VOLUME V, NO. 36
SEPTEMBER 3, 1952

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

TO say that the thoughtful people in the world are intensely preoccupied by the grim facts of the international scene verges on understatement. The threat of the future has become almost an obsession, tending to withdraw attention from almost all but so-called "practical" issues. In the case of the United States—especially in the case of the critics of the United States—there is the sense of an almost irreparable shattering of the American dream of expanding opportunity and multiplying freedoms.

The faults of America are celebrated today with as much enthusiasm as eighteenth century philosophers proclaimed the promise of the new Western World. We have not set out, here, to prove that the criticisms of America are overdone, but what may be said, when so many look in this direction with distrustful eyes, is that the centuries heap responsibility first in one direction, now in another. And while, in their hour of trial, the people of North America may exhibit inadequacy and sheer bewilderment more than anything else, there are other considerations of importance which have little or nothing to do with immediate misfortunes and mistakes.

If, in the first place, we are prepared to admit that the history of great nations and civilizations should suggest an unfoldment in human development—something beyond the petty triumphs of empire, on however grand a scale—then it must be admitted, also, that the cycle of American civilization, thus far, remains largely an enigma. Scores of writers have addressed themselves to this problem. In what terms is America to be understood?

The heralds of the American future spoke as articulately as any ancient promise of legend or myth. Thomas Paine, who was a type of Americans to come, spoke of "a new order of things for the human race opening in the affairs of America." Richard Price, writing in Great Britain in 1784, called the revolt of the Colonies a "revolution in favor of universal liberty which has taken place in America;—A revolution which opens up a new prospect in human affairs, and begins a new era in the history of mankind." This vision was echoed in retrospect by distinguished Americans. "Our ancestors sought a new country," said James Russell Lowell. "What they found was a new condition of mind." The new man, the American, born of a new continent, has been endlessly characterized, but never, with any finality, summarized. For generations it was the fashion for foreign visitors to mingle with their admiration of the new country a friendly mockery of its youthful and bumptious ways. A Frenchman remarked that Americans were reluctant to admit that Christopher Columbus was not an American. Americans, however, have always been able to reply in kind. When a European complained to his American hostess of the 1890'S that her country had no leisure classes, she answered, "But we have them, only we call them tramps." This visitor himself remarked that "America is the only country in the world where one is ashamed of having nothing to do."

Paradox rules in essays on America. Americans have been called "a nation of lawyers," yet the most lawless people in the world. American generosity is almost proverbial, yet Uncle Sam is invidiously associated with the dollar sign. Our restless energy is envied, our nervous tension deplored. In his essay, "What Then Is the American, This New Man?", Arthur M. Schlesinger remarks:

> In 1940 the American people owned more motor cars than bathtubs. The pursuit of happiness was transformed into the happiness of pursuit. Foreigners earlier expressed amazement at the spectacle of dwellings being hauled by horses along the streets from one site to another; but by means of the automobile trailer more than half a million Americans have now discovered a way of living constantly on wheels. The nation appears to be on the point of solving the riddle of perpetual motion.

Schlesinger's observations concerning the money-making drive of Americans seem both illuminating and just:

> When President Coolidge made his famous remark, "The business of America is business," he quite properly added, "The chief ideal of the

> American people is idealism. I cannot repeat too often that America is a nation of idealists." This dualism puzzled foreign commentators, who found it difficult, for example, to reconcile worship of the Almighty Dollar with the equally universal tendency to spend freely and give money away. In contrast to Europe, America has had practically no misers, and one consequence of the winning of Independence was the abolition of primogeniture and entail. Harriet Martineau was among those who concluded that "the eager pursuit of wealth does not necessarily indicate a love of wealth for its own sake." The fact is that, for a people who recall how hungry and ill-clad their ancestors had been through the centuries in the Old World, the chance to make money was like the sunlight at the end of a tunnel. It was the means of living a life of human dignity. In other words, for the great majority of Americans it was a symbol of idealism rather than materialism. Hence "this new man" had an instinctive sympathy for the underdog, and even persons of moderate wealth gratefully shared it with the less fortunate, helping to endow charities, schools, hospitals and art galleries and providing the wherewithal to nourish movements for humanitarian reform which might otherwise have died aborning.

Enough of critical comment, from week to week, has appeared in these pages to make unnecessary an attempt to "balance the ledger" of merit and demerit on these points. Here we are trying to get at what might be regarded as the basic temper of America, as distinguished from its all-too-familiar excesses and misalliances. It is an effort which recalls the appeal in 1941 of the two Japanese envoys to the United States, Kurusu and Nomura, who were apparently doing what they could to avert the war which finally broke out with the attack on Pearl Harbor. The Christian evangelist, E. Stanley Jones, knew Kurusu and Nomura well, and during the war he often told his audiences about those fateful days in November, 1941. The envoys, he said, who represented the conciliatory policy of the Konoye government, asked their friends in the United States to remember that Japan had been at war for more than ten years, that the strain of this undertaking had worked against "normal" attitudes of mind and feelings among the Japanese. This was the fact, whether Japan's adventure in China was approved or not, and the hope of peace might depend upon recognition of such psychological realities.

