtse and Huai Rivers inundated practically all of China's vital "rice bowl," destroying the food of scores of millions. It is *Fellowship's* proposal that some of the six billion dollars' worth of surplus food now lying idle in the storehouses and granaries of America be sent to these famine-stricken men, women, and children. Those who wish to support the campaign should write for a copy of the petition for which signatures are being collected, requesting the President to offer this food to China. (FOR, 21, Audubon Ave., New York 32, N.Y.)

Taking its text from the New Testament, "*If thine enemy hunger, feed him!*", the FOR is sponsoring this campaign as an act of human brotherhood, and not as a form of "political strategy." To indicate that a gift of food to China by the United States is really possible, an announcement of the campaign says:

Under Public Law 480, the President has the right to offer stocks of our surplus food to China. There are indications that he may be willing to do just that, if he has the assurance that millions of Americans will back him up. *Help give him that assurance!*

## REVIEW

### AN ISSUE OF "ANTIOCH REVIEW"

DURING the past few years we have found ourselves calling frequent attention to articles appearing in *Antioch Review*, and especially commending this magazine to MANAS readers—along with the *Progressive*, the *Reporter*, and the *American Scholar*. We mention these publications in particular because they seem to furnish good examples of a new freshness and vitality "among the intellectuals."

The fall issue of the *Antioch* quarterly begins with an article by Paul Willen, graduate of the Russian Institute at Columbia University—a collaborator in the preparation of the State Department's *Problems of Communism*, and a contributor to the *Reporter*. It is Mr. Willen's intent to prove the ridiculousness of hysterical concerns about past communist sympathies on the part of prominent men of letters and affairs. Prejudices based on a one-time "pro-Russia" record, he shows, evaporate when considered against the background of public opinion during the past fifteen years. For instance, in September of 1944, a nationwide poll showed that "almost one-third of the American people acknowledged between 1939 and 1944 they had come to hold a more favorable view of the Soviet system." Willen adds:

This is to say nothing of those whose picture of the USSR had altered in the same period but were unconscious of the change. Another poll, taken at the same time, asked—

"From what you have heard, do you think the kind of government Russia has is as good as she could have for her people at the present time, or do you think a different kind would do better for the Russians?"

Twenty-eight per cent thought a different type of government might be more beneficial. Twenty-six per cent did not know. But forty-six per cent thought that the type of government Russia then enjoyed was "as good as she could have for her people."

What has seemed alarmingly easy for some people to overlook is that most men of social

conscience have been inclined to view favorably *any* experimental efforts to bring social order into being, whether in Russia or anywhere else. That the Russian experiment failed of its aims, enslaving as much as it liberated, need not detract from the respect due those men who wished the venture well in its early stages, or who hoped for better things after the cessation of World War II. As Henry Steele Commager pointed out recently, the oversimplification of history and the adoption of myths which place the blame for world travail upon a few men's shoulders makes Americans menacingly provincial in outlook—extremely poor candidates for world administration. If we cannot even understand the Owen Lattimores of the U.S.A. and give them partial credit, at least, for sincerity of belief, there is obviously little chance that we can come anywhere near grasping the point of view of those abroad who have come under Communist influence.

Returning to Mr. Willen, and the poll disclosing that only seven per cent of the American people saw Russia as a threat in the immediate post-war period:

Recalling these facts in 1954, ten years later, may startle some Americans, especially those who have, to one degree or another, accepted the now-popular theory that the postwar expansion of Communism in Europe and Asia was largely the result of White House capitulation to Communist advisors. This theory, which portrays the American people as innocent victims of a vast international conspiracy, is one of the basic ingredients of the trend in American politics which we now label McCarthyism. Indeed, the basic justification for whatever suspension of civil liberties has occurred in the past five years is the assumption that China would not have fallen to the Communists had Hiss, Lattimore and Harry Dexter White been removed from the government many years ago.

McCarthy's accusation of "twenty years of treason" is the most crude and exaggerated expression of this viewpoint. More sophisticated observers, unwilling to accuse Roosevelt and Truman of outright and conscious betrayal, attribute the loss of China to the "softness" of the New Deal toward Communism as the result of which Hiss and Lattimore assumed positions of such great influence.

