

IMPARTIALITY IS THE ISSUE

A SUBSCRIBER has written to call into question the treatment in MANAS of two subjects: (1) Conditions in communist-dominated countries, and (2) the contribution of modern psychotherapy. His point is the same in both cases—MANAS writers or editors seem to offer uncritical admiration or approval of people whose fundamental opinions are in irreconcilable conflict with the philosophic values which MANAS has adopted.

Since this comment amounts to indictment of a very bad habit—the practice of a "double standard" in thinking and writing—we shall try to give it thorough examination. Even if we are able to show ourselves innocent of this weakness, there should still be value in considering the problem, which exists for all who attempt to look without partisanship and with good will at controversial issues.

Turning to specific questions, our subscriber writes:

For example, your articles on the East {in the Nov. 17 issue} suggest that there is genuine progress being made under communism and that it has answered genuine needs. Yet the correspondent from China pointed out the brutality and authoritarianism accompanying the particular kinds of emancipation, particularly for women. It is a MANAS policy to point out the various sides of a many-sided issue, but in this case you fail to elaborate on the negative as well as the positive. These immediate social gains are no doubt of value to Chinese women, but what of the long-run effect of the policies of the party in power? And would their concept of human nature be acceptable to the editors of MANAS?

To set the record straight at the outset, the report of the reforms instituted by the Chinese communists was quoted from an article which appeared in *Harper's* for November. Since this article was originally written as a letter to a friend by a Catholic priest who had been in the Far East for twenty-six years, and gave internal evidence that the author had not the slightest sympathy for communist

ideology, and since it seemed free of special pleading, either political or religious, we quoted from it. We did not slight the ruthlessness of the communist regime, and even proposed that the reforms attained were in spite of the theoretical materialism of the Marxists.

There is much talk, today, of the need for recognizing the possibility of "peaceful coexistence" with communist societies. This seems to us too superficial a version of the hope for peace—the tolerance of one "system" for another. Much more important, we think, is the necessity of realizing that behind the ideological facades of the differing social systems of the present are millions of human beings who, sooner or later, must learn to live in harmony on the same planet. While it would be folly to ignore the nature and implications of the systems, it would be a still greater folly to identify all those people with the abstract theories of the ideology under which they live. There is need, therefore, to look behind the system, from time to time. The *Harper's* article, we think, gave one such opportunity.

Further, there is a secondary need to understand why so many people either willingly adopt or eventually submit to systems of government or theories of human nature for which we feel only aversion. There can be no doubt about the fact that the internationalism of the radical movement has been a thrilling inspiration to countless people all over the world. The ideas of equality and human solidarity are powerful levers of human behavior, and the crimes committed in their name ought not to make us insensible to their importance. Today, we look back on the French Revolution with its hideous Reign of Terror with mixed emotions. We speak of the great gains that were accomplished for the French people by this revolt, and we explain the crimes of the extremists by saying that they were part of a vast and uncontrollable emotional reaction to centuries of oppression. So long as human beings are so constituted to react as the people of France

and the people of China to great wrongs—by doing some good, by committing terrible new wrongs—the rest of us, who, at the same time, are not caught in the throes of revolutionary upheaval, have an extraordinary obligation to *try to understand* what is happening.

The admission that humanitarian ideals powered the Chinese Revolution ought not to depress us. We shall have genuine cause for depression only when men can no longer be aroused to action by humanitarian ideals. If we are so foolish as to deny or ignore the humanitarian aspect of present-day revolutions, we shall be in the position of insisting that all those countries where revolution is going on are populated by evil maniacs. Impartial reporting of the happenings in countries wracked by the storms of revolution, when it can be found, is thus of incalculable value. If we lose sight of the fact that the people of those countries are very much like ourselves, although suffering a terrible ordeal, we shall endanger our own sanity.

Now, as to the perversion of the revolutionary ideals—this results, we think, from several causes. To some extent, those who fear communism without attempting to understand its historical origins contribute to the perversion, since they whip up crusading emotions against all communist or socialist experiments, causing the rulers of communist countries to feel that they must maintain a constant readiness to fight the West. It may be true, as some ideologists maintain, that the Marxists believe that in order for a socialist society to survive, the entire world must either be conquered or converted. Our point is that angry threats from non-communist countries seem to make this doctrine indisputable. The more there is of fear, the more a war of absolute extermination seems to be the only solution, for both "sides."

In the same issue, we printed a Letter from Moscow by a Scottish visitor there. The letter painted a rosy picture of life in Russia. Doubtless too rosy. And except for some remarks to the effect that the Russians seem to think that life in democratic countries where free enterprise prevails is universally like the life of the poor in a novel by

Dickens, the writer of this letter had little to say of the communist ideological bias.