Something of this sort might be said in behalf of Americans, today. The United States has been engaged in hot and cold wars for more than ten years past. In the West, moreover, Americans are looked upon as bearing the major responsibility for whatever peace is possible. If other countries make a botch of things, the view is that there will still be hope for a free world of peace. But if the United States makes a mistake, no other country can redress the balance of power. Whatever judgments be made of the policies of America—and they can, we think, be severe—these psychological facts remain, and are responsible for the way in which Americans regard their own behavior, as well as for the attitudes toward America in other countries.

Finally, it seems fair to say that the world situation of today has a complexity which places it far over the heads of all the countries, regardless of "side" or degree of power. No country that we know of—least of all a country which is able at the diplomatic level to implement practical proposals for world peace—has manifested the sort of sagacity, to say nothing of the "morality," which might be expected to bring rapprochement to the East-West antagonists. America's case of "nerves"—obviously a very bad case—is surely in large part a product of America's enormous responsibilities at this juncture of history.

Let us remember, too, that the national emotions which must be channeled by the leaders of the United States into policies of State are emotions which are possessed the world over, and only by accident of history, or, perhaps, by some hidden scheme of destiny, are now linked with decisive power in the United States. We live today, as Wendell Willkie declared, in "One World." And as the world grows in unity, the more practicable it becomes to recognize that the psychological maturity of the peoples of the world is at approximately the same level, everywhere. If we are willing to admit this, then the habit of blaming "peoples" for what they do becomes a little ridiculous. The real problem, a world-wide one, is to discover ways to greater maturity, not to single out evil-doers, not to condemn those who, because they happen to be most active in this hour, are making terrible mistakes. This view, it seems to us, is the only possible basis for world fraternity, and if it happens, now, to indicate the need of particular patience for the United States, then let us provide what is indicated.

To return to our initial inquiry—the measure of American possibility—there is a gamut of estimates to be reviewed. At one end is the emotional patriotism, the thoughtless rhetoric, which declares, "I still possess that to me the greatest of honors and distinctions. I am an American." We say this expression is at "one end" for the reason that the place of a man's birth is the one thing which he has had nothing to do with. Where, then, is the distinction? This, we think, is really an "Old World" sort of patriotism, which finds special virtues attaching to an accident of birth. It could be argued, of course, that a soul born in America has been granted America's special opportunities as the fulfillment of some previously earned reward. On the hypothesis of pre-existence, joined with the Buddhist doctrine of Karma, this claim to distinction might make some sense. On any other theory, however, distinctions are gained by how you go through life, not by where you come into it.

There is another view of "being American," however, which holds more promise for the future. Others, perhaps, besides Thornton Wilder have given it expression, but no contemporary writer, we think, has given it better expression. We have in mind a chapter from a forthcoming book by Mr. Wilder, appearing in the July *Atlantic*. Titled "Toward an American Language," this discussion involves much more than linguistic considerations, although the language of American literature supplies the author with a focus for the study of the American character. Mr. Wilder starts out by distinguishing between lectures, American style, and lectures in Europe:

> . . . there is a wide difference between an Old World and a New World lecture, and the difference arises from those American characteristics which are precisely the subject of these lectures.
>
> Emerson, describing the requirements for lectures in the Lyceums of his day, said:—"There are no stiff conventions that prescribe a method, a style, a limited quotation of books and an exact respect to certain books, persons, or opinions."
>
> There's the crux: no respect.
>
> An American is insubmissive, lonely, self-educating, and polite. His politeness conceals his slowness to adopt any ideas which he does not feel he has produced himself. It all goes back to the fundamental problem of an American's relation to authority, and related to it is the American's reluctance to concede that there is an essential truth, or a thing true in essence.
>
> . . . An American lecture is a discourse in which a man declares what is true for him. This does not mean that Americans are skeptical. Every American has a large predisposition to believe that there is a truth for him and that he is in the process of laying hold of it. He is building his own house of thought and he rejoices in seeing that someone else is also abuilding. Such houses can never be alike—begun in infancy and constructed with the diversity which is the diversity of every human life.
>
> . . . From the point of view of the European an American is nomad in relation to place, disattached in relation to time, lonely in relation to society, and insubmissive to circumstance, destiny, or God. It is difficult to be an American because there is yet no code, grammar, decalogue by which to orient oneself. Americans are still engaged in inventing what it is to be an American. That is at once an exhilarating and a painful occupation. All about us we see the lives that have been shattered by it—not least those lives that have tried to resolve the problem by the European patterns.

