VOLUME V, NO. 31
JULY 30, 1952

REHEARSAL FOR RAGNAROK

AS the grisly conflict in Korea continues, with hope of peace taking on more and more the aspect of a medieval peasant's blindly emotional prayer for a miracle, one is struck by the passive acceptance of this war by the American people. War itself is bad enough, but fatalistic tolerance of a war which most people find difficulty in understanding at all seems far worse. A war with ends that are clear is at least understandable. It has concrete objectives for its reference-points. Such a war may not, it is true, take the people fighting the war to those objectives, but they at least *think* it will, so that the war has elements of rationality.

The present fighting in Korea, however, has just enough superficial resemblances (one hopes they are superficial) to the ritualistic frontier actions described by George Orwell in *Nineteen-Eighty-four* to start a great wave of impersonal anxieties. The personal anxieties about Korea are familiar enough. Everyone knows fathers, mothers, sweethearts with boys in Korea. Everyone knows that the casualty rate in this war is almost the highest of any war in the history of the United States. The personal anxieties have to do with the lottery of death, disappearance, and disablement. But a man, as a social human being, can put up with personal anxieties, even personal bereavement, if he is able to believe that some meaning is fulfilled by his loss. It is the impersonal anxieties which constitute the deepest threat to human society, for they take away a man's sense of meaning in the sacrifices brought by war.

The border military actions between the great, rival Powers of *Nineteen-Eighty-four* are really a morbid sort of psychological "toning up" process tacitly adopted by the rulers of these States in order to maintain the "right" tension of fear and submissiveness in the people. Such fighting is like a narcotic doled out to an addict to keep him from falling apart. It has become the normal ration of war. Too much war would destroy everybody, and too little would relax the tendons of a social order built upon expectation of war, and lead, therefore, to chaos. Without any war at all, the people would discover the great void in their inner life, and would no longer obey the bureaucracy which obtains *its* life from the people's fear of *total* war.

We are willing to concede that the resemblances are superficial, for the States of *Nineteen-Eighty-four* are ruled by calculating Machiavellians, and whatever the present day rulers, they are not Machiavellians, and their calculations seem consistently inept.

Further, we have no particular interest in theories of the cause of modern war which try to fix responsibility upon a special caste of demons in human form. A far better explanation of the way wars originate was well put, we think, by Norman Angell in *Peace and the Plain Man* (Harper, 1935):

> Governments become prisoners of their own propaganda. They produce a certain type of mind or flow of emotions for the purposes of war. But that flow cannot be turned off like a tap when the war is over, as we shall see. The peace comes, and then governments are compelled to make a peace they don't want to make, because the state of mind produced during the war clamours for that kind of peace. And then that kind of peace makes more war. Or governments and rulers and leaders become prisoners of their own Frankenstein monsters in another sense: they end by believing their own propaganda.

This is one setting of the problem. It helps us very little, however, for governments, today, establish their own public opinion with considerable success. Nor are we here endeavoring to inventory available plans and

programs for stopping war *now*. Such plans and programs are in print, from the writings of Tolstoy to the essays of Jessie Wallace Hughan and Evan Thomas, and we cannot hope to improve upon them. The issue we should like to consider is the tired acceptance of war by the great mass of the population. Everybody hates war, but nearly everybody thinks that war is inevitable. Consequently, pacifist proposals fall on deaf ears. Pacifist ideas are simply unbelievable for most people.

Given the present state of public opinion, then, there are only two practical roads to peace. One is simply to wait until war becomes so hideously destructive that it wipes out all the material values for which men suppose they fight. We should then start all over again, after Ragnarok, living desolately among the wreckage of the institutions which supported war, but with no assurance that military power would not again become the great objective of the first tightly-organized group or tribe.

The other alternative is world conquest by a single power or group of powers, resulting in a single world State—a solution envisaged by Bertrand Russell. Regarded in the abstract, this objective seems not entirely unreasonable, but its reasonableness exists only for peoples who can imagine themselves as doing the conquering of the rest of the world. Such a conquest would produce as much moral devastation, among both victors and defeated, as the physical devastation pictured in the first alternative.

We conclude, then, that these alternatives are intolerable. But what can we do to avoid them?

Workers for peace have tried many methods of arousing the populace to the horror of war. These methods seldom work, and they work least of all when the horrors are merely physical disasters of atrocities, destruction, disease, and slaughter. Such horrors have to do with what men do to other men. They have no real educational value for the reason that they always leave the psychological loophole which permits men to suppose that they and their loved ones will somehow avoid these horrors. The most effective education for peace that we know of is the education which leads a man to consider *what he may do to himself* while he and his country are fighting a war. *There is no escape from this.*

Very few books and articles have dealt with war in these terms. The idea is of course a theme in the works of men like Thoreau, Ruskin, Tolstoy, and Gandhi, but the great mass of popular writing on war ignores this question almost entirely. And the only way in which the common people will finally make their governments renounce war is, it seems to us, by first discovering for themselves what they do to themselves in going to war.