I cannot take up either the accuracy (in terms of fact) or the realism (in terms of world politics) of

these charges; rather I aim to *question their very pertinence*. If it be true, as the above-cited polls suggest, that the American people themselves were "soft" on Communism in the wartime period, the question of the undoubted gullibility of the White House politicians loses much of its weight and seriousness. But it is not my purpose here to apologize for the diplomacy of the Roosevelt administration; nor is it to deny the influence of Communist agents and spies in the American government; nor is it, incidentally, to embarrass politicians like McCarthy, who accepted Communist support in his 1946 campaign for the Senate, or McCarthyites like Walter Winchell who told millions in 1944 that the "fear of Russia" is a "bogey." (Both men have survived such embarrassing revelations.)

My purpose is to show that wartime pro-Soviet feeling was far more widespread, had much deeper roots, received encouragement from much more respectable quarters, than it is discreet to remember now in the year 1954. Once the American people realize that the "softness" allegedly responsible for the fall of China was not confined to the White House and not the result of a conspiracy, they may begin to look for the real and deep-rooted causes of the tragic absorption of China into the Communist Empire.

"Who Collaborated?" is the title of this article. It seems a well-documented piece of research.

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Another article in the same issue of Antioch Review will be of particular interest to those who took note, in 1950, of the ambitious Partisan Review discussion of "Religion and the Intellectuals." Now, under the heading "Aldous and Heaven Too," a lecturer at the University of California, Floyd Matson, examines transitions in the philosophy of Aldous Huxley as significantly symptomatic of progressive trends among the literate. Huxley, during the '20's an apologist for "the gospel of balanced excess," was once considered representative of that sort of intellectual fascism which held that the full gamut of the pleasures of life was only for those smart enough to get away with them. Later, according to Dr. Matson's analysis, Huxley felt a keen distaste for the life of sensual pleasure, and retreated into Vedantic mysticism. At this point, of course, Huxley parted company with popular opinion; he was no longer a "spokesman,"

but, as Dr. Matson shows, he still properly belongs in the vanguard of those intellectuals and aesthetes who show that they have worked their way through a whole range of philosophical difficulties:

The quest of the intellectuals for recovery of values, if all of this has any meaning, is no mere curiosity; and the case of Aldous Huxley is not eccentric to our time. The roots of the novelist's aversion to the World and the Flesh may have been in some degree unique and private; but the fruits are common to substantial numbers of our generation. Doubtless Huxley chose an exotic avenue of escape from freedom, one which seems to most of us obscurantist and irresponsible. But the "escape" itself is increasingly frequent and even fashionable in a time when something like the Brave New World (of two-way-television screens and an I.B.M. way of life) is all too plausible, and modern man seems obsolete. Possibly a new age, with a new set of gods, is struggling to be born. No one can predict with certainty what its outer form or inner faith might be; but on the basis of the recent record there would seem little cause to look forward to its nativity except in the terms of Yeats's Second Coming: "What rough beast, its hour come round at last, slouches towards Bethlehem to be born?"

If Huxley and his fellow converts, to put their crime at its blackest, have turned their backs on the future as well as on the present, can we be altogether certain that they are less our spokesmen than they were a score of years ago? To upbraid them for their cortical delinquency (or failure of nerve) is, in this view, about as meaningful as rebuking the mirror for what it reveals or blaming the symptom for the disease. "In the long run," as Huxley himself has somewhere pointed out, "we get exactly what we ask for."

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"Letter From Karachi" by Sidney Lens, author and director of the United Service and Employees Union, AFL, traces in detail the continuing effects of British rule in India. Partition did not work well, is not working well—and in the course of reading Lens' report one cannot help but sympathize with Nehru's predicament. For "the Moslem problem" after partition has been a much greater threat to the stability of India than it was before. Gandhi did not bequeath the uneasy dissents of religious division in

their most virulent form; these are largely the result of political maneuvering during the last days of British hegemony. Lens reviews the background of partition:

When the British came they naturally leaned on the oppressed Hindu majority against the Mogul rulers. In due course the Hindus became the most educated segment, and the wealthier. They owned large chunks of land, most of the new factories, and soon, when government jobs were allocated, beginning with the mid-'30's, most of those too. But again in due course the British, ever true to the Machiavellian principle of *divida et imperia*, reversed their field and supported Mr. Jinnah and his Muslim League against Mr. Gandhi and his mostly-Hindu Congress. There is little doubt that by this time the Muslims were secondary citizens. Part of it was due to the fact that religion had a different type of hold on them, and part due to rank discrimination. With the old Islamic traditions as the cement Jinnah applied the mortar of partition and established his peculiar almost-but-not-quite theocratic Moslem state.