Someone may ask, By what license does Mr. Wilder engage to tell us what "an American" is? Who can afford such big generalizations? The answer to such questions involves a consideration of the meaning of culture. Mr. Wilder is not talking about any particular Americans, but about those qualities of mind, that temper of the spirit, which are generally identifiable as belonging to the men and women who have made America what it is. He has his examples, of course—he shows how Herman Melville, Henry David Thoreau, and Walt Whitman figure as creators of the American language—but what Mr. Wilder is talking about could easily be characterized as a particular kind of Platonic Oversoul representing a particular species of human intelligence. This is not half so mystical or improbable as it sounds. If there are grounds for believing that the minds of men are not wholly separate and divided entities—and the grounds, we think, are good—then what is to prevent the formation of a loosely united "group" mind, even a group-mind of several "storeys," with levels representing differing "universes of discourse," all united by certain common attributes—outlooks and attitudes of common origin, but with miscellaneous degrees of refinement and

diverse directions of interest and aim? The thing is not impossible.

A larger "mind organism" of this sort could, by hypothesis, be mechanically akin to the structure of what we call "mob emotion." The fact that crowds, as such, show forth traits which seem radically different from the sum of the behavior of the people in them may be taken as evidence of the reality of inner, psychic connections uniting communities and groups.

This kind of thinking, of course, is dangerous, in the sense that anything which might lend support to totalitarian theories of social organization is dangerous, but the fact, if it is a fact, of group-minds and group-emotions, could as easily become a force for good as a force for evil. It is perhaps the force behind all the good we do in common, without our knowing it, exactly.

Further, at Mr. Wilder's hands, such a theory might gain curious amplification. It is his proposal, for example, based upon his literary researches, that Americans have a special sort of independence—a drive, one might say, toward psychic individuality which works against the ritualistic unities which so often betray men into becoming less than men and moral agents. This would mean that the "group-mind" of America is, at root, made up of minds which are struggling to resist the subtle psychological coercions to uniformity—making it a sort of contradiction in terms. Here, perhaps, we have an essential paradox of the American temperament, a key to its multiple conflicts and Gargantuan inconsistencies.

> The men who came to America, Wilder says, "all had one thing in common."
>
> Their sense of identity did not derive from their relation to their environment. The meaning which their lives had for them was inner and individual. They did not need to be supported, framed, consoled, by the known, the habitual, the loved—by the ancestral village, town, river, field, horizon; by family, kin, neighbors, church and state; by the air, sky, and water that they knew.
>
> The independent.
>
> Independence is a momentum. Scarcely had the first settler made a clearing and founded a settlement than the more independent began pushing further back into the wilderness. The phrase became proverbial: 'If you can see the smoke from your neighbor's chimney, you're too near."
>
> These separatists broke away from church at home, but separatism is a momentum. New religions were formed over and over again. Ousted clergymen went off into the woods with portions of their contentious flocks, there to cut down more trees and raise new churches. When Cotton Mather went to what is now Rhode Island he said that there had probably never been so many sects worshipping side by side in so small an area.
>
> These were the men and women who were most irritably susceptible to any of the pressures which society and social opinion can bring.

What alien wind of stubborn independence so defied the familiar canons of snug security? How could unrighteous and unsettling dissent become the hallmark of private virtue? Were these turmoils of independence, these refractory consciences only a kind of fanaticism born among rootless adventurers, or did they signify an inchoate rumbling of a kind of human evolution not mentioned in the Book of Revelations? Does America still disclose the growing pains of a great, gawking adolescent culture, bepimpled and disjointed, a Paul Bunyan of tomorrow's history, a Golem rising prematurely from the troubled earth? Is her solitary virtue, the love of freedom, still a saving grace? One wonders about these things, even in these days of trial, these hours of chagrin. What is the American? He is many things—above all, he represents unfinished business.

LETTER FROM MEXICO

MEXICO CITY.—The recent presidential elections here were hailed as a victory in the democratic evolution of a new nation. Traditionally chaotic, the orderly participation of electoral opposition and the reduction of violence suggest that Mexican politics have reached maturity. If the signs are optimistic, the accomplishment is in no small measure due Lázaro Cárdenas.

Mexicans may recall the words of their idealistic president who initiated the evolution to democratic processes:

> "Even reactionary groups organized under the protection of our civil liberties should be able to enter into the contest and have the same protection throughout the electoral campaign as that which is given to the revolutionary groups."