The psychiatrists, probably, will in time make important contributions to this subject. One book addressing itself to the question in national terms is Caroline Playne's *Neuroses of the Nations*, issued by Seltzer in 1925. Another line of attack on the ideology of war appears in the literature of the radical movement. Perhaps the most searching analysis of the causes of war is found in sources of this sort, but its effect on the people at large is almost nil because of the way in which a single class is blamed for the war—the wealthy, property-owning "capitalist class." It was only during World War II that a few radical thinkers began to abandon this oversimplification of the Marxist analysis and to make some new discoveries. The work of these writers was published almost exclusively in journals of dissent, and their thinking is usually expressed in the vocabulary of the revolutionary tradition. For this reason, among others, such writing is still practically unknown to all but small minorities and handfuls of intellectuals. Yet we venture to say that a great evolution in humanitarian study of war has been accomplished by these few unknowns—and that later generations will some day unearth their work and publish it with unbounded admiration as representing the first pioneering attempts to understand the war psychology and to

give new-found tools of peace-making to the world.

We have in mind persons like Dwight Macdonald, whose wartime essays have been quoted in these pages, and another writer, Simone Weil, whom Macdonald often published in his magazine, *Politics.* Miss Weil, who died in London in 1943 at the age of thirty-four, was, we have no hesitation in saying, a moral genius. Her death came partly because she insisted upon eating no more than the ration allowed the French people at that time. The purity of her thinking and writing is clearly the consequence of the intensity of her brief life, which was entirely—both intellectually and practically—devoted to others. (Alfred Kazin's article under "Books" in the *New Yorker* for July 5 is an understanding appreciation of Simone Weil, to which may be added, for those who can obtain *Politics* for February, 1945, an editorial note on her life [p. 55].) Miss Weil's most profound contribution, perhaps, is her *Iliad, the Poem of Force,* which finds philosophical depths in the Homeric epic which few would have believed possible. Then, in articles which appeared in French periodicals during the thirties, she brought the light of her brilliant and compassionate mind to bear on modern war. The result will probably be a shock to readers for whom revolutionary thinking is an alien and fearsome thing. Yet the truth of her analysis seems both impersonal and unmistakable. She writes as an internationalist, to whom the expression, "national interest," is a phrase with only historical significance. The following is taken from a *Politics* reprint of an article first published in Paris in 1933 by Boris Souvarine:

> *Ultimately, modern war appears as a struggle led by all the State apparatuses and their general staffs against all men old enough to bear arms.* But while the machine used in production takes from the worker only his labor power and while employers have no other weapon of constraint than dismissal—a weapon that is somewhat blunted by the existence of the possibility for the worker to choose among different employers—each soldier is forced to sacrifice his very life to the needs of the total military machine. He is forced to do so under the threat of execution without the benefit of a trial, which the State power holds over his head. In view of this, it makes little difference whether the war is offensive or defensive, imperialist or nationalist. Every State is obliged to employ this method since the enemy also employs it.
>
> *The great error of nearly all studies of war, an-error into which all socialists have fallen, has been to consider war as an episode in foreign politics, when it is especially an act of interior politics, and the most atrocious act of all.*
>
> We are not concerned with sentimental considerations or with a superstitious respect for human life. We are concerned here with a very simple fact, that massacre is the most radical form of oppression and the soldiers do not merely expose themselves to death but are sent to death. And since every apparatus of oppression, once constituted, remains such until it is shattered, every war that places the weight of a military apparatus over the masses, forced to serve in its maneuvers, must be considered a factor of reaction, even though it may be led and directed by revolutionists. As for the exterior effect of such a war, that is determined by political relationships established in the interior. *Arms wielded by the apparatus of the sovereign State cannot bring liberty to anybody.*

Simone Weil wrote this when she was twenty-four years old. Not only the power and assurance of her discussion are impressive, but the factual basis as well, for she proceeds, in this article, to document her general proposition by citations from the histories of the French and Russian revolutions.

