VOLUME XIII, NO. 19
MAY 11, 1960

THE UNFOLDING CONSCIOUSNESS

IT may be said, with almost no qualification, that the one great realization emerging into the foreground of present awareness is that the essential human problem is one of finding a core of meaning for our lives. If we wish to speak of this problem as broadly as possible, we shall probably call it the religious problem. "Religious" is the word, since as far back as history goes we find men meeting the problem of meaning with a religious answer. Religious answers are commonly made to serve men in the mass. Religion affords a *cultural* solution to the problem of meaning. But because it is a cultural solution, it is not a final solution. The final solution of genuine problems, for human beings, is always individual. That is, it comes as the result of individual discovery and realization. For the individual, then, the problem of meaning is a philosophical problem. Philosophical answers to profound questions may result in religious or cultural answers, but the answers are invariably changed by being turned into the "common denominators" thought to be appropriate to a particular community or population.

After we have admitted the usefulness, as well as the varying necessity, of the religious answers, what shall we say about the difficulties they create?

The obvious trouble with religious answers to the question of meaning is that they can be and are accepted *without being understood.* The instrument which produces this effect is the doctrine—usually put in the form of an explanation of meaning which is not individually verified by its believers, but which is left as a matter of faith. So long as there is thorough-going awareness that doctrines are no more than cultural or institutional substitutes for knowledge, religion may have a constructive role in the community. But when belief in doctrines is allowed to replace philosophic search, religion falls prey to the tendency to turn into encrusted ignorance. This tendency is confirmed, finally, when the leading doctrines of religion are made into dogmas—a form of belief which by definition must be obtained from an outside source, such as divine revelation.

In general, we may say Eastern religions, as distinguished from Western faiths, have maintained the distinction between the religious and the philosophic answer to the question of meaning. For this reason, there is a closer alliance between religion and philosophy, even today, in the East, than in the West. Here, undoubtedly, is explanation for the fact that when contemporary Western thinkers seek for help from philosophy and religion in their search for the core of meaning, they turn more naturally to Eastern thought than to the Western religious tradition. Eastern religion, most particularly Buddhism, is uniformly emphatic in pointing out that doctrines and beliefs are *not* knowledge. In fact, the iconoclastic side of Zen Buddhism is largely devoted to an attack on the delusion that verbal traditions and intellectual formulas constitute the verity and the explanation of life men hunger after.

We began by proposing that the search for a core of meaning in human life is becoming the central intellectual and moral issue of the age. This development is manifest in many areas of contemporary inquiry. In political thought, a decisive step was taken during the war by Dwight Macdonald, in his epoch-making essay, *The Root Is Man.* Returning to the essential Humanist content in the work of Karl Marx, Macdonald pointed out that the so-called "Progressive" view of history and human affairs continually betrays the present in behalf of some hypothetical political millennium which is to arrive *after* the dirty work is complete. Over-simplified, Macdonald's

declaration is that we must stop doing evil in order that good may come. The section of Macdonald's essay, "We Need a New Political Vocabulary," demands a here-and-now interpretation of the word "radical." A radical, in his view, is a man who will not compromise the present for the future:

> The Progressive makes History the center of his ideology. The Radical puts Man there. The Progressive's attitude is optimistic about human nature . . . and about the possibility of understanding history through scientific method. The Radical is, if not exactly pessimistic, at least more sensitive to the dual nature of man; he sees evil as well as good at the base of human nature; he is sceptical about the ability of science to explain things beyond a certain point; he is aware of the tragic element in man's fate, not only today but in any conceivable kind of society. The Progressive thinks in collective terms (the interests of Society or the Workingclass); the Radical stresses the individual conscience and sensibility. The Progressive starts off from what is actually happening; the Radical starts off from what he wants to happen. The former must have the feeling that "History is on his side." The latter goes along the road pointed out by his own individual conscience; if History is going his way, too, he is pleased; but he is quite stubborn about following "what ought to be" rather than "what is."

Another kind of watershed in modern thought is provided by a book which appeared in 1952—*Time and Eternity* (Princeton University Press) by W. T. Stace. Prof. Stace represents a Western thinker's emancipation from the form of delusion common in religion. As he puts it:

> The moment you take your religious doctrine as literal, you find that it results in contradictions, for instance between the goodness of God and the evil in the world, or between God's unchangeability and His activity, or between His personality and his infinity. These contradictions are the stock in trade of the sceptic. His business consists in pointing them out. He always necessarily wins because the contradictions are real and cannot be evaded by any subterfuges. . . .