The Porfirian *candillo* tradition which Calles sought to reimpose was snapped by Cárdenas, who established a "no re-election" precedent by his firm refusal to accept a draft for a second term in violation of the federal constitution.

It was an easy victory for Ruiz Cortines, candidate of the *Partido de Revolutionario Institutiones* (PRI), founded a quarter century ago by ax-president Plutarco Calles—a party which has been in power without interruption since 1929. After a well-financed campaign extending over a year, the PRI won against a field of three opposition candidates.

The other presidential aspirants included the left-wing Lombardo Toledano, supported by the Stalinist apparatus; General Henriques Guzman, a wealthy contractor who attracted a large vote from disaffected elements; and Gonzalez Luna, backed by the extreme right wing *Partido Action Nacional* (PAN) and Catholic sinarquists.

Pledged to carry on the industrialization program of his predecessor, President-elect Cortines—who was Aleman's chief cabinet minister—is regarded as an honest administrator. Unlike his two immediate predecessors, Camacho and Aleman, Cortines is not a professed Catholic—an uncommon Mexican article, particularly now that reaction is once again ascendant.

The election tabulations disclosed 35 write-in votes cast for Cantinflas, Mexico's Charlie Chaplin. The screen idol recently played the candidate in *Si Yo Faera Dipatado*—"If I Were Deputy"—a satire on Mexican politics. Once a street urchin but a millionaire today, Cantinflas gives generously to charity.

As a social satirist, Cantinflas is as exhilarating as he is trenchant. At a recent dinner he noted the disparity of Mexico's income and attacked millionaires for their indifference to poverty. He proposed that every millionaire—there are over ten thousand in Mexico—give 10,000 pesos (about 1200 dollars) annually for a social service program to uplift Mexico's poverty-ridden lower strata—beggars, urchins, and superannuated. Cantinflas himself gave 10,000 pesos to inaugurate the fund. Delighted, the people nominated him for the Nobel Prize, candidates for which include President Aleman.

A millionaire himself, Aleman offered the first donation of 10,000 pesos from his own bank account and 100,000 pesos from the federal treasury. In perspective, a comparison with Cárdenas —suggested by their respective premises and roles—is perhaps invidious, and ungenerous. Cárdenas, too, without ostentation, gave liberally of his money—though he was never a millionaire. Cárdenas was the idol of the oppressed peon, Indian, and proletarian, while Aleman is the darling of the conservative industrial class. Aleman loves applause, limelight and a good drink; Cárdenas shunned all three.

The clash of Mexican social classes is apparent today as yesterday, but despite revolutionary slogans, reform is in retreat. With the termination of the Cárdenas regime, the middle class, always hostile to increased benefits for the peasant and working populations, has

consolidated its power under Aleman. Perhaps this is the logical evolution of all revolutions.

Industrialization, enchanting siren to the middle class and cardinal doctrine Ruiz Cortines is pledged to support, may be a boon for the middle class, but its ostensible benefits have not reached the peon or peasant, who constitute the majority of the population. While industrialization has accumulated wealth and power to the middle class, the peasant and *campesino* remain in a state of piteous poverty. The deficit created by the expenditure of millions of pesos annually in the U.S. to purchase heavy machinery for industrial expansion is balanced by the tourist dollar.

In commercial atmosphere and hectic automobile trafiic, Mexico City is reminiscent of Los Angeles. Like the ancient Aztec capital, *Tenochtitlan*, on whose foundations the new capital is built, Mexico City exercises financial, political, and intellectual domination over all of Mexico. But the beautiful city is not the real Mexico. That you will find in the thousands of distant and remote villages where the impact of industrialization has hardly been felt—where the only visible symbol of its ominous approach is the Coca-Cola sign at the corner store.

MEXICO CORRESPONDENT

REVIEW
THE LONELY CROWD

DAVID RIESMAN'S *The Lonely Crowd* (Yale University Press, 1950) is a more difficult book to read than to review. Riesman loves his specialized sociological terminology, and the average reader will require remarkable powers of perseverance to survive to the last page. As one might expect, however, a volume so provocatively titled is worth looking at.

Basic psychological problems have always revolved around human incapacity to comprehend the nature of the "directional" forces which define commonly accepted goals and ideals. Whether a man finds his directives in religion or in the social demands of his community, submission to such directives leaves him little opportunity for autonomy in thought, and, without autonomy in thought, we conclude—and quite rightly—we are helpless people. This, however, forces us to accept our immaturity as in a sense permanent and inevitable, which is no sort of inspiration for removing our immaturities.