One thing more. While Miss Weil writes out of an intensive background of revolutionary analysis of Western society, we should never forget that, for almost a century, men and women of altruistic tendencies have been drawn into the radical movement as apparently the only practical way of overcoming the sufferings of the great masses of mankind. The thoughtful man who neglects to familiarize himself with the thinking of the radical tradition—and this is not a difficult task—will probably *never* really understand the

major social phenomena of the present epoch. Surely, it is the sincerity of the radical movement of the past, as a minority protest against man's inhumanity to man, and the seriousness of its undertakings, which nurtured such clear perceptions as the following:

> Our visions of security, now that scientific man has nature under lock and key, are disappearing in the destruction which war-making man is bringing on himself. If the danger is great, it is no doubt partly because of the power of the weapons technology has put into our hands. But weapons do not go off by themselves, and it is unfair to blame on inert matter a situation for which we ourselves bear full responsibility. The most disastrous wars have something in common which, though it may comfort some observers, is their real danger: *they have no definable aims*. Throughout history, the most desperate wars have been those which were fought for nothing. This paradox, when we come to understand it better, may prove to be one of the keys to history. It is certainly the key to our own period.
>
> When a conflict has a well-defined aim, each side can calculate the cost and decide whether it is too high; generally, a compromise is more profitable to either than a victory. But if a conflict has no objective, we have nothing to measure, or weigh, or compare; compromise is inconceivable; we can only judge a battle's importance by its sacrifices, and as these sacrifices perpetually ask for new ones, wars would never stop if human forces did not have their limits. This paradox is so violent that it escapes analysis. (From an article which first appeared in Paris in 1937, reprinted in *Politics* for March, 1946.)

This, in a social sense, is what we do to ourselves when we participate in wars we do not understand. As time passes, the social neurosis must inevitably become personal, creating in individual terms the psychological and moral disasters which, thus far, we are able to recognize only when they are called to our attention by modern psychiatry. This, quite literally, is the murder of souls, the strangulation of the love of men for one another, and the replacement of normal emotions with the searing frenzy of suspicion and hate. And if we do this to ourselves, *what,* in reality, are we fighting for? This is the question that men must face, must answer honestly, before there can be an end to war.

Letter from
CENTRAL EUROPE

VIENNA.—Seven years after the war, and several years after assistance by ERP, Austria is confronted with an economic crisis. Explanation is not difficult. This small country is still occupied by its "liberators"—Americans, British, French, and Russians—and Austria's economic life is still cut into four slices. Vienna is much too large a capital for our little state, since it grew as the center of a large Empire. Raw materials are scarce in Austria and Austrian industries have little hope of competing with neighbouring countries—particularly Germany. Capital is leaving the country (through illegal channels mostly) in consequence of the fact that the Russians and Western Allies cannot or will not agree about a peace treaty with Austria.

Is it true, however, as some politicians (not only Austrians) have emphasized during recent weeks, that the Austrian population has been living "above its standard" and that the approaching crisis might be arrested by a return to a simple living?

Such an investigation ought to begin with the necessities of daily life. On the average, every person in the United States of America buys three to five pairs of shoes yearly. Europeans, on the average, buy one to two pair. The Austrian satisfied himself last year with 0.7 pair. A total of 700,000 pairs of shoes has been produced in Austria since 1945. Of these, 15% were exported, the rest bought by the domestic population. As practically all the shoes acquired by Austrians before World War II were either destroyed, confiscated, stolen, or out of fashion, only one tenth of the population is today in possession of a pair of shoes.

Deluxe hotels depend upon foreigners for 95% of their business; only a small percentage of Austrians are able to take such holidays. Official Italian statistics compiled for all European countries show that the national incomes of Austria and Greece are the smallest of all. Actually, the money spent by the Austrian for the 0.7 pair of shoes forms an important part of his income. What little money he has goes for the urgent needs of existence.

What has happened, then, to the enormous sums taken from the taxpayer, and the money which flooded in from overseas to build up the Austrian economy?

To answer this question, one should keep in mind the geographical conditions of Austria. Not only are expenses for building roads much higher in these Alpine regions, but new maintenance costs arise practically every year, when parts of the highways are washed away by snow, rain or storms, when avalanches destroy sections of the railway system and its tunnels, auxiliary plants and structures. These needs, combined with expenditures for the rebuilding of stations, public and private edifices, factories, and schools which were destroyed in the war, swallow up large amounts of money.

Apart from the swelling of bureaucracy and the deplorable fact—not typical of Austria only—that more and more civil "servants" cannot do their work without driving official cars, there have been big investments in hydro-electric power-stations, dams, and other mammoth projects. As most of these establishments will benefit only coming generations, it is no wonder that this generation passes from one economic trouble to another.