Here, again, our purpose was to show the *humanity* of the Russians. The fact is that *no* people is entirely consistent with its official and proclaimed ideology. Human beings are contradictory in a thousand different ways. The common people are seldom ideologists. Further, it would be a miracle if nobody in Russia revealed any trace of the original social idealism of the revolution which has rocked the world. It is a great pity that many Americans seem to think that any notice of the fact that people are moved to goodness and devotion to the welfare of others by these ideals, despite the gross defects and incredible cruelties of their government, is some sort of breaking of the democratic faith. Actually, the responsiveness of human beings to such ideals is the hope of everyone in the world, no matter where he lives.

Let us now go on record with respect to dialectical materialism and the means chosen by the communist leaders to attain their ends. The communist movement, first of all, is a movement which, although sponsoring traditional humanistic ideals, has embraced a theory of progress which elevates political power above all other considerations. The quality of human beings is ultimately defined in terms of whether or not those human beings contribute to the communist drive for power. There is, in short, no conception of individual morality in communism—is, indeed, no conception of the individual. This point of view has become plainly apparent during the course of the past twenty years. Individuals are nothing if they get in the way of the progress of the Party or the State. There are books—a few—written without animus which show the historical consequences of these ideological doctrines. Tchernavin's *I Speak for the Silent* is one, Louis Fischer's *Men and Events* is another. Then, for the portrait of massive tragedy and impersonal brutality under communism, there is *The Dark Side of the Moon*, a study of what happened to a million or so Poles, including Polish socialists, at the hands of the Soviets after Poland was invaded by Russia in World War II. This book was written by the victims who escaped.

The dilemma of all serious men, at a historical juncture like the present, is in refusing, on the one hand, to become sentimental about a revolution, simply because it is a revolution, and refusing, on the other hand, to become alienated from two or three or five or six hundred million people because they are in the grip of a revolution which once had impressive ideals and now has bad principles. One easy escape is to make out a clear case *for* the revolutionary ideals, while ignoring their perversions. Another easy way is to point to the horrors, the excesses, of the revolution, the continuing tyranny, and to deny that anything worth noticing has happened concurrently with the revolution.

To choose either of these evasions of difficult thinking is to decide that there is no real need of understanding the revolution and its consequences; and this, in turn, means either that we can live out our lives untouched by what has happened in Russia and China, or that we shall be forced to punish all those people in a victorious war. Meanwhile, to *think* is to risk extreme unpopularity and emotional criticism. The fact is, however, that we must penetrate to the meaning of the revolutions of the twentieth century. It is a part of the destiny of present and future generations that they cannot afford to regard so many million people as beyond the pale of understanding.

One thing more: The freedom of thought which does not exist in communist countries may be missed by only a tiny fraction of the population. We have no doubt that many Russians feel the heavy hand of their autocratic administrators and wish things were otherwise; but actual dissent from the political dogmas of communism is probably important only to a small minority. The rest, quite likely, are able to participate in those phases of life which have been bettered by the revolution with enthusiasm and a degree of pleasure. It is only the creative tip of free discussion and free dissent that has disappeared. The Scottish visitor to Moscow was able to see a number of happy people who are not particularly interested in dissent and social thought outside the assumptions of Marxist doctrine. (Perhaps we should say, here, that before we can be cheered by the fact that cultural workers are especially honored

in Russia today, we shall have to read a blow-by-blow refutation of Max Eastman's *Artists in Uniform* and be able to accept it as authentic argument—for artists are as important as social thinkers in a really free society.) It is certainly no defense of Marxism or Communist practice to admit that within the rigidities of political dogma, material changes for the better have taken place, to recognize that ancient wrongs have been wiped out, and that the *lumpenproletariat* has grown less *lumpen* under the economic emancipations wrought by the Bolsheviks.

The role of intelligent citizens of the world is to try to find out what is really happening to people, what they are really doing, thinking, feeling, and why, regardless of the "sides" of modern ideological controversy and propaganda. Anything else can only perpetuate the animosities that divide the world into rival armed and anxiously arming camps.

We turn, now, to the question of the psychotherapists. In MANAS for Nov. 17, our Review article ended with the rhetorical proposal that a government headed by men like Brock Chisholm, Carl and William Menninger, and Erich Fromm might improve the prospects of world peace. In his comment on this and other references to modern psychotherapy, our correspondent speaks of

psychologists who use words and ideas which sound as if they believed in certain individual dignities which are above and beyond the mechanistic and social, yet are committed to a science whose principles deny the very existence of these, or at least considers them of secondary importance. I mean these same people who talk in glowing terms of the human soul, yet would apply their freedom formula only to those who accept their way of thinking or are reflections of their personal and psychological selves, . . .