Riesman contends that even men who share identical work and leisure activities will be "lonely" until they establish human relationships on the basis of autonomy rather than pattern. His thesis is that, in the case of people who do not have the reserves which make autonomy possible, character is strongly influenced by the contemporary level of societal growth. When there is a "high growth potential" for the population—a society characterized by high birth rates and high death rates—people are most apt to be "tradition directed." The conformity of the individual tends to be dictated largely by power relations among the various age and sex groups, the clans, castes, and professions—by relationships which have endured for centuries and are modified but slightly, if at all, by successive generations. This is the society of rigid etiquette, intensive ritual in religion and little mobility for the individual. Next, in passing into an era of "transitional growth," during which mobility for the individual increases along with the population (as the birth rate goes up and the death rate goes down), the whole of society is involved in expansion. In this process there are more demands for initiative and an increased tolerance of unorthodox methods and morals. The society itself no longer directly controls the individual by group regulation, but nonetheless seeks to achieve the same end by promoting generalized goals and standards. Religion moves from ritual to moral commandments, relying upon the stimulation of feelings of fear and guilt to hold the apparently autonomous individual "in line." We say "apparently autonomous," since those who live in a moralistically dominated society may enjoy all the opportunities of capital and property expansion and still be proceeding according to what Riesman calls "a psychological gyroscope," set in motion by parents and teachers. The individual is "inner-directed" but is not really autonomous, for his direction derives from institutional suggestion.

Finally, in the latter part of the population cycle—our own—which Riesman calls "incipient population decline," the directives shift again. Work hours are short, there are no more financial empires to build—even though managerial positions of tremendous power are still available—and more leisure is possible. As Riesman puts it:

> The hard enduringness and enterprise of the inner-directed types are somewhat necessary under these new conditions. Increasingly, *other people* are the problem, not the material environment. And as people mix more widely and become more sensitive to each other, the surviving traditions from the stage of high growth potential—much disrupted, in any case, during the violent spurt of industrialization—become still further attenuated. Gyroscopic control *is* no longer sufficiently flexible, and a new psychological mechanism is called for.

The new psychological mechanism which Riesman calls "other-direction" is extremely flexible. Instead of being governed by the elders or by insistent moral precepts, the individual

begins to be governed, first, by the opinions of his "peers,'" and then by the opinions of everybody. The influence of modern advertising clearly reveals the extent to which "other-direction" has become dominant in our society. "Other-directeds," however, are often interested in something more than "keeping up with the Joneses"—something which the "inner-directeds" were much concerned about. The average man, today, in Riesman's analysis, *is* not simply gregarious; he is anxious to establish contact with the inner experiences, the feelings, aspirations and problems of many other individuals, and thus he develops a strong interest in psychology, whether or not he employs its jargon.

Reisman does not dwell upon the many evidences that "Psychology" is rapidly becoming the dominant modern religion, with an increasing interest shown by the general public in famous psychologists and their writings. This interest in turn leads to a more cosmopolitan attitude, though it may not encourage any genuine autonomy. Even in leisure activities, for example in "play," there has been an increasing tendency to conformity, arising from the fact that vicarious participation in sports is encouraged both by an increase of professionalism and by an increase of leisure time. As Riesman puts it:

> Advertising and sheer consumption no longer have their old pre-World War II magic for that sophisticated trainee-in-consumption, the other-directed man. He is not *impressed* by standardization and commercialism of leisure; he is simply oppressed by them. His oppression springs, in part, from the tremendous development of virtuosity that specialization and division of labor have brought to the field of play as well as to the field of work. The varied capacities of the medieval entertainer . . . include some amiable virtuosities. But they would hardly get him a billing on the RKO circuit or television today, and he would certainly not be good enough for Ringling Brothers. The amateur player has to compete with professionals who are far more professional than ever before—can he tell Laurence Olivier how to play *Hamlet,* as Hamlet himself could get away with telling the professional players how not to do it? We saw in Part I that, while the inner-directed man held on tenaciously to his competence as a player at least in his downward escapes, the other-directed man is faced with and oppressed by virtuosity from the omnipresent media wherever he turns.
>
> Thus it looks as if the task of restoring competence to play is almost, if not quite, as difficult as that of restoring it to work. While a change in income relations or even in the organization of industry, might make for fairer distribution of leisure and a lessening of guilts, it could not of itself teach men how to play who have historically forgotten how and who have turned the business over to professionals. Are we right, then, in supposing that play offers any easier channels to autonomy than work; are not both equally "alienated" in Marx's sense, so much so that even the coming of socialism would mean little?