Today the cement that held together an oppressed opposition group is becoming dry sand that is badly in need of political caulking. Possessing state power has had a disintegrating effect. The Muslim League—Jinnah's vehicle—still wins all the elections in the provinces by vast majorities but it is creaking at the seams, rent with dissension.

Peculiarly enough the state which was established because of Islam hasn't been able to formulate a constitution for five years. The rabid Musselman wants a theocratic state with laws based on the Koran. The Jamaat-i-Islami, mouthpiece of this sentiment, has been in trouble with the authorities because of its espousal of the riots in Lahore during March and April, 1953. But its Mullahs—religious leaders—have an enormous hold on the simple peasant and worker. Even on many of the cultured leaders. One of the top men in government has a large picture of a certain Mullah in his closet to which he prays once of the five times required for prayer each day. A state formed on a religious principle obviously must lean on the Moslem "clergy" to keep it together, particularly if it has done all too little to alleviate hunger.

Nothing except the sunshine looks rosy in Karachi five years after partition. The hold on East Pakistan is tenuous, secession talk is not serious but it exists and one day it may take hold. The way Muslim

Leaguers in Dacca brush it off when it is brought up indicates that it is considered more serious than is let on. The below-subsistence plight of the poor man seems destined to remain below subsistence for some time to come. Partition has given him "independence" but it is hard to see which of the four freedoms he has gained unless it be the fifth one, the freedom to die without fuss or fanfare.

Reginald Reynolds—recently a contributor to MANAS—by coincidence adds a footnote to Lens' remarks concerning India in a report on "Women in Africa." One cannot, to be sure, divorce questions of psychology from matters of politics, whatever the country or colonial policy. For what is politically expedient easily becomes socially evil, through psychic effect. Reynolds grants that the British in India were of two minds, torn between ethics and political expediency, but concludes that this "double-thinking," which intensified many of the problems of India, is now a number one *global* problem:

The history of modern India since independence (and even before) shows that popular leaders can and will attempt innovations, breaking with religious prejudice, which a foreign government cannot attempt and will even obstruct. The British in India, though individually recognizing untouchability as a social evil, never did anything to remove the evil which they deplored. They were powerless to do so and even hindered the effects of Gandhi in this direction because big social changes threaten political stability. Even more apposite is the story of Indian agitation against child marriage and the hostility of the British rulers to all demands for legislation against it. This is an inevitable concomitant of foreign rule and implies a criticism of a system rather than of its administrators, who are placed in an impossible position where reforms of this kind are concerned.

U.S. foreign policy-makers, please ponder!

Toward the close of the fall *Antioch Review* is a useful list, with comment, of twelve current volumes dealing with "McCarthyism" and problems of intellectual freedom. We suggest that MANAS readers who have not yet thoroughly perused this national quarterly invest seventy-five cents in the current copy.

## *COMMENTARY* **MOTIVES IN RELIEF**

IT is natural to speculate on the sort of reaction which may be generated by the Fellowship of Reconciliation's campaign to send America's surplus food to China to feed the victims of famine caused by the 1954 summer floods. (See page 2.) The facts are startling enough. An FOR news release reports that "in a similar but somewhat less destructive flood in 1931, 140,000 persons were drowned and 53 million people died in the resulting famine." Figures of this sort make one wonder how many were drowned last summer, but the destruction wrought by the overflow of the Yangtse seems beyond question. The rising waters covered an area estimated to be larger than Kansas, Nebraska and Iowa combined—source of a major share of China's food supply.

The important consideration, if the offer is to be accepted, is that it be without political strings. For a gift without strings could not easily be refused by the Chinese Government. It is rather suggested by the Fellowship of Reconciliation that distribution of the food be left to the Chinese Government, on the ground that "part of the world problem America faces is the suspicion on the part of Asians and others that we think we can do everything better than they."

There will, of course, be objections. It is even conceivable that some Americans would regard a refusal of the food by the Chinese should the offer be made as a kind of strategic "triumph" in the cold war. But a little reflection will show the careless brutality of this attitude. What would we "prove" by offering the food with provisos certain to be humiliating to the Chinese policy-makers? Only that our self-righteousness is as oblivious to human suffering as the projects of Communist propagandists.