It seems that MANAS is taking certain statements by these professionals at face value, and not considering to any great extent the kind of thinking, the principles, to which these same people are committed. It is true that some people rise above the limited principles of their particular "specialty" and see human nature in a broader context. But psychoanalysis and sociology are bound to some principles which do more than merely "contrast" with those of MANAS: they flatly contradict. Much of the thinking done in current social science is done in

terms of mechanistic psychological concepts. Furthermore, the vast majority of people in this field are not interested in principle as much as in social pragmatism. It is very easy for these people to make correct statements or even idealistic statements. Yet in their daily professional contacts, they withdraw their idealism in favor of a rigid formalism which applies to the "other" in society, or to those not trained in their particular specialty or committed to their conception of human nature. This I have discovered from graduate work under leading psychologists and specialists at a "famous" university.

...

Disregarding a few enlightened individuals in the field of the social sciences, it seems that the majority of the workers in this field have an extremely "distasteful" concept of human nature, which reflects their failing as developed human beings and attests to their professional competence alone. . . . In our desire to construct a "safe society," are we not training an army of technically competent "idiots" whose human nature will be controlled precisely because it has been reduced to a controllable phenomenon? Are not the very people which the particular article in MANAS proposed as candidates for philosopher-kings committed to this type of thinking to a dangerous extent?

To this last question, the answer is no. At any rate, we are certain of this answer in respect to the Menningers and Erich Fromm, and Brock Chisholm was included for another reason—for his militant opposition to the effects on human attitudes and behavior of the dogmas of orthodox Western religion.

It is certainly true that Erich Fromm and the Menningers were mentioned because of their notable freedom from fixed notions or assumptions concerning the nature of man. As recently as the issue of Sept. 15, MANAS quoted in Review Karl Menninger's declaration of humility in respect to "the hypothetical nature of many of the assumptions upon which my [his] early faith depended," and a deepening appreciation of the complex character of the human being—which remains wholly obscure to the over-simplifying claims of the Mechanists—is evident in the pages of the *Bulletin* of the Menninger Clinic. We do not mean to suggest that the Menningers and their colleagues share one or several of the views of man espoused in MANAS, but that

there is in the work of these men both devotion and open-mindedness. We think it fair to say that the Menningers are men consecrated to the welfare of their fellows, and that there would be small chance of ensconcing a tyranny in inviting them to seats of power. We like, also, William Menninger's attitude toward the role of the psychiatrist in war and peace. He once remarked that since, in war, the psychiatrist must attempt to "adjust" normal men to an abnormal situation, and in peacetime to adjust men made abnormal by war to supposed post-war "normality," a point is finally reached where actual normality becomes smothered in confusion. This sort of honest confession of bewilderment is not obtained from typical politicians and we think it probable that the nation might profit from having so candid a ruler.

In behalf of Erich Fromm, attention is invited to his books such as *Psychoanalysis and Religion* and *The Forgotten Language*. We fail to find in them expressions that could in any way be equated with conventional psychological Mechanism. On the contrary, Fromm is a psychotherapist whose references to the soul receive an enlarging meaning from his first principles. His books give ample evidence of this.

Our correspondent may argue that men like Fromm and the Menningers and Chisholm are not the typical psychologists at whom his criticisms were directed. Precisely. They are men who are opening up new vistas in the study of the *psyche*. That is why we single them out for recognition.

REVIEW

NOTES ON THE NEWS

WE read with some interest, a couple of weeks ago, a report in the British *Peace News* for Nov. 12 (air mail American edition) on a German youth rally in Cologne, in which young Germans of draft age expressed their unwillingness to put on uniforms in the new German army which Theodor Blank has the responsibility of building for the Bonn government. The young men told officials on Blank's staff that they had been "re-educated" against war. When a military representative argued that the communists would see in objection to military service a sign of weakness in the West, someone shouted from the floor, "That is how Goebbels spoke!"

Oh well, skeptics are likely to say, that was in *Peace News*. But the skeptics will probably be as surprised as we were to find a longer and much more detailed account of the same Cologne meeting in *U.S. News World Report* for Nov. 26, pointing more emphatically to the same conclusion. The report is factual, with the following editorial paragraphs for introduction:

The next German army isn't going to spring into being overnight—not if it is left to young Germans to volunteer.

Defense speakers, looking for recruits, are finding more conscientious objectors than anything else. Hardly anyone signs up.

Allied drive to "demilitarize" Germans after World War II turns out to have been a real success.

Not only youth liable to military service oppose the plan for a German army of twelve divisions. A printers' union in Dusseldorf recently counselled its members to refuse to print draft notices. "Nowhere in Europe," a Frankfort newspaper observed, "is the feeling against military service as strong as it is in Germany."

Blank's officials, *U.S. News* reports, came to the Cologne rally to explain the plan for the army, but found the young men "most interested in learning how to qualify as conscientious objectors." According to *Peace News*, they were told by Hans Guhr, of Blank's office, that "Only those ready to be

shot rather than kill are entitled to exemption and they will have to serve in other ways," but this warning apparently had little effect on the war resistance of young Germans. Typical reactions to the proposed draft are quoted by *U.S. News*:

"We do not want to be forced to shoot our brothers of Eastern Germany."