In addition to this, the "drive" of the "other-directed" person moves him to share as much as he can with as many others as he can. Thus modern psychology, all too often, takes on a Dale Carnegie tone. Rather than being encouraged to study one's own individual capacities, in an effort to find an integrity which can resist social pressures, one simply "goes along." Attention is focussed upon the psychological tendencies which make men the same, rather than upon those which differentiate. While this may lead to a greater capacity for sympathy, it will not eliminate "loneliness." For the man who has not yet "found himself," who does not even in a small degree *know* himself, will certainly be lonely. Both play and work become rituals which take a great deal more time than is necessary. But time is spent in this fashion because to do otherwise would be to lose contact with a type of association upon which we depend for comfort and security.

Here Riesman makes his own plea for autonomy:

> If the other-directed people should discover how much needless work they do, discover that their own thoughts and their own lives are quite as interesting as other people's, that, indeed, they no more assuage their loneliness in a crowd of peers than one can assuage one's thirst by drinking sea water, then we might expect them to become more attentive to their own feelings and aspirations.

> While I have said many things in this book of which I am unsure, of one thing I am quite sure: the enormous potentialities for diversity in nature's bounty and men's capacity to differentiate their experience can become valued by the individual himself, so that he will not be tempted and coerced into adjustment or, failing adjustment, into anomie. The idea that men are created free and equal is both true and misleading: men are created different; they lose their social freedom and their individual autonomy in seeking to become like each other.

The Lonely Crowd is not an easy book to grasp, nor is it apt to reveal its value in a single reading. It calls for study. Our own reactions run something like this: Though many books and many moments of self-realization inform us of the fact that human beings are still too immature to exercise the "inalienable right" of individuality, we need to discover the many ways in which outside control over our private lives is exercised. To grant that the various stages of social growth each produce a characteristic set of directives which tend to rob the individual of the chance for genuine independence, and to grant, further, that we ourselves are profoundly affected by the externally imposed directives of our time, does not necessitate the conclusion that autonomy is impossible. Riesman, perhaps, shows the possibility of autonomy in thought by demonstrating innumerable specific ways in which it has been lost. A man in chains since birth will take his first step toward freedom when he comprehends that the chains exist. His second step is taken as he begins to examine the particular links of these chains; his third, when he begins to work to sever the link to which his personal tools are best adapted.

Riesman, then, supports the old Socratic thesis that no one can be happy until he is capable of standing alone:

> The autonomous person, living like everyone else in a given cultural setting, employs the reserves of his character and station to move away from the adjusteds of the same setting. For autonomy, like anomie, is a deviation from the adjusted patterns, though a deviation controlled in its range and meaning by the existence of those patterns. . . . But whereas the adjusted person was driven toward his goals by a gyroscope over whose speed and direction he had hardly a modicum of control and of the existence of which he was sometimes unaware, his autonomous contemporary was capable of choosing his goals and modulating his pace. The goals, and the drive toward them, were rational, nonauthoritarian and noncompulsive for the autonomous; for the adjusted, they were merely given.

COMMENTARY
ODD MAN OUT

THE difficulties experienced by the rulers of Israel in obtaining the sort of religious conformity they deem necessary (see Frontiers) calls to mind the commonest of paradoxes in human experience. Everyone, or nearly everyone, feels quite competent to describe how men should live under ideal conditions, but almost no one except the practical politician concerns himself with the theory of intelligent adjustment to very imperfect conditions. And the politician, unlike the idealist, is not especially interested in human progress, but only in the progress of politicians.

The reason that the "ideal" society populated by ideal people is so easy to imagine is probably that perfection places no strain on the imagination. All you have to do is to think of a frictionless paradise. But to describe the sort of efforts needed to transform the existing society into a better one—and present-day people into better people—is exceedingly difficult. There are so many things that we don't know.

First, we don't know very much about the *rate* of progress that is possible for mankind. Further, we are far from being agreed upon what constitutes progress. People go to church on Sundays, calling themselves Christians, and presumably aspire to the imitation of Christ, yet the Son of Man had no place to lay his head, while not many modern Christians look forward to a wholly propertyless existence. Of course, they may be right. Quite possibly, to be without a place to lay your head is not progress at all, but a kind of idolatry of the letter of the scripture. The fact remains, however, that no Christian ideal that we know of causes the great majority of the Christian community any noticeable inconvenience.

There are exceptions, of course, but the authors of Theocracies are never interested in exceptions; their interest is in devising patterns for "mass" behavior. The irony of this is that the Messiahs and prophets of both East and West have always made their appeal to exceptional people. "Come ye out and be ye separate," was the cry of Jesus of Nazareth.

One wonders, therefore, if the stern dispensers of Decalogues, the proud and insistent regimenters who declare themselves militant defenders of the common good, are not in fact the worst enemies of progress, simply by opposing, with all the righteousness they possess, the exceptional behavior of the exceptional man.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves

As nursery schools become more and more a part of the accepted pattern for children of moderately well-to-do families, there seems to be good reason for encouraging as much discussion of them as possible.