While good political leadership cannot concentrate on the immediate present and forget about the future, too much "foresight" does not seem to work either. Accordingly, the new Austrian Minister of Finance has stated that he now regards it as his task to bring assistance to those trades which produce articles for daily consumption.

CENTRAL EUROPEAN CORRESPONDENT

REVIEW
TREASURES IN BUREAUS

MOST of the books ordinarily received for critical discussion evoke, at the outset, a melancholy sigh from the prospective reviewer—especially if they are *big* books—and then, after they have been looked at, there is usually occasion for a deeper and somewhat more melancholy sigh, implying that the book turned out to be just what was expected. The MANAS policy, conceived in part to reduce this melancholy routine to a minimum, is to review only those books concerning which at least something worth while may be said, either for or against. And even among these, the experiencing of quandary, of looking for an "angle," is not infrequent.

When, then, a book arrives that literally drives you to the typewriter to tell about it, this Department would like to hang out a flag, if we had a flag, or a place to hang it. It is probably no coincidence that some of the books which produce this reaction are by naturalists. We are thinking of Henry Beston's *Outermost House*, Ross Parmenter's *Plant in My Window*, and France's *Germs of Mind in Plants.* We might add Donald Culross Peattie's *Flowering Earth*, even though it has never been noticed in these pages. We now have another book to add to the list—*A Sand County Almanac*, by Aldo Leopold, issued by the Oxford University Press in 1949: There may be better books on nature, but we have never encountered them.

Mr. Leopold was both amateur and professional in his devotion to nature. One delightful thing about his writing, however, is that you will never suspect his professional status from the text. Instead, you get the impression that here is a man who has grown to a love and a knowledge of the natural world without benefit of academic training, and when you finally discover that he rose to high posts in the United States Forest Service; that he practically "founded" the profession of wildlife management and taught this subject in a university; and that, believe it or not, for about four years he conducted wildlife surveys for the Sporting Arms and Ammunition Institute;—when you discover all these things you can only conclude happily that there are treasures hidden in government bureaus and that an academic background doesn't necessarily do a nature-lover any harm.

Mr. Leopold is a serene man, but never a man whose peace of mind depends upon his obliviousness to the evil and stupidity that are in the world. He is, one may say, equal to them. He reports horrifying facts—facts, for example, about the perversion of even highly respected "conservation" programs to the artificial trophy-seeking of the modern hunter—without emotional disgust. He writes of these things as a doctor might describe the symptoms of a malignant disease. Instead of getting excited, he does what he can to help.

Technically, the book has three parts, but actually it has two. The first part is reverie, the enjoyment in mind and heart of a man who lived all his life in tune with the wild and the natural in the world around us. The second part is evaluation. The author, we may note, lived a life rich in service to his fellows, and rich in satisfactions to himself. He was born in 1887 and died in 1948, appropriately enough, while fighting a grass fire on a neighbor's farm in Wisconsin.

In all, the most impressive thing about *A Sand County Almanac* is the way in which the writer shows, without effort or self-consciousness, that he has learned his values from Nature. His prose has the quiet beauty of a pleasant hillside at dusk. See how he regards being marooned by high Wisconsin waters, unable to go "to the office" of a Monday morning:

> There are degrees and kinds of solitude. An island in a lake has one kind; but lakes have boats, and there is always the chance that one might land to pay you a visit. A peak in a cloud has another kind; but most peaks have trails, and trails have tourists. I know of no solitude so secure as one guarded by a

> spring flood; nor do the geese, who have more kinds and degrees of aloneness than I have.
>
> So we sit on our hill beside a newblown pasque, and watch the geese go by. I see our road dipping gently into the waters and I conclude (with inner glee but exterior detachment) that the question of traffic, in or out, is for this day at least, debatable only among carp.

The "almanac" part of the book is a month-by-month chronicling of what may be found in forest, field and stream in the country surrounding a poor Wisconsin farm which is doomed to economic failure, but fertile for the discoveries of a nature-lover. There is humor, beauty, and sheer wonder in these lines:

> Like other great landowners, I have tenants. They are negligent about rents, but very punctilious about tenures. Indeed at every daybreak from April to July they proclaim their boundaries to each other, and so acknowledge, at least by inference, their fiefdom to me. . . .
>
> We sally forth, the dog and I, at random. . . . Once in a while we turn up a coon or mink, returning late from the night's foray. Sometimes we rout a heron from his unfinished fishing, or surprise a mother wood duck with her convoy of ducklings, headed full-steam for the shelter of the pickerel-weeds. Sometimes we see deer sauntering back to the thickets, replete with alfalfa blooms, veronica and wild lettuce. More often we see only the interweaving darkened lines that lazy hoofs have traced on the silken fabric of the dew.
>
> I can feel the sun now. The bird-chorus has run out of breath. The far clank of cowbells bespeaks a herd ambling to pasture. A tractor roars warning that my neighbor is astir. The world has shrunk to those mean dimensions known to county clerks. We turn toward home, and breakfast.