Finally, is there anything that can be said about the Communists that would justify opposition to the proposal? There is only the

argument of total war policy—that the hungry children are tomorrow's Chinese soldiers, who had better be left to die; and that, from the viewpoint of psychological warfare, it would be desirable to make it appear that we tried to save them, but that stiff-necked communist policy prevented.

These, it seems to us, are the actual motives that will contend against the honest humanitarianism of this proposal. They are not pleasant to contemplate, but they ought to be recognized for what they are.



## CHILDREN ... and Ourselves

IF asked to phrase a pivotal doctrine for a philosophy of education, we should probably start out by saying that, above all else, the purpose of learning seems to be the acquirement of individuality.

While we are all familiar with the comparison between "indoctrination" and education—and with proper disparagement of the former—it is yet at times difficult to remember that conditioning and education have literally nothing to do with one another: "To draw out from" (*educare*) and to embed or "condition" are logical opposites. If this distinction be granted, it should also be seen that the goal of learning is originality—not conformity.

The acquirement of individuality, however, seems a very subtle matter, and we have only begun to establish the meaning of the phrase when we decide that the truly educated man must have developed the capacity to be original. For there are many personal idiosyncrasies which can pass for originality in a dim light. Egotism and a belligerent affirmation of independence in respect to all social obligations are in no sense "original," but rather as old as psychic immaturity. No man, it can be said, can be independent until he recognizes the nature and extent of his interdependence; that is, one must know the many ways in which he belongs to a social framework, a "total situation," before he can intelligently discover the ways in which he is "free." Ethical theorists like Kant—in recent times John Dewey furnishes a good example have correctly pointed out that whenever we act, we act in relation to a whole range of surrounding obligations and responsibilities, affecting others who belong to the same range. The need of this total situation is, theoretically, our own need. The ethical man, it is then maintained, is one who is increasingly aware that this "total situation" includes a good deal more than a circle of intimate acquaintances. The ethical man sees all the members of his community

as part of a continuum in which his actions will reverberate, and senses, also, that beyond the community lies a larger orbit called a nation, beyond that the whole of humanity—and if we wish to carry along far enough, even the lower orders of nature may be included when we consider the moral effects of what we think and do. So there are definitely—but not definite limits to our freedom, though this does not mean that there need be limits to individuality. It is in the *solving* of the ethical problem that each man is entitled to, and, indeed, must find, an original solution, and it is in the solving of the ethical problem that individuality defines itself.

These considerations, it seems to us, are reflections prerequisite to an evaluation of individuality, nor can they be dispensed with at any later stage of the inquiry. But the inquiry must go on, for men are not only bound to one another by the subtle links of interdependence—they are also bound by a common privilege to discover their own unique contributions to general ethical welfare. Here the thesis of Joseph Campbell's *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* comes to mind, for Campbell professed to discover, in the myths, allegories and legends of all ancient peoples, that the hero is universally recognized as one who ventures beyond the bounds of the commonly known into the unknown, who journeys to a new land of values, and finally brings back to those who live in comfortable habitude the news that both their habitude and their comfort are snares and delusions.

The scriptures and legends of ancient India provide a wealth of thought on this subject. Buddha, the "perfect" man, was both the most ethically concerned of his time and the one who uprooted conventional notions as maintained by the Brahmin priesthood. His message, among other things, was that each must go back and think as if he were the first man who ever thought, recognizing that the generalizations of religion meant little unless creatively reinterpreted by

every person for himself. Krishna, the teacher of the *Bhagavad-Gita*, similarly insisted that "the words of the Vedas" were not enough. Scripture has meaning, all right, but it does not declare itself until one has determined to take control of his own kingdom, decided how the deposit of traditional wisdom needs to be reinterpreted to fit the actual demands of his historical situation—which is never quite the same as any other historical situation.

We may be justified in thinking that when Jesus of Nazareth spoke of "the God within," he referred to the primary need for each individual to discover his own special light to focus upon the universal problems. All three of these men, it seems, were "individualists" in this sense; they were at odds with conventional values because they had decided that nothing merely conventional contained value enough; that which is merely taught and learned is unthought. So while we characteristically think of such great persons as "religious," we can all too easily forget that each of them originally aroused aspiration and inspiration precisely because he insisted on peering behind heavy religious curtains. All three were alike—remarkably so—in regard to the quality of their ethical concerns, but also alike in respect to a disinclination to declare those concerns in a way acceptable to most of their contemporaries.