"Only the bankrupt militarists are rushing for army jobs."

"How can I be asked to fight for home and family? Most of my family was killed in the last war. My home was destroyed by bombing."

"Germany without an army has resisted Communism much better than France and Italy, which have armies. Rearmament has never prevented war. It produces war."

One young man pointed to the example of Chancellor Konrad Adenauer, "who has said he is proud never to have done military service." Another asked if the careful plans for rearmament included the preparation of lists of war criminals for "the next Nuremberg trials."

This generation is different from past generations of German youth. Words like "fatherland" and "patriotism" and "nation" are not used by the Germans who grew up during the occupation. These young men were glad that EDC fell through, and are now even more unwilling to go into the army.

While it is generally assumed that Germany will have some sort of army, the project is not as simple to carry out as the Allied defense planners have assumed, who, as *U.S. News* says, "are accustomed to thinking of Germans as being among the best soldiers in the world."

There can be little doubt about the fact that attitudes toward war and the new weapons of war are changing, the world over. Early last month Prime Minister Winston Churchill spoke ominously in the House of Commons concerning the long-term effects of nuclear explosions. The radioactivity thus released might, he warned, produce a cumulative effect. He spoke of the possibility of serious effects upon the earth's atmosphere for as long as 5,000 years. Hanson Baldwin, *New York Times* military

expert, discussing the British Prime Minister's address, remarked that this was the first public notice of a "mystery" and quite possibly a "growing danger" of the atomic age. He explains (*Times*, Nov. 8):

That mystery is whether or not there is a cut-off, or danger point beyond which it would be unwise to go in conducting nuclear tests. Will the abnormal amount of radioactivity released in each explosion have a very slow but cumulative effect upon the earth's atmosphere and/or upon its vegetable and animal life, and hence upon human life?

The first answers to these questions were negative, and they are still negative, but now with some doubts and qualifications and uncertainties. . . . As nuclear tests go on, will the earth's atmosphere become contaminated, as Sir Winston seemed to imply? Will animals and humans, occasionally subjected to small but more than normal amounts of radioactivity, absorb, breathe, or eat these particles to such an extent that development, growth, or life itself might be affected?

There is no sure answer now. . . .

Not dissimilar thoughts seem to occupy members of the House of Commons. In a debate on the British Civil Defence Bill a month ago, Emrys Hughes, MP, declared:

A previous Home Secretary has described this Measure as a Bill to deal with an earthquake. If these are to be the conditions, ought we not to face realities and tell the people that the defence of this country in the event of an atomic bomb attack is largely an illusion, and that it is better for this country to remain neutral? (*Peace News*, Nov. 5.)

This debate, incidentally, was marked by a notable lack of attendance by the members of the House, who apparently felt that any argument about civil defense against atomic attack was unreal and futile. R.H.S. Crossman, a member from Coventry, was emphatic in his ridicule of the measure:

Here is a Government which delivers fifty million people to certain destruction by a certain strategy [the Montgomery-Gruenther doctrine of massive retaliation] and then comes along and says, "Here is a little Bill for protecting you, but it is secondary to our offensive power. . . ."

We are 50 million people on someone else's aircraft carrier; 50 million civilians on an aircraft

carrier which is immobilised and stationary off the coast of Europe. The protection of those 50 million civilians cannot be done by flying V-bombs to Moscow; it can only be done by revolutionising our national life.

Emrys Hughes said further:

It is said that a war would be in defence of this country against Communism, but I believe that the bad features of Communism would be infinitely better than total obliteration. We are not opposed to the real defence of the civilian population. But we have arrived at a situation where because of our strategy over the past five years we have spent 5,000 million pounds on so-called defence and now our experts say that we have little defence against the H-bomb.

Another MP, Cyril Bence, said:

Hydrogen bomb warfare involves not only our destruction, it involves impregnating many generations to come with the most cruel and vile deformities. It may mean untold misery for centuries and perhaps longer.

It is the duty of statesmen, whether in this country or in other countries, to pocket their pride and to do everything in their power to make this sort of thing unnecessary. . . . Let us be honest with ourselves, and let the statesmen in other countries be honest with their peoples. If we start throwing these things about the world, there is no defence of the present population and there is no prevention of the evils which may be brought upon generations to come.

Dr. H. B. W. Morgan, MP, medical advisor to the Trade Union Congress and a specialist on industrial diseases, gave this testimony before the House of Commons during the debate on Civil Defense:

We know very little, even in highly scientific circles, about atomic energy and its relation to physics and chemistry, and indeed, to all the sciences. Unless we are going to keep atomic relationships and science, whether they are chemical or physical, under control, then our present civilization is doomed.