No need to wonder how these sentences grew so free and clear—the analogy is plain enough: they grew like the living things the author loved, for here is the distillation of a natural life. One learns from Mr. Leopold what it is to be a true sportsman, fisherman, hunter. There is no enmity to life in his fishing and hunting, only the sparkle of a spirit at home in the woods:

> Between each hanging garden and the creekside is a moss-paved deer trail, handy for the hunter to follow, and for the flushed grouse to cross—in a split second. The question is whether the bird and the gun agree on how a second should be split. If they do not, the next deer that passes finds a pair of empty shells to sniff at, but no feathers.

The hunting described, incidentally, reminds one of that done by the Indian, which included a sort of reverence for the natural economy.

Quite evidently, "life in the raw," for Mr. Leopold, was not found in the wilds, but in the haunts of human beings. There is a balance, a sense of measure, in the world of nature which speaks with far greater validity than the panaceas of economists, the programs of reformers. Where, for example, is the system-builder who has grasped this profundity:

> I have read many definitions of what is a conservationist, and written not a few myself, but I suspect that the best one is written not with a pen, but with an axe. It is a matter of what a man thinks about while chopping, or while deciding what to chop. A conservationist is one who is humbly aware that with each stroke he is writing his signature on the face of the land. Signatures of course differ, whether written with axe or pen, and this is as it should be.

From daily watching of wild life, he gained a great tolerance of the "bad things" in nature. The dead and decaying, the pest-ridden and insect-devoured trees are viands for other inhabitants of the forest. The grouse live on oak galls, the chickadees on the "treasury of eggs, larva, and cocoons" in the author's sickly woodlot. "All squirrels depend, for permanent dens, on a delicately balanced equilibrium between a rotting cavity and the scar tissue with which the tree attempts to close the wound. The squirrels referee the contest by gnawing out the scar tissue when it begins unduly to shrink the amplitude of their front door."

Man's attempts to help nature along can become quite ludicrous. When, for example, the mountain stream no longer supports enough trout to satisfy the hordes of invading fishermen, the universities study and plan for restocking the

stream. The streams are polluted and ravaged by deforestation and tramping feet. Then some anemic trout are supplied by the hatcheries—fish with livers degenerated from hatchery feeding, condemning them to a spiritless existence if not an early death. The cycle does not end here:

> To safeguard this expensive, artificial, and more or less helpless trout, the Conservation Commission feels impelled to kill all herons and terns visiting the hatchery where it was raised, and all mergansers and otters inhabiting the stream in which it is released. The fisherman perhaps feels no loss in this sacrifice of one kind of wildlife for another, but the ornithologist is ready to bite off ten-penny nails. Artificialized management has, in effect, bought fishing at the expense of another and perhaps higher recreation; it has paid dividends to one citizen out of capital stock belonging to all. The same kind of biological wildcatting prevails in game management.

Mr. Leopold's illustrations go on and on, till you almost turn sick at the human race and its version of "recreation" and "sport." One finds relief from the depression of what man has done to nature only in the author's own attitude, which sees in service to the natural world—the service of the husbandman—the highest kind of "recreation." As he puts it:

> The Government, which essays to substitute public for private operation of recreational lands, is unwittingly giving away to its field officers a large share of what it seeks to offer its citizens. We foresters and game managers might logically pay for, instead of being paid for, our job as husbandmen of wild crops.

We have not begun to do this book justice. The reflections of the closing pages, dealing with the ethics of the man-land relationship, are so rare, and so self-evidently just, that no one should fail to consider them; yet they are so organically grown from the rest of the book—the part filled with the living facts of the forest—that it would seem almost a mutilation to tear them loose. This is a book that merits reading entire.

COMMENTARY
CAPTIVES OF THEIR OWN PROPAGANDA

Two articles in recent issues of the *Christian Century* deal with the efforts of the Army and the Navy to win friends and influence people that is, to enlist the cooperation and support of the clergy. In January of this year, the Army put on a three-day program in the Pentagon for representatives of all major denominations. It was called "Orientation Conference for Religious Leaders," and seventy-eight clergymen listened to addresses by high government officials, generals, and admirals (reported in the *CC* for March 12 by John R. Wilkins). Then, on May 27, the Navy offered a one-day "character-building seminar" at the U.S. Naval Training Center at Great Lakes, Ill., which was attended by 400 clergymen. (Clyde E. Weaver and Chalmer E. Faw described this gathering in the *CC* for July 2.)