The strongest objection we know of in respect to the popularity of the nursery schools is that they are favored by many parents who believe that the basic problem in raising children is the problem of securing "adjustment to society." Especially is this true in the case of parents who have but one child, or of parents who live in fairly isolated areas. Such well-wishers want to make sure that their offspring will be able to get along with children of their own age, but often, we feel, they may be going out of their way to subject the potential individuality of their child to the enormous pressure of group opinion.

How many children grow through adolescence and into their first jobs, conditioned by attitudes toward various occupations inculcated in their earliest years, and how many of these later discover that they made the wrong selection because they did not know themselves or their own special proclivities well enough! The child who spends a considerable amount of time alone has a far better opportunity to discover what his genuine interests are, and, if he has a chance to consolidate and intensify them, his later contact with schooling may be less likely to cause him to rearrange his life according to the popular prejudices and preferences of his school locality. Further, how do we know that the child who spends much of his time by himself suffers by deprivation? Certainly those who venture into the wilderness alone are able to observe much more, both scientifically and esthetically, than those who are taken on conducted tours.

It has been previously noted here that early childhood may alone offer opportunities to the child for escaping rigid scheduling of time and activities. While, during all of our later lives, we shall be plagued by the "I-don't-have-time" situation, the earliest years are fortunately different. Time, then, is *not* of the essence for the child of nursery-school age, and, in fact, the adults' whole conception of time has not yet intruded. If we were to advise politicians on the best way to resist totalitarianism, our counsel would be to see that all children grow up under conditions which require them to spend a good deal of their time alone. Thousands of individuals so raised would find it temperamentally impossible to accept regimentation or routinization.

A friend of ours was recently horrified to discover that one of his nephews responded to a request for reliable testimony in regard to a certain event by chirruping, "Scout's honor!" The uncle was horrified, not because he dislikes Boy Scouts above all else, but simply because the youngster seemed to feel that his own personal affirmation would not be accepted unless supported by some kind of group standard. The uncle did not want to hear the Boy Scouts' testimony, but what one youngster would say. And "Group Honor," we might note, is often defective, as many pages of history attest. Group honor has sometimes involved even betraying parents to The Party, falsifying to serve The Cause, etc., in totalitarian countries. Admittedly, in this incident precipitating "Scout's honor," there was only a tiny seed of danger to individual integrity, yet we need to be aware of the relationship between such seeds and the sort of psychological atmosphere which encourages its germination, since that atmosphere presses heavily upon us, these days.

There are other reasons, too, for adopting a precautionary attitude toward the spread of nursery schools. We are sure that the practice of sending three- or four-year-olds to nursery school is becoming more common because it dovetails nicely with the desire of many parents for a socially acceptable means of evading responsibility for child-raising. If it can really be made to seem "the thing to do," getting one's little ones out of

one's hair for half of every day may be very attractive indeed. With the help of a nursery school, one can be a "good parent" while hardly being a parent at all, and what could be nicer than this?

While a large proportion of American parents have the habit of turning the reins of responsibility to their children over to the school with the first grade, they at least struggle along with the problem up to that time. If the pre-school period of close parent-child relationship is curtailed or eliminated, there is ground for suspecting a recurrence of the age of governesses who did everything for the child except implant the final kiss on the forehead at bedtime. Most parents need very much to learn of the things their children can teach them. And because they need to know these things, and because the learning will be at least moderately difficult, there is often a bit of recalcitrance --at which point the nursery school springs forth with great tidings of rescue from responsibility.

In totalling up the objections to the extensive spread of the nursery school custom, we should also point to the class distinctions which may be fostered by this means. If either the parent or the child feels that social status is augmented by attending a nursery school—attendance not possible for many children of the less well-to-do—another psychological barrier has been raised for future years, with only the carefully principled inter-racial and "inter-income-class" schools serving to keep it down.

In justice, however, we must grant that a number of nursery schools are presently contributing valuable aid to the field of child psychology, as well as offering a haven to children who, unfortunately, come from homes from which they need to escape as often as possible. Nursery schools clearly have a role in our society, and we may be glad for the existence of teachers with a spark of genius for child understanding; but, please, let us not have nursery schools become a completely "accepted thing"! If no counter values are emphasized during the next few decades, we shall probably start running to State-supported institutions with our three-year-olds. In such a pattern, children and parents may typically fail even a little more noticeably in understanding each other. The basic problem, we think, has always been that parents are not quite willing to risk the emergence of genuine individuality in their children.