Exposure to some of these rays changes the character of human beings, even though it is occasional and is under control. But under detailed and careful supervision, care has to be taken. Atomic warfare is going to change the whole of our lives, and yet we sit and talk as though ordinary human life is not going to be entirely different.

Minor changes take place when atomised chemicals are applied experimentally to certain individuals. The results which come from them are sometimes entirely different from those which we expect under present scientific methods.

Some of us have observed men—I have not seen any for years, I must say—treated for certain cancerous diseases by these atomic rays. The changes are marvellous, but I have never yet seen one case where there was continued improvement for a lasting period. There was always a certain stage when the reaction became so severe that changes could not be calculated, and the patient was an entirely different person from the one who received the treatment first.

This change between the life we knew in the past as compared with the future may be such that even scientists have to admit that they know very little about the things on which they are supposed to be experts. This atomic warfare and the changes in ordinary life which it will bring are going to be the terror of the future. . . .

The London press ignored the address of Dr. Morgan.

Opinions of this sort in the United States are also carefully suppressed, except when those who voice them have unusual eminence. Dr. Vannevar Bush, for one, recently declared himself in *I. F. Stone's Weekly* as being one of those who tried to persuade the U.S. Government to postpone its first H-bomb test.

I still think [he writes] that we made a grave error in conducting that test at that time, and not attempting to make that type of simple agreement [to make no more tests] with Russia. I think history will show that was a turning point when we entered into the grim world that we are entering now, that those who pushed that thing through to a conclusion without making that attempt have a great deal to answer for.

Dr. Einstein is another who is unafraid to speak out. Invited by the *Reporter* to comment on its series of articles on the present-day situation of the research scientist, the famous physicist responded briefly by saying: "If I would be a young man again and had to decide how to make my living, I would not try to become a scientist or a scholar or teacher. I would rather choose to be a plumber or a peddler in the

hope to find that modest degree of independence still available under present circumstances."

Last September, in New York, at a meeting of the American Psychological Association, Prof. G. M. Gilbert, who teaches psychology at Michigan State College, told of an interview he had with Hermann Goering:

I asked Hermann Goering, the Fuhrer's right-hand man himself, whether it wasn't true that he had unleashed World War Two in utter disregard of the desires of the people. To this he smirked: "Why of course, the common people never want war, neither in Germany, nor in Russia, nor in the U.S., nor anywhere else. That is understood.

"But the common people have nothing to say about it—it is the leaders who decide the policy, and when they decide on war it is a simple matter to drag the people along. All you have to do is tell them that they are being attacked. Then throw any outspoken pacifists into jail for threatening the national security. You can drum up the war spirit in no time. It's as easy as that."

The only comment we can think of to make, here, is that it might be a good idea to keep convicted war criminals alive—in a safe place, of course—and allow them to tell the truth with impunity. Since they know how wars are arranged, they would make the best possible critics of the peace-loving victor nations.

COMMENTARY **THE FEAR OF INQUIRY**

SOME fifteen years ago, Anne Morrow Lindbergh destroyed her literary reputation by publishing a small book called *The Wave of the Future*. The critics and commentators descended *en masse* upon this essay, which was an attempt to understand the meaning for history of the Nazi revolution, tearing it to shreds, and with it the literary future of Mrs. Lindbergh.

As we recall, what Mrs. Lindbergh was trying to say was that underneath all the ugliness and psychopathic froth of the German revolt against decency and humanity was an element of authentic revolution—an attempt, however misguided, to change the world for the better. Mrs. Lindbergh has doubtless been obliged to admit, or repeat, *ad nauseam*, that the effort became a diabolical madness, its prayer a wicked whisper. Yet, years later, when Hannah Arendt, a brilliant analyst of the Nazi mentality, spoke of the deep disgust it revealed for middle-class money-grubbing and the pettiness of bourgeois existence, she touched the same chord of understanding that Mrs. Lindbergh had sounded, years before.

During the past eight or nine years, another monstrous revulsion, in some respects like the Nazi revolution, in other respects quite different, has forced itself upon the attention of the democratic world. As a result, any attempt to penetrate to the meaning of the communist movement now meets with the same suspicion and loathing as greeted Mrs. Lindbergh's book. We are as determined as ever to preserve a kind of sacred darkness—a region of unrelieved evil to which we are free to exile as beyond the possibility of human explanation the attitudes and acts we fear and disapprove.

Apparently, we imagine that by maintaining this limbo for "unspeakable" political theories and, therefore, by easy transition, unspeakable nations and races, we prove our virtue to ourselves, our critics, and to the world. The truth, however, is

that, by each refusal to try to understand, we prove our own susceptibility to the same urgent demands for "liquidation" and the "purging" of evil from the world that we loudly condemn in others.

What is so frightening about serious inquiry into the nature of these periodic revolutions? Is not the "West" itself weary and sick of its besetting ills, even though the "East" be sicker and more barbarously affected? Or can we suppose that these abortive convulsions come upon us without cause or meaning—from the unprovoked and uncontained wickedness of man?