Both these articles deserve careful reading. The military, naturally enough, is interested in moral or religious education to the extent that it may be turned to the purposes for which military establishments exist. The Army program made it plain that universal military training is basic to military plans for the future (UMT had not been voted down at this time). The article on the Navy conference reports: "Although conscription and UMT were rarely alluded to as such, there was a subtle assumption that they will be the norm for the future."

At the Pentagon, when a California delegate objected, "We teach to save life, but your objective is to kill," he was told by an acting chaplain that killing is not "murder" when done at the command of another. He was told, further, that so "far as the idea of brotherhood is concerned, that is a carry-over from Stoic philosophy and has no place in New Testament teaching." At least some delegates heard this claim of the military spokesman with troubled minds.

The character guidance program of the Navy elicited similar reactions. Weaver and Faw report:

> "Men with good morals are better fighting men," Rear Admiral Francis F. Olds told us bluntly.... In the mimeographed digest we found the same idea reiterated. This explanation is typical: "Morality is basic in the cultivation of those personal qualities which make the ideal navy man. . . . technical know-how and material resources are important, but these assets must be combined with character to produce a superior fighting man."

These writers wonder if the program "is a mere extension of the navy's indoctrination plan," and conclude:

> . . . our basic concern remains. It is not only the pacifist who says that war is becoming an obsolete institution. How then can character be built by promoting moral allegiance to an institution whose moral basis is so dubious? Can character be character when it is promoted within the confines of such a structure?

One is bound to wish that the thoughtful churchmen who ponder these questions would add Simone Weil (see lead article) to their reading about war. The union of religious ethics and revolutionary analysis sometimes makes a powerful combination.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves

A GREAT many teachers and educators, we suppose, often find themselves wanting to write of the benefits to the young in contact with "Nature"—a propensity which we share. What one means by contact with "Nature," however, can hardly be expressed adequately in words. We do know that children may benefit wonderfully from years spent in the mountains, on a farm, or in a small fishing town, and perhaps we feel that many subtle forms of growth best take place in such environments. But discussion as to exactly how or why this occurs is difficult. Perhaps, instead of attempting to pin the matter down to a formulation, we would do better to propose that children need to feel at home in the "natural" world if they are to acquire adaptability for feeling at home in any other kind of world. We seem to want youngsters to know something of the meaning of law, both moral and social. And recognition of the laws or patterns of action and reaction evident in the non-man-made world is surely the best preparation for comprehension of the fact that a principle of law exists in all things.

A national movement now in progress, led by the states of California and Michigan, provides opportunities for something called "school camping." During the last school year, the children of 67 of Michigan's schools had at least a week of school camping made possible by a law appropriating necessary funds. It is predicted that half of California's schools will make similar provision by 1960. Neil M. Clark gives these statistics and a comprehensive description of a plan for school camping in the *Saturday Evening Post* for March 8, in an article, "Teacher Takes to the Woods." This is apparently one of those movements which take place chiefly because of an instinctive conviction of their value on the part of numerous teachers. Mr. Neil comments:

> Convinced school-camping advocates see in camping an opportunity to put new life into teaching, make it less dry and textbookish, bring children closer to real-life experiences, heighten their interest in many subjects, including the land and the need for conserving it, teach work habits, recreational habits, social habits, health habits, encourage self-reliance and problem solving, prepare them for an adult world, develop desirable attitudes toward others and even actually simplify and speed up the learning of the three R's. They think of going to camp, in fact, not as five days away from school but as five days at school in a different environment—a sort of laboratory where things can be learned by experience. They are strong for learning by doing, and they think that if a child has a strong motive, he'll learn faster than if his motive is weak.

We may with some certainty conclude that such opportunities cannot do harm and may do a great deal of good, especially in providing new criteria for the child's evaluation of character and personality. Some children who do not shine in the classroom become mature and respected leaders in an environment where innate resourcefulness gains recognition, and where powers of observation are turned from books to the total environment. Some of the youngsters who are more showy and popular in town are stripped of pretensions in the hills and mountains. Also, the study of forestry contributes much more than a botany section in a Junior High School biology text.