Now, what sort of schooling is it that helps youths to become original, independent thinkers, capable of eventually generating inspirations of their own? Clearly, it must be a schooling which places the greatest value upon intellectual honesty, so that one never deludes himself into thinking that he "knows" something because someone else has discovered it. Whether religionists or scientists by way of emphasis, the representatives of an ideal university cannot promote the causes of originality and independence by merely dispensing information and doctrine. Thus it is only through continual conversation and discussion, as recommended by Joseph Wood

Krutch in his *Measure of Man*, and by Whitney Griswold of Yale in a recent Commencement Address, that the student begins actually to discover what *he* thinks, and why. It is not important that his first opinions and beliefs be the "right" ones, but it is necessary for him to recognize that he has these opinions and beliefs, and also owes an obligation to define them as clearly as possible. For only when one has learned to describe and define his present opinions clearly is he apt to be impressed by a logic which asserts that no opinion, as it stands, is without need of revision. Independence is finally reached, we suspect, only by those who can face the passing of former favorite conceptions without a quiver, and who, having nothing other to defend than the truth itself, become constitutionally incapable of small-mindedness.

## *FRONTIERS* A Time of Waiting

ONE not-so-obvious factor which contributes to the widespread threat of war, the prevalence of crime, and the increase of juvenile delinquency is the loss of the community spirit in the modern world. Grown-up people, both men and women, do not feel that they have anything important to do together. They do, of course, unite in minor special interests such as "hobbies," and they gather in auditoriums to concern themselves with common fears, but the sense of an overriding common purpose is entirely lacking from their lives.

Take for example the feelings that are associated under the general name of "Patriotism." One seldom meets a patriot who is not also a politician—that is, a man who trades on pretentious devotion to what he endeavors to persuade his countrymen is the national welfare. This does not mean that Americans do not love their country. They do; but it is a static, if deep, affection—a kind of passive attachment which is felt within and which finds expression only with a certain shyness—when provoked, that is, by some criticism of the nation which seems summarily unfair.

One reason for the quiescence of patriotism may be that there is very little which the average citizen can do for his country, these days. He can "do his duty as a citizen," of course, and interest himself in worthy national or local projects and reforms, but the notion that the virtue of America lies in what *it* can do for its people has bitten deep—America is great, we believe, because it is great *for us*. There is a basic contradiction between this idea and authentic patriotic emotion, which is not a matter of self-interest at all.

Setting aside the easy moralisms and slogans which usually take over discussions of patriotism, we find the most suggestive light on this question in Lyman Bryson's *The Next America*. It is Mr. Bryson's idea that economic problems are really a

dead issue in the United States—that the administrative and inventive capacities of Americans have long since reached a perfection which is quite capable of efficient organization of economic production and distribution, by means of what he terms the "collectivist" methods peculiar to modern technology. In other words, patriotic ardors are not really needed to solve political and economic problems. The reason why these issues seem so aggravating is that we are continually *worrying* them with an attention and energy which ought to have more important spheres of interest.

Back in the thirties, some acutely intelligent engineers and economists discovered the basic competence of technology to manage the economic side of our society, but having assembled their information and proofs, they made the mistake of promoting it in the form of a new cult—Technocracy. Cultism is typical of a people suffering from diminished aspiration. In fact, the profusion of cults in the United States is itself evidence of a wealth of undirected energies—typifying the hypochondria of a society which is comfortably fixed, but having nothing better to do, starts tinkering with itself.

Back in the early days of the country, there was plenty to engage the patriotic idealism of Americans. A happy opportunity to combine pioneering for all with goals of personal achievement created a natural link between patriotism and self-interest. For a hundred years or so, the combination worked, and worked so well that the vast majority of Americans have assumed that it should go on working forever. Now, however, the pioneering is done—the "new ground" is all broken—much of it, alas, is turning to dust; and the self-interest is no longer dignified by the strenuities of daring enterprise. Patriotism, in short, has lost its familiar role as friend and supporter of personal ambitions. Today a patriot has to be *really* a patriot, or his pretenses are likely to show. Here is another reason for the reticence of the average man in

respect to "love of country." He would prefer not to sound like the pretenders and demagogues.