CHILDREN ... and Ourselves

A MANAS subscriber has mailed us a bulletin issued by "The Committee on Autonomous Groups." The members of this committee, in a spirit similar to that which motivates Arthur H. Morgan's *Community Service News*, have devoted themselves to the difficult but rewarding task of serving the interests and needs of non-institutional adult education. Composed of educators, sociologists and psychologists, as well as other professionals and laymen, this association has already accomplished something almost unprecedented—it has begun the dissemination of useful information without first securing a substantial fund and impressive staff of salaried workers.

The 22-page periodical, *Autonomous Groups Bulletin*, from which we quote, is mimeographed, but this is not, as is so often the case, an indication of careless writing or inconsequential material. Letting the sponsors speak for themselves, we extract from a basic statement of purposes:

The Committee on Autonomous Groups is an informal association of laymen, social scientists, and community educators. It is interested in groups in which the relationships between the individual members are based primarily on spontaneous mutual attractions, in which aims and interests are congenial and determined by the group itself. Believing that the growing evidence of social disintegration requires critical examination of the role of such groups in modern society, the Committee endeavors to: accumulate records of educational, recreational, health, and social planning activities of such groups; analyze the processes natural to them; study developments in social psychology, anthropology, disseminate its findings; co-ordinate the interests and efforts of lay and professional students of group processes; serve as a clearing center for information in this field. The Committee has no income other than subscriptions and voluntary gifts.

Maria Rogers, an editor of the *Bulletin*, explains the approach which she and her associates have adopted:

The working hypothesis of the project is that if the autonomous friendship groups and families of a

community can be stimulated, primarily by mass media, to discuss public affairs on the local and national level, then the community will take action to solve its own problems. The approach to community development is wholly indirect. There is no attempt in the broadcasts or newspaper articles to state problems as such, nor to suggest solutions for them, but only to provide families and groups of friends with a continuous flow of information about American history, culture history, and local conditions to use as a starting-point for *intimate* discussions. The assumption is that through widespread participation in this program community feeling will develop and that, the tradition of voluntary community action being strong in this country, community action, if and when needed, will naturally follow. What *organizational* form community action will take is still to be discovered and it is not assumed that either families or friendship groups will necessarily take action as units. The creative social forces that will presumably be generated by this program of adult education will be free to find their own form of organizational expression, to formulate their own objectives and goals.

This type of indirect promotion of community development is the polar opposite of that conventionally approved by professional community organizers, whose first step is to plan a program of community betterment and, second, to set up an organization to carry out the program. As a third step, they endeavor to draw more and more community residents into activities that have been planned for their good. This method has, it must be admitted, developed various refinements whereby participants are afforded some sense of making decisions for themselves, but the broad objectives and purposes being determined before the program is initiated, their actual freedom to make decisions is narrowly restricted. It is not surprising that the mortality among such projects is high.

We have already noted the kinship between this effort and Arthur Morgan's work to revitalize the "autonomous" community spirit. It might also be pointed out that Gandhi's educational programs for India had similar inspiration—in all these instances, the keynote is clearly that of decentralized responsibility. Those who are familiar with the writings of David Riesman—and more and more are, these days, what with *Time's* feature story on Riesman's thesis—will note that wherever the word

"autonomy" is used, today, it is apt to carry genuine vitality. For, as many thoughtful students of our time have concluded, the blessings of advanced technology easily become vitiated by an accompanying lassitude of spirit, a decline in initiative.

Those who eat and dress identically, who drive nearly identical cars, and are alike in other daily habits, will obviously tend to think alike. And with the departure of individuality, the wellsprings of community enthusiasm and innovation dry up at the source. Yet, on the other hand, as if to prove that human beings are not entirely the creatures of their environment, we note a wholesome and considerable enthusiasm for every declaration that autonomy must be recaptured. Everyone has a television set and radio, but not everyone believes that life is complete when he sits down for a passive evening in front of the screen. The educational program sponsored by Station KPFA (Richmond-Berkeley) stimulated immediate community support, including voluntary financial aid and a sharing of the work of canvassing for new subscribers for the station. The KPFA programs, moreover, include many serious discussions, often critical of popular political and social prejudices. The Ford Foundation has helped Station KPFA substantially, but the real success of the program stems from the few who undertook the project on their own, without any guarantees that subsidies would be forthcoming.