Of course, the best introduction to the beauties and the instructiveness of the natural world comes through transfusion of natural enthusiasm from parent to child. Always we may regard the youngster as fortunate who has a parent desirous of spending some time away from the city—and who is able to appreciate and benefit by the contrast and quiet provided. The importance of natural "quiet," incidentally, can hardly be overestimated, and here the school camping programs are likely to fall short of perfection. The ideal entrance into woods and fields is either by oneself or with only one or two others, and we hope that, as the large-scale project develops, all practicable steps will be taken to afford this more isolated form of contact. Parents can also help to provide some of those subtle and important values which the sponsors of

"school camping" must have in mind by encouraging an interest in books which fire the child's imagination in respect to woodland adventuring.

A short time ago, for this reason, we gave special attention to Le Grand Cannon's *Look to the Mountain,* and suggestions from MANAS readers have added other volumes. We should like now to call attention to *Swiftwater,* a story of the Maine woods by Paul Annixter, who is a genuine woodsman in his own right. This book (published by A. A. Wynn, New York) is one of the few which serve equally well for adults and ten-year-olds. Without any of the excessive sentimentality which unfortunately marks some similar attempts, *Swiftwater* provides a glowing picture of the sensitive appreciation of a woods existence shared by father and son, as well as portraying the gripping adventure story of a boy becoming a man by surmounting the hazards of his surroundings. The Calloways of *Swiftwater* are hunters and trappers, but they are also lovers of the wild things, so that the excitement of the hunt is tempered by the desire to conserve life in all ways possible and by an even greater desire to understand the beauties and wonders of the ways of the wild. (Also excellent, though chiefly for older readers, is Conrad Richter's series on frontier experience, the first volume of which is currently available in a pocket edition of *The Trees.*)

We have, naturally, no guarantee that every child will find special fascination in this type of story, but it does seem likely that any child who lives in a home where appreciation for such literature is keen will gain something by the perspectives which an enthusiastic parent, brother, or sister will reflect. It is difficult to keep alive an active appreciation of the beauties of nature in the midst of city life, so that some reading of this type should be a beneficial influence in any home.

Our schools have attempted to study nature "scientifically"—one of the less fortunate heritages of the Aristotelian tradition—but the classifying and microscope examining of the laboratory is a far cry from entering into the heart and soul of Nature's harmonies and beauties. We have little doubt that the admirable scenic photography of many motion pictures and in Disney productions involving wild life, such as *Nature's Half Acre* and *Beaver Valley,* may be far more valuable to children than formal classes in biology and botany.

As we confessed at the outset, one can do little more than take note of this field of interest and appreciation, recognizing that any particular recommendations will represent but poorly the psychological benefits which may result from the striving to become, in however small a way, a philosophic naturalist.

FRONTIERS

Illusory Affiliations

THE discussion in these pages of Erich Fromm's *Psychoanalysis and Religion* gave considerable attention to Dr. Fromm's rejection of the familiar ways of differentiating between religionists and psychiatrists. Fromm holds that there is only an artificial opposition between many votaries of conventional religion and those of modern psychiatry—not because Freud's and Jung's first assumptions could be reconciled with religious orthodoxy, as some so wrongly think, but because *genuine* opposition can only be represented by attitudes of mind in respect to methods of education; and upon this point some religionists and psychiatrists may differ very little. Thus we have the suggestion, too, by implication, that some method of revaluating accepted labels in the world of ideas must be developed, since the real debates have to do with basic assumptions in respect to the nature of the human being and the education of the human being—assumptions so basic that they cannot be fully encompassed by any orthodoxy, religious, psychiatric, or otherwise.

A crucially important controversy of the present deals with the philosophical and political meaning o£ education. There are those who believe that the individual must be conditioned to acceptance of "the good society" and that the major psychological problem is one of adjustment to the national and social *status quo.* A number of philosophers, psychologists and religionists alike actually hold this view. Yet those who regard education as primarily a process of "conditioning" or "adjustment" stand on rather weak ground when it comes to championing freedom of thought. Nearly all educated men give at least lip service to the ideal of "freedom of thought," but only those who reject the "conditioning" and "adjustment" theory of human progress show a consistent unwillingness to compromise. In regard to Communism, many self-styled advocates of "Democracy" have therefore maintained that complete freedom of thought can only be beneficial when the threat of Communism has been obliterated, and that since the United States may be required to fight a full-scale war against Russia, "unity of opinion" is vital to satisfactory cooperation in preparation for war. Indoctrination, on this view, becomes a perhaps temporary but necessary blemish on the good national life.