One comment heard concerning the state of the nation is that the people have grown soft and slothful. This may be true, but it is also true that the times have conspired against the people. The challenges of the past have died away, and no new challenges—easily recognizable ones—have appeared to take their place. Of course, there are always challenges about for those who look for them, but the essence of modern "salesmanship" is the attempt to *remove* the challenges from life—to make all good things seem easy, or at least "purchasable." Hence, at the level of popular culture, the idea of seeking challenges has been discouraged and forgotten.

If, then, it is challenges we need, who can make up a challenge that the people will accept? Who, indeed, has both the egotism and the arrogance to attempt it? So the present, it seems to us, is a time of waiting, so far as the great changes that seem to be necessary are concerned. Americans may need community spirit, but more than anything they need a reason to *want* community spirit, and the reason ought to be a better one than those which grow out of fear and the symptoms of social disintegration. Bryson hopes that a new feeling for the arts may help to generate this spirit. We have no doubt that a renaissance in the arts would accompany such a cultural revival, and we agree that the time is past for challenges in economic enterprise, but one wonders if the arts, taken by themselves, hold sufficient inspiration for this mighty task. It seems more likely that anticipation of the discovery of a new continent of thought—thought concerning the inner side of things—the world of feelings and ideas, of selves and souls—will start things going.

Exploration of possibilities of this sort is bound to be extremely tentative, if only for the reason that it encompasses an area for which no historical parallels are easily found. There have been sacerdotal communities, of course, and theocratic societies, but these, from the Brahmin

culture of India to the "Hebrew" commonwealth of Massachusetts, founded by the Puritans, have been erected with the timbers and planks of Divine Revelation. Repetition of such "pasts" is absolutely inconceivable for the modern world, save on a miniature scale in isolated religious communities. It almost seems as though Julian Huxley's dream of some kind of "mutation" or accelerated evolution will have to be realized, before a *free* society of people engrossed by such inquiries can come into being.

We can hear the grunts of skepticism at such a proposal, yet consider how the worldly wise of, say, a thousand years ago would have greeted a "dream" of the political concepts and social organization of the now existing United States! Even in the eighteenth century, there were men of excellent repute who believed the program of the American colonists wholly impossible to carry out.

But, some will say, the revolutionary ideas of the eighteenth century related to *this* world—the world of sticks and stones and three meals a day. Perhaps, but is this entirely true? There is a sense in which the claims of the Founding Fathers concerning the rights of man are very much a matter of trained imagination. In a world everywhere marked by inequities, they declared for equality. In a world accustomed to trampling on individuals, they set out to secure freedom for all individuals, simply because they are human. To a medieval baron and his drudging serf, alike, this would have seemed a completely mythical hope—a widely improbable spree of social philosophy.

So let us not sell the future short by limiting it to our own notions of the reach of imaginative human creation. A great dream of reality came true in the United States. If we have turned it into something of a nightmare, enough of the substance of the original vision remains to support our further imaginings. Meanwhile, there is the darkening evidence of the present to urge us on. The extraordinary increase in juvenile crime—

reviewed last week in *Children . . . and Ourselves*—shows the grave weakness of a society which fails to afford a spur to undertakings beyond self-interest—the sort of spur men used to find in patriotism. In the *Autumn American Scholar*, Irving Ben Cooper, Chief Justice of the New York City Court of Special Sessions, writes on juvenile delinquency, noting that the character of the offenders is changing. While numerous writers have pointed out that the community is as guilty as the offenders, Judge Cooper brings striking confirmation of this view:

The immense spread in the range of criminal acts has increased tremendously the nature and number of cases appearing on the calendars of our criminal courts. These jurisdictions no longer deal with depraved and or degenerate individuals—that is, with persons congenitally or by habit unable or unwilling to conform to community minimums of behavior. A larger proportion of today's criminal cases concern defendants involved in strictly contemporary situations, the full outlines of which many of them do not understand and—even more important—situations so new and uncharted that the legislature and administrative bodies which pronounce the prohibited acts and establish regulations regarding them have not been in a position to think them through.