The Ford Foundation also played a part in furthering one of the communication projects featured in *Autonomous Groups Bulletin*. This particular effort has now come to involve the whole of San Bernardino County, Calif. Newspapers, libraries, and radio stations have all cooperated in making available to an interested public material suitable for discussion of small groups. A program already extremely popular is the radio series, "The Jeffersonian Heritage." Reporting on the communication projects of the Groups, Eugene I. Johnson tells how the idea has really caught on in the environs of San Bernardino:

A telephone survey was made once during each series to determine the approximate size of the listening audience. In each case the radio audience

was estimated at upwards of ten thousand people. Seven television channels are received in the area from Los Angeles. As might be expected, the great majority of the people were found not to be listening to radio but to be watching TV. However, in both surveys the people listening to the radio program beamed by the CEP constituted almost a majority of all people listening to radio at all and over ten per cent of the combined radio and TV sets turned on. Interestingly, the survey made during the second series showed an *increase* in the percentage of people listening to the discussion program as contrasted to all radio programs, but a total drop in terms of all persons listening to any radio at all. A possible implication of this is that radio still has a bright future in the programming for *groups* rather than for the hypothetical average American.

A further discovery from the telephone survey made during the second radio series ("The Jeffersonian Heritage") was the extent to which discussion was in process among family groups. Almost half of the persons listening to the program reported that they had also read the newspaper article and had discussed the program with family members following the broadcast. . . .

This program represents a new approach to the problem of maintaining the importance of the individual in the functioning of a democratic society. Basically, the program is attempting to bring people together in groups that are significant both in the functional life of the community and personally significant to their members. These groups are small, each containing from ten to twenty adults, and they meet weekly to talk over basic ideas and problems of mutual interest. Cooperating newspapers and radio stations form a service team designed to stimulate participation in the discussion groups and to provide them with a common experience as the basis for their discussion.

On April 1, 1954, the program had been under way for approximately one year. By that date, one hundred home discussion groups, to use round numbers, had participated in one or more of three series of programs offered by the mass media service team. These groups contained over a thousand men and women, and twenty times that number listened to the radio program and read the accompanying newspaper articles.

FRONTIERS More on Asceticism

CORRESPONDENCE from India relating to our review of G. S. Ghurye's book, *Indian Sadhus* (MANAS, Aug. 18), and our reply, appear in this Department, since it seems likely that readers will be more interested in the general philosophical issues involved than in further citations from Ghurye's volume. There is a measure of appreciation for austerity in every man, so that practices of self-denial, to which some philosophers turn by natural inclination, and many religionists by moral commandment, can certainly be regarded as influential of all cultures to some degree.

Indian Sadhus is principally an effort to illuminate the history of the monastic life as practiced in India throughout recorded history, by arguing a definite evolution in the direction of greater social awareness. We are in no position to quarrel with this evaluation, but in our review we said that the Indian ascetics of the past, while apparently displaying a better psychic balance than their Western counterparts, had nevertheless been more concerned with private salvation than with social improvement.

Most of our comments on Dr. Ghurye's work were complimentary, the only exception being a mild demurrer concerning one conclusion. We wrote, for example:

Dr. Ghurye, as a sociologist, makes an effort to show that asceticism has a considerable social significance and has played a part in the evolution in Indian culture generally. Here we feel the author to be on his least defensible ground, for in none of the ascetic practices discussed in detail do we find any appeal for revolutionary social change.

This small paragraph elicited a long communication from a Bombay reader, and while we feel that the writer has misunderstood our comment—which was inadequately put—his letter is itself interesting demonstration that ascetic practices are still a subject of general concern in

India. Small wonder that students of Indian history should be extraordinarily sensitive to anything which sounds like the amused indifference or scorn which emanates from so many English and American writers! In any case, B. N. Tripathi, the present correspondent, writes as follows:

Having gone through your comment on Dr. Ghurye's *Indian Sadhus*, I, as one who had studied the book beforehand, felt that you had either ignored a large part of the book or had inadvertently done injustice to the book and its author.

For something to have played a significant role in the development of culture it need not necessarily have been or be a revolutionary idea or practice. For one thing, the partition between evolutionary and revolutionary aspects of culture or of things in general is after all thin. Each subsequent stage in the process of development may take on an evolutionary aspect on the background of the previous stage. But say a fifth or sixth or tenth stage in the process viewed on the background of the first stage without taking note of the intervening stages will certainly appear as a revolutionary aspect. Thus Indian asceticism which started with the ideal and idea of renouncing dealings with mundane affairs, as shown by Dr. Ghurye very clearly in his book, is to-day concerned with rendering all kinds of social service to distressed and erring Indians and even non-Indians. This is revolutionary, but when the intermediate stages of development so lucidly stated by Dr. Ghurye are considered, this latest development appears only as an evolutionary stage.

At least sixty percent of the Indian culture, if not more, must be declared to be what is formed by Indian Philosophy and Religion. As Dr. Ghurye's "History of Asceticism Coming of Age" distinctly makes clear, most of the philosophy and a very large part of the Religion were developed and their classics produced by Indian ascetics. This contribution of Indian asceticism to Indian culture should by itself convince any one that Indian asceticism has played a significant role in the development of Indian culture.