This is a viewpoint on man's relation to society which Bertrand Russell has derided at great length in articles in the *Manchester Guardian.* Perhaps, since Mr. Russell is a mathematician, he cannot see how one can go in two opposite directions at the same time. It is this contradiction, we think, which forthright opponents of loyalty oaths also have in mind, for the loyalty oath is a weapon for compelling conformity. Most of those who defend loyalty oaths argue that such means are necessary expedients to avoid confusion among our youth. There is, of course, a certain logic here, for one does need to be unconfused and single-pointed in order to win wars. MANAS, however, like Bertrand Russell, is convinced that there are two wars in progress already, only one of which opposes Communist political infiltration; the other is against the idea of expedient conformity. Those who conceive this second great struggle as being of tremendous importance will perhaps be inspired as well as encouraged by reading Arnold Serwer's "The Contagion of Courage" in the *Progressive* for May.

Serwer describes a seven months' struggle in defense of academic freedom at Sarah Lawrence College, in Bronxville, New York. The faculty of Sarah Lawrence, although assailed by the combined forces of most of the loyalty opathers of the Eastern seaboard, has stood firm on a policy of complete freedom in respect to the selection of teachers. Mr. Serwer's title is aptly chosen, for there have been indications that the principled, rational, and absolutely uncompromising stand taken by Sarah Lawrence's president and faculty has done much to strengthen loyalty oath opposition elsewhere. Fifteen years ago such statements as the following would have been commonplace, but today, issued by a college president who draws ceaseless fire from the American Legion, The New York *Journal American,* Louis Budenz, and others, they really mean something. After a considerable amount of pressure to dismiss several faculty members charged

with Communist leanings, the Board of Trustees of Sarah Lawrence and President Taylor declared:

> An educational institution must teach its students to think for themselves by giving them the knowledge on which to base judgments. The teaching faculty of Sarah Lawrence College is responsible for the development in students of intellectual independence and maturity. In carrying out this responsibility faculty members are expected to deal candidly and honestly with controversial questions. Teachers who meet the test of candor, honesty, and scholarly integrity may not be deprived of any rights they hold as citizens of this country, including the right to belong to any legal political organization of their own choosing.
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> It is in this refusal to exact an oath or to cross-examine the teacher as to political belief or to spy upon his activities that the educator differs from the outsider who wishes to investigate college faculties. The latter fails to understand the necessity that the teacher be free to have and to express his own ideas and that the teacher is not a person hired to follow certain rules and to advocate certain economic or political dogmas.

Following these developments, the busy Legionnaires, Mr. Budenz, *et al.,* must have been surprised to discover that the difficulties encountered by their pressure campaign were increasing daily. One of the members of their chosen committee, a high school history teacher, for instance, appeared to reverse his position suddenly. This teacher addressed a Legion Post in such a way as to indicate that his own thinking had advanced considerably during the fracas, stating that "Everyone who disagrees with the veterans is not a Communist. Danger lies in the fact that we can't discuss subversive activities without involving the rights of individuals." The history teacher was, of course, immediately disavowed by the Legion committee for such weasel words, but Sarah Lawrence's stand continued to have salutary effect. The New York *Times* praised the Board's declaration, and a New York Council of Churches supported the position of the college.

In California, a distinguished committee, formed as the "Federation for Repeal of the Levering Act," has undertaken a public education program concerning the new loyalty oath involved in two proposed amendments to the California Constitution (to be voted upon Nov. 4, 1952). One effective leaflet issued by the Committee contains a brief document taken from Quaker history. It begins:

> "Starting up in a rage, the judge said, 'I can put the oath to any man here, and I will tender you the oath again.' . . And I told them, 'I am a Christian and shall show forth Christianity amongst you this day.' . . . Christ commands me not to swear. . . . never took any oath in my life. . . .then I was put into a tower, and I was so starved with cold and rain that my body was greatly swelled, and my limbs much numbed."
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> Thus in 1664 George Fox witnessed against the loyalty oath of his day. As a result of his sacrifice and that of many others, the requirement for a loyalty oath was eventually lifted in England.
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> Today in California under the Levering Act, and in other states of the Union, the integrity of Friends and others is challenged by the imposition of special loyalty oaths. Many teachers, social workers, and other state employees have lost their jobs rather than submit to special oaths. Efforts are being made to extend loyalty oaths to physicians, lawyers, Community Chest employees and others.

Propaganda and politics have now led the California Legislature to consider eliminating the regular oath of allegiance to the federal and state Constitutions, previously required of all public officials and employees, and to set in its place an outright oath of conformity, *which prohibits subversive ideas, but which, in the worst reactionary tradition, neglects to define them.*

These are real issues, in which points of philosophy, religion, psychology, and politics focus with disturbing clarity—issues so fundamental that they can be seen to cut through a great many previous "allegiances," and to illustrate the importance of Dr. Fromm's remark to the effect that many of the labels worn so proudly must be recognized as both superficial and misleading by fully self-conscious man.