The courts, Judge Cooper points out, are ill-equipped to bear the load of these new responsibilities. Professional skills are needed "to distinguish the youthful offender with good moral potential, who can be safely returned to the community to line up with the orderly citizen, from the hair-trigger pervert or psychopathic first offender, who needs institutionalized care." Not only is professional help required, but also, the communities themselves must be willing to learn from court records "what kind of crimes are committed, the conditions that breed or facilitate certain crimes, and the community prophylaxis called for to prevent them by promoting the community's moral health and capacity to resist evil temptations." The health of the community, Judge Cooper remarks, "lies in the absence of

disease, rather than in its resources for isolating the sick and providing for their cure."

Help from the community itself should begin, Judge Cooper suggests, with a change in the public attitude toward crime. Today, nearly half the persons arrested for crimes against property are under twenty-one years of age. Yet, in respect to "crime"—

People deny it in themselves, turn away from anyone accused or suspected, are willfully ignorant of its varieties or treatments, and prefer to believe that it does not exist. To consider crime by youth as something foisted on an innocent community, rather than as an aspect of its own thought of itself and its own action, is to be naive beyond sanity.

Concerning the offenders themselves, the judge relates:

The great mass of offenders consists of persons who have not made very good use of their opportunities and who are prone to give vent to their feelings at slight provocation. They accept the easiest way out of trying situations. They have never really faced up to life as a challenge.

A common factor in most of these cases is that, set against the life situation, the criminal charge lacks major importance. Where there is so much deep-seated misery, one additional increment does not seem to matter too much. The life situation may inhere in the defendant's relations to his mother or father, to his family tradition, to his neighborhood associates, to the social situation of his school or shop or other place of employment, to the standards of the community as these are reflected in magazines, papers, movies, actions of important people, envy of others. Treatment involves dealing with these primary causes.

The need of these defendants for the help of society and the court is greater than that of the morally sensitive and the family-bolstered individuals. For these misguided defendants are in great peril—the peril of rejecting and being rejected by the community.

But *how* are these primary causes to be treated? What leads men and boys and girls to "reject the community"? It seems obvious that the community affords little to win the appreciation and devotion of such "defendants," and let us note

in passing that it is not only criminals and delinquents who reject the community. Serious-minded social philosophers—the anarchists, for example—make their rejection on grounds of principle, arguing, among other things, that a community which treats its wayward members as these young people are treated is a bad community which ought to be rejected. On the subject of people's attitudes toward crime, Judge Cooper says:

The community's attitude toward youthful offenders, like its treatment of youth generally, is a mixture of soft-heartedness, exasperation, wounded resignation and sadistic pleasure in punishment. Once a complaint is issued against the young offender, the good forces about him shrink and evil forces are alerted. Those he has injured are naturally outraged; the parents of susceptible children become fearful; the godly draw their garments about them; the evil-minded, anxious for social support, welcome a convert; and the police close in.

Much more, quite evidently, is needed than boys' clubs, judicially located in spots of social festering, and better "recreation facilities," to establish in the community the sort of moral health that can provide immunity to the infection of crime. In no critical situation on the social scene is the interdependence of human beings and their common welfare as plain as it is here. The mood of the entire populace is clearly at fault, so that the unhappy and the weak and impulsive turn to crime as by an irresistible attraction. We may say that they don't have to, but the point is that they *do*, and to react to Judge Cooper's analysis in the same way as the community he describes is to compound the offense.

The prescription of the judge is this:

A delinquent is usually very well aware that he has made a mess of at least one situation, and, he suspects, of others. The botched situation once was rosy with promise. But he cannot live in it any longer; he must move out into another compelling dream. A famous Scottish divine once preached a sermon entitled "The Expulsive Power of a New Affection." What the delinquent needs above all is that "new affection." No one, least of all a disappointed

delinquent, can desire forgiveness or crave "reinstatement" for more than a little while. What he wants is job status, a sweetheart, wife, children, a house and garden. These dreams, once lighted, have a steady incandescence.

Our own conclusion is that the delinquent cannot have his dream so long as the rest of us indulge a higher sort of delinquency—which is the failure to entertain high dreams of our own, and to strive after their realization. The lesson of the great social experiments of the twentieth century is that you can't just *give* a young man a job, a house, a garden, or even a sweetheart and children, to keep him out of trouble. You have to strive for something worth-while, yourself, so that as a by-product of that striving, conditions emerge which enable the young man to *earn* his job and house and garden more easily, and to acquire the dignity which will gain him a sweetheart or wife. Not just the "criminals" need "a new affection." It is needed by all.