Prof. Stace has much in common with the thought of Paul Tillich, who is perhaps the most influential of modern theologians. Tillich makes much the same contentions, with such vigor and insight that it is easy to show that he is not even a "Christian" thinker, in the conventional sense of the term. What men like Stace, Tillich, and a number of others are doing is restoring to modern religious thought the idea of the crucial importance of individual self-realization. In a later book, *Religion and the Modern Mind,* Stace remarks:

> A man may attach himself to any church or to none. He may be disgusted with the superstitions into which institutional religions degenerate, and with the shams and hypocrisies which they engender. Or he may have seen the literal falsity of their creeds, and because he has been taught to take them literally and thinks there is no other way, because he fails to see their symbolic truth and function, he rests in a mere negation. He may then call himself an agnostic or atheist. But it does not follow that he is irreligious, even though he may profess to be. His religion may subsist in the form of a sort of unclothed religious feeling, unclothed with symbols at all, inarticulate, formless. *Each man,* in an institutional religion or out of it, *must find his own way.*

Belonging to the same family of critical thinkers is George P. Grant, whose recent work, *Philosophy in the Mass Age,* was discussed in MANAS last week. Others who might be mentioned as expressing not unrelated insights are Simone Weil (*The Need for Roots* and *Waiting for God,* G. P. Putnam), the writings of the French Existentialists, Camus and Sartre, Alan W. Watts (*The Spirit of Zen* and other works), and in modern psychology the works of A. H. Maslow, who is often quoted in these pages.

All these writers represent some kind of break with the customary interpretation of the meaning of human life. All of them seem to be reaching back toward either a philosophic or a religious explanation of life, although what some of them say may be so independent of the familiar vocabularies of religion and philosophy as to hide this aspect of their quest.

Where, finally, this broad and strengthening current in modern thought will lead is a question that may be left to the future: what is unmistakably plain, right now, is that such

thinkers are all contributing to a restoration of the importance of the individual. A philosophy which neglects the activity and discovery of truth by individuals is for them quite obviously a philosophy without meaning.

The first notable change in the modern temper which has come as a result of this new feeling about the individual is a loss of interest in philosophies of history. In most modern philosophies of history, the individual is at a serious discount. Hegel, as McTaggart has pointed out, simply did not care about individuals (*Studies in Hegelian Cosmology*, John McTaggart). Apart from his genuine concern for injustice and human suffering, the only thing that interests non-communist students of Karl Marx is his suppressed Humanist and Renaissance spirit. Both Macdonald and Grant go back into Marx's writings to show this side of the founder of modern Communism. In psychology, Ira Progoff has written a book (*The Death and Rebirth of Psychology*) to demonstrate that the materialism of the psychoanalytical movement begun by Freud has been decisively abandoned by the neo-Freudians and by the representatives of other off-shoots of the Freudian revolution. Many of those now dealing with the sicknesses of the mind seem inevitably drawn to reconsider the mechanistic assumptions of nineteenth-century science. This renascent idealism in psychology is probably best represented by Erich Fromm, who has become something of a leader in the reconciliation of the concepts of psychoanalysis with the ideas of transcendental or mystical religion. These trends all work against the importance of historical philosophies.

The central idea of the new view—also a very old view—is that the essential meaning of human life is something that takes place in the inner being of the individual. A passage quoted from Jacquetta Hawkes' essay on history (in last week's MANAS) puts the matter well:

> What has mattered most over the last fifty thousand years is the individual man's and woman's inner experience of life. A woman may be living more fully, dancing to make the corn grow than in dancing in the Cafe de Paris; a man may have more primitive thoughts driving to Wall Street in a Cadillac than trotting to Ur on a donkey. Yes, it is the experience of the individual that counts, of the man and woman living eternally in the present instant of time.

As suggested earlier, the thought of Zen Buddhism, with its uncompromising opposition to reliance upon doctrines, theories, and intellectuality, has a natural attraction for Western thinkers who have been exploring the field of religious philosophy in their search for a core of meaning. While the periodical, *Philosophy East and West*, has for years been publishing papers concerned with analogues between Eastern and Western thought, an event of the first importance in this program of comparison and synthesis comes with publication by Erich Fromm, D. T. Suzuki, and Richard De Martino of essays under the common title, *Zen Buddhism and Psychoanalysis* (Harper, 1960, $4). Dr. Fromm's Foreword briefly describes this joint undertaking:

> This book has its origin in a workshop on Zen Buddhism and Psychoanalysis, which was held under the auspices of the Department of Psychoanalysis of the Medical School, Autonomous National University of Mexico, during the first week of August, 1957, in Cuernavaca, Mexico.
>
> Any Psychologist, even twenty years ago, would have been greatly surprised—or shocked—to find his colleagues interested in a "mystical" religious system such as Zen Buddhism. He would have been even more surprised to find that most of the people present were not just "interested" but deeply concerned, and that they discovered that the week spent with Dr. Suzuki and his ideas had a most stimulating and refreshing influence on them, to say the least.

It is suitable to say that on this occasion some fifty psychiatrists and psychoanalysts (preponderantly the latter) were glad to "go to school" to Daisetz Suzuki. Dr. Suzuki, a venerable Japanese Zen Master who has written extensively on his subject for Western readers, was no doubt the best possible choice of a man to help these Westerners to an understanding of Zen.

One gets no trace of pretentiousness in his works, which are obviously written as simply as he can write them. It is not easy to write about an activity that is believed to be crowned with spiritual enlightenment, when carried to fulfillment. Dr. Suzuki does his work without creating any false impressions—so far as we can see—either of himself or of Zen. It takes considerable enlightenment to do this.

He has learned something of the vocabulary and conceptual structure of Western thought, but never compromises his own thinking with too facile an adaptation to Western ideas. His stubbornness in this regard, however, is plainly rooted in philosophic conviction. He is even a little hard on some Western thinkers. There is no space here to summarize his views (which would be difficult, if not impossible, anyhow), but one quotation will convey some essential ideas. Dr. Suzuki writes:

> The truth is that what involves the totality of human existence is not a matter of intellection but of the will in its most primary sense of the word. The intellect may raise all kinds of questions—and it is perfectly right for it to do so—but to expect any final answer from the intellect is asking too much of it, for this is not the nature of intellection. The answer lies buried under the bedrock of our being. To split it open requires the most basic tremor of the will. When this is felt the doors of perception open and a new vista hitherto undreamed of is presented. The intellect proposes, and what disposes is not the proposer himself. Whatever we may say about the intellect, it is after all superficial, it is something floating on the surface of consciousness. The surface must be broken through in order to reach the unconscious. But as long as this unconscious belongs in the domain of psychology, there cannot be any *Satori* [high spiritual awakening] in the Zen sense. The psychology must be transcended and what may be termed "the ontological unconscious" must be tapped.
>
> The Sung masters must have realized this in their long experience and also in the treatment of their disciples. They wished to break up the intellectual *aporia* by means of the "Mu!" in which there is no trace of intellection but only of the sheer will overriding the intellect. But I must remind my readers not to take me for an anti-intellectualist through and through. What I object to is regarding the intellect as the ultimate reality itself. The intellect is needed to determine, however vaguely, where the reality is. And the reality is grasped only when the intellect quits its claim on it.

There is an obvious therapy and "shock" value for Western thought in Zen Buddhism. The concept of "knowing" found in Zen is confirmed in dozens of ways by the best of the intuitive philosophers of the West, yet in Zen there is a body of ideas which places this psychology in a firm relation to ultimate values such as are indicated by the terms "self-realization" and "Union with the One." It is the intuitive appreciation of at least the partial validity of the Zen psychology which opens the way to consideration of these values by Western thinkers. Zen, moreover, would naturally appeal to persons brought up in the empiricist tradition, for it is nothing if not experimental in its approach to the problem of knowledge.

The last section of Dr. Suzuki's essay is intended to meet—even if obliquely—some of the questions asked by the participants in the workshop, including the following:

> How is it that in the writings of Zen there is so little explicit concern expressed about cultural conditions, the organization of society, and the welfare of man? . . . .
>
> Is there then in such a return to the self some danger of desensitization to the preciousness of every man? Do Zen masters and students participate in the social problems of the day?
>
> What is Zen's attitude toward ethics? Toward political and economic deprivation? Toward the individual's position and responsibility toward his society?

Dr. Suzuki found these questions discouraging. "No wonder," he said, "my short tongue, quite different from Buddha's, fails to make people come to an understanding of Zen in the preceding four lectures." He hardly deals with the questions directly at all, but gives an account of the *paramitas* of perfection which manifest in

the illumined *bodhisattva*, and concludes by speaking of the commitment of the followers of Buddha to help others find the way to enlightenment. One question, however, he does deal with specifically. Some one had asked: "Christian mysticism is full of erotic images—is there any trace of that in *satori?"* Dr. Suzuki replied:

> . . . the notion of love as it is understood by Buddhists lacks the demonstrative feature of eroticism which we observe strongly manifested by some of the Christian saints. Their love is directed in a very special way toward Christ, whereas Buddhists have almost nothing to do with Buddha, but with their fellow beings, nonsentient as well as sentient. Their love manifests itself in the form of ungrudged and self-sacrificing labor for others, . . .

The first part of Dr. Fromm's essay contains a brilliant analysis of the break-down of Western civilization, examined in psychological terms. He then moves to the task of drawing parallels between the psychoanalytical and the Zen account of the human situation. The result of this comparison is the perception that all human beings go through certain basic changes in attitude, in the passage from what might be called man's "primitive" condition to a state of relative maturity or enlightenment. This is the true drama of human life, and not the achievements of history. The Zen philosopher and the psychoanalyst are concerned with the same essential elements of human experience, however different may be their respective vocabularies and philosophies. It is this emerging similarity of experience of the dynamics of psychic behavior, of the functioning of men in search of the good, that draws men like Dr. Fromm to the study of Zen Buddhism. There is no suggestion in his writing that he is about to become a Zen Buddhist, but there is much to indicate an intense interest on his part in the realities which are shrouded by man's ignorance of his own nature—realities which seem to appear in outline in Buddhist philosophy as well as in psychoanalysis.

A characteristic passage in Dr. Fromm's essay is the following:

> I have said that man is asked a question by the very fact of his existence, and that this is a question raised by the contradictions within himself—that of being in nature and at the same time of transcending nature by the fact that he is life aware of itself. Any man who listens to this question posed to him, and who makes it a matter of "ultimate concern" to answer this question, and to answer it as a whole man and not only by thoughts, is a "religious" man; and all systems that try to give, teach, and transmit such answers are "religions." On the other hand, any man—and any culture—that tries to be deaf to the existential question is irreligious. There is no better example that can be cited for men who are deaf to the question posed by existence than we ourselves, living in the twentieth century. We try to evade the question by concern with property, prestige, power, production, fun, and, ultimately, by trying to forget that we—that I—exist. No matter how often he *thinks* of God or goes to church, or how much he believes in religious ideas, if he, the whole man, is deaf to the question of existence, if he does not have an answer for it, he is marking time, and he lives and dies like one of the million things he produces. He *thinks* of God, instead of experiencing *being* God.

Here, surely, is one of the cornerstones of the philosophy of the future, if we may be so optimistic as to assume that the world has a future. For in this passage is implicit the central principle of scientific inquiry—that of finding out for oneself; and the central principle of religious philosophy, also—that of finding out something that is worth knowing.

REVIEW
"THE WAR LOVER`'

THIS much discussed novel by John Hersey is not, we think, primarily intended as pacifist propaganda. It does not argue that war necessarily creates bestiality in human beings, but demonstrates most dramatically that the war situation is one which allows psychotic individuals full play for their destructive ambitions. In war, "Buzz Marrow," who earns the DFC, for a long time appears to be a magnetic leader, and he is unquestionably a genius at flying an airplane. Yet Maj. Marrow is also a dangerous psychotic, described by Orville Prescott (New York *Times*) as "one of those men who find in war a license that 'makes what they want to do legal and respectable'." Mr. Prescott continues:

> It is the thesis of Mr. Hersey's book that there are many Marrows in the world and that one of the worst evils of war is its sinister glorification of such "heroes." But Buzz Marrow is not just a representative type. He is a brilliantly portrayed individual and an utterly loathsome one. His insane egoism, his obscene tirades, his sadism and his lust for death are almost overwhelming. One cringes from the presence of such a monster.

Mr. Prescott also says that, "unlike many anti-war novels, *The War Lover* is not an angry denunciation. Its message is implied rather than shouted. It is that war itself, which unleashes the Marrows, is the ultimate evil, the irrational destroyer of lives and the corrupter of character." We can hardly object to this interpretation of *The War Lover,* but Hersey goes on to detailed consideration of a fundamental dilemma which grows out of Maj. Marrow's relations with his differently-constituted compatriots. The same sort of issue is examined by Tom Driver in reviewing Saul Levitt's *The Andersonville Trial* (*Christian Century,* Feb. 3). The basic question is whether one should defend an authority which supports injustice. Driver writes:

> One can escape the tragic dilemma inherent in the demand for personal accountability from soldiers by facing and accepting the anarchical consequence that action according to individual conscience would lead to. If one continues to maintain, however, that the military is indispensable, one should recognize that the demands of the military and the demands of personal conscience will inevitably conflict. The individual is subject to contradictory sanctions and there is nothing for it but his destruction, physically or morally or both. Melville saw this dilemma when he wrote *Billy Budd,* with the result that Billy's death became inescapable and Capt. Vere was "stretched on the cross of choice." Aeschylus saw it when he wrote the *Eumenides*—and he had to call in a goddess to help him solve the problem.

In The War Lover a percipient English girl draws out of Maj. Marrow his actual feeling:

> "What about the war?" she said, using again the very small voice of someone intimidated by such masculine vitality as his.
>
> "Never had it so good," he snapped out.
>
> "What do you mean?" she asked.
>
> "I like to fly," he said. "I like the work we're doing."
>
> "Work?"
>
> "Listen," he said, with flashing eyes, "Boman here and I belong to the most destructive group of men in the history of the world. That's our work."
>
> Daphne looked at me questioningly, as if to ask whether I associated myself with these statements, and I believe I gave my head the slightest negative shake. . . .
>
> I had an odd, uncomfortable feeling about my pilot. For the first time, I sensed a serious lack in him, and, also for the first time, with Daphne, I was conscious of a gap of nationalities. I felt apologetic about my American colleague. I determined to explain to Daphne, at a later meeting, that . . . But what would I explain? There was something wanting in Marrow's education. He was uncultured, crude. . . . No, that was hardly it. . . . Ours was a people who liked what money could buy; we were blunt, open, aggressive. . . . No. . . .

Daphne later puts her finger on what Marrow is really seeking through the destruction of others:

> I tried to pin Daphne down. "What is he, then? What is it about him that makes you call him what you do?"

"I'm not an expert. This is just a woman's theory."

"I fly with this guy, don't forget that."

Daphne thought a few seconds and then said, "One who loves fighting better than the things he's fighting for."

I tried to think what Marrow might be fighting for. No ideas, no hopes or dreams, certainly. . . .

"He's a superb flier," I said, "and if he loves war so much, why *was* he passed over?"

Daphne was frowning. "A war lover—my Dugger—your pilot: he's a hero, as I see him, in every respect except that he gets a tiny bit too much satisfaction, 'bang,' Marrow called it, out of some deep-down instinct for. . . perhaps hunting." Daphne was having a hard time with this. "I'm trying to tell you. . . . It's silly for me to try to analyze it, Bo; I'm a woman. It's just something I feel. . . . It has to do with death. That's close to it. I guess when you say the things a man's fighting for, you mean: life. And Marrow doesn't want that, he wants death. Not just for himself, but for everyone."

You can read into *The War Lover* any sort of symbolism you wish, so long as you end with the unsettling opinion that there is something of Marrow in every man who isn't possessed of the "mature mind." In the final analysis, Marrow is pathetic, but no more so than the rest of us when obsessed by a destructive urge. In war there is "necessary" risk of death, but beyond this lies a more subtle danger—that of losing, either temporarily or permanently, the capacity to feel obligation toward life. The man in uniform can easily ignore the responsibility to be human—that is, humane—because his "functional" responsibility in relation to military duty is so easily fulfilled.

So those of immature, twisted psyche, like Maj. Marrow, are enabled to express their worst tendencies in a war-orientated society. Hersey's chief protagonist, Marrow's co-pilot, pulls himself back from the abyss, while the tragedy of Marrow is that he