FRONTIERS
Against the Grain

FOR some years now, we have read about the progress and fortunes of the new State of Israel in the *Jewish Newsletter,* issued bi-weekly by William Zukerman, coming to value also his reports of the affairs of the Jewish community in the United States. During recent months, the *Newsletter* has been describing a trend in Israeli policy which promises to turn back the centuries and to reduce the level of Israeli culture to that of the Middle Ages. The issue of Aug. 4, for example, reports the provisions of the new Israeli Nationality Law, under which all Jews residing in the territory are automatically made citizens, while non-Jews cannot become citizens without fulfilling a number of requirements, including a knowledge of Hebrew. The 175,000 Arabs living in Israel, for example, are automatically eliminated from citizenship by this law, although their ancestors have populated the country for a thousand years. These Arabs can regain citizenship only through a long and difficult process of naturalization.

Meanwhile, in the United States, a move on the part of the Reform and Conservative Jews to create an American Committee for Liberal Judaism in Israel, for the purpose of easing the restrictions on non-orthodox Jews in the new country, has been greeted with threats and warnings by American spokesmen of Orthodoxy. Mr. Zukerman explains the situation:

> . . . unbelievable as this may sound, this elemental right of worship according to one's own conscience is not granted in the Jewish State to Jews who do not follow the strictly Orthodox form of their faith. A Christian in Israel may follow any form of Christianity without molestation. He may be a Catholic, Baptist, Presbyterian or Unitarian, but a Jew may not deviate from the Orthodox, which has not changed for the last fifteen hundred years, at least. Since religion in Israel is a state institution and is enforced by the law, the failure to recognize any kind of non-Orthodox Judaism is not merely a matter of prestige or principle, but a question of existence. For four years the Reform and Conservative rabbis (most of whom are rabid Zionists who have done more for the establishment of Israel than the Orthodox) did nothing but protest cautiously against the humiliation and injustice inflicted upon them by the first Jewish State after two thousand years of history. This year, the protests passed from word to action, and the first step was taken to rectify this intolerable condition. And this aroused the ire of the Orthodox rabbis and laymen.

We are informed that, curiously enough, the difference between Orthodox Judaism and other forms is principally in external observances. Orthodox Jews meticulously observe the Jewish dietary laws. They are faithful to the ancestral customs such as covering their heads during worship, holding their services entirely in Hebrew, and maintaining the segregation between the sexes in the synagogue. While the same scriptures are read by both Orthodox and non-Orthodox, the Orthodox Jews take a much more serious view of the doctrine of the Messiah, who is to come for the purpose of leading all loyal Jews to final peace under the rule of Jehovah. Orthodox Judaism differs doctrinally from Christianity in regard to Jesus, who is looked upon as an interloper—even a false Messiah. It is natural, then, for Orthodox Jews to feel some disturbance when it is reported that a survey conducted among a thousand Reform Jewish families in Louisville, Kentucky, reveals that 60 per cent of a Louisville Temple celebrated Christmas with trees and gifts, and that 70 per cent of them want their children to join with others in singing Christmas carols in the public schools! These attitudes, *Jewish Newsletter* reports, reflect the trend among American Jews everywhere in the country outside the large metropolitan centers of Jewish population where Orthodoxy is still powerful.

Obviously, the preaching of "tolerance" is no solution for this problem. "Tolerance," to the Orthodox, can mean no more than a betrayal of their sense of mission to create an environment for the practice of their religion which has some hope of bringing the millennia of miserable and forlorn wanderings of the Jewish people to a happy conclusion. So long as Orthodoxy stands for

Theocracy in social and national organization, the Orthodox must in conscience oppose with vigor the watered-down versions of their faith represented by Reform and Conservative Judaism. A great irony, however, lies in the fact that "the majority of the people of Israel," as Mr. Zukerman reports, "except for the most backward Oriental Jews just brought over, are not Orthodox and they could not be forced into the Orthodox religious strait jacket without the money, political influence and moral prestige, of American Jews." The move to maintain the unbending rule of Orthodoxy in Israel has this morally contradictory effect:

> . . . under the guise of relief and humanitarianism, all the resources of Jews in democratic America are to be used to impose the most reactionary anti-democratic form of Theocracy upon an unwilling democratic people of Israel.

Thus the Jews, with the blessings of people of liberal feelings everywhere, have at last gained control over their ancestral homeland, only to encounter the unyielding dilemma of a faith which cannot be practiced in freedom save by constraining all those who do not share it. Like the famous Pilgrim Fathers who settled in Plymouth town to worship without interference, but no sooner were established than they began to "interfere" with dissenters among themselves, the Orthodox Jews are haunted by the same articles of faith which made a mockery of Pilgrim and Puritan advocacy of religious freedom. Theirs is a tragedy compounded of a thousand years of dreaming of a Promised Land, not for all mankind, but for a favored few. All such dreams, perhaps, are the stuff of future tragedy.