But if more proof is needed, and here is Dr. Ghurye's unique contribution to historical evaluation, it is borne in on one's realization that the family law of the large part of India was fixed and given, as Dr. Ghurye has shown, by Vijnaneshvar, an ascetic who belonged to the highest order of asceticism called Paramahams and lived in the twelfth century A.D.

To add to this there is the thrilling story of various monastic orders sacrificing their lives or giving their time and energy in the cause of preservation of Indian culture against the Islamic onslaught.

Throughout known history most monastic centres, as described in detail by Dr. Ghurye in *Indian Sadhas*, have conducted schools and colleges for Sanskrit learning. For ages they have fed on occasions poor people and distributed indigenous medicine free. And now a number of them launch on more active social service. Does this not entitle asceticism and monasticism to claim for itself a significant role in the development of Indian culture?

And finally, Sir, I put it to you your own appraisal of Indian monasticism as superior to Christian monasticism should mean that it has played a significant role in Indian culture. For one thing undoubtedly is very clear, whether you or any westerner likes it or not, Indian monasticism is an integral part of Indian culture.

The comments in our review of Aug. 18 were in part determined, of course, by familiar value associations in respect to certain words. For instance, "evolution" signifies to us development in a recognizably improved direction. There is no doubt that Indian asceticism has *affected* Indian culture to a remarkable degree most westerners, we think, over-emphasize this point rather than the reverse. But so far as we could see from reading Ghurye's book, the nature of that effect has been in the direction of static, rather than changing, patterns of social life.

A distinction can and should be drawn between failure to appreciate the psychological significance of any ascetic ideal and evaluation of the provincial forms its historical expressions have often taken. The truths declared by the *sadhus*, let us say, have contributed to India's greatness, but their untruths, if such there be, have contributed to India's weakness. We do not, therefore, champion the ascetics, though we are impressed by some of the things they have had to say.

It is simply that we feel this to be another instance wherein a necessary ingredient of psychic evolution has been converted into an extremity.

And the converting agency, as usual, has been a form of institutionalization. Self-discipline, regulation of vagrant desires, is a part of learning and prerequisite to striving. There are also times for austerity, and there is a constant value in the *capacity* for self-denial, if a man is ever to rise above the level of past habit. The saying attributed to Jesus of Nazareth, "the kingdom of heaven must be taken by violence," speaks to this point, we think, and the Holy Warfare of *The Bhagavad-Gita* is similarly concerned. But neither Krishna nor Jesus taught that the *only* way to practice the spiritual disciplines is by retiring to monastic life. And Buddha, like Jesus, moved far afield from this egotism of the "saint." So may we not agree that, while the usual practices of asceticism may lead to "spiritual improvement," or clearer philosophic vision through the disciplines of renunciation and formal meditation, similar ends may be attained by other means, or at least in conjunction with a different life? We have no quarrel, then, with those ascetics who have been willing to grant that each man's distinctive path may lead him to truth, but differ with those others who believe that only the monastics can have matters straight. Here is one good reason for preferring Eastern monasticism to the Western variety—a tolerant ascetic may or may not be a wise man, but an intolerant ascetic is fully as foolish as any other prejudiced person, perhaps more, since his folly is augmented by self-righteousness. Monastic ascetics obviously run a serious risk of becoming provincial and a trifle superior in their attitudes toward the workaday world. How could we imagine else, when all history informs us that whenever men build a set of social practices at variance with the ways of the average, they are tempted by the illusion of superiority? Some succumb—they are the "average" of their own small society—and some do not. And no physical self-denials or flagellations will root out this particular "devil," since the harder one works at being holy, the easier it is to feel that the many millions who strive less eagerly, or not at all, belong to a

spiritually inferior breed. Because these are the ways of most men, even when they essay to become ascetics, the monastics tend towards isolationism. Gandhi was once criticized for mixing "yoga" with political crusading, and it might be surprising to Westerners to discover how many *sadhus* consider Gandhi a little on the mistaken side because of his involvement in matters of the moment.

Our correspondent indicates, correctly, we think, that "evolutionary" and "revolutionary" ought to be interchangeable terms, according to historical circumstance. But the matter of an "appeal" for revolutionary change involves an activist attitude. Our original comment, that Ghurye seems "on his least defensible ground" in maintaining that asceticism has "a considerable social significance and has played a part in the evolution of Indian culture generally," would have been clearer if we had said, "*conscious* part," which is what we meant. There is certainly no doubt that any considerable body of men, holding to definite and distinctive norms of living, will affect the attitudes of the larger society in which they exist. And as attitudes are modified, so, also, will be behavior, although to a lesser extent, in this case, if the larger society is not challenged constructively by the smaller.

The social evolution most worthy of respect, in our opinion, is that which brings deepening conviction of human brotherhood. If ascetic practices can help us here, we need more of them, but to the extent that formal monasticism implies essential differences between the anointed and unanointed, we regard them with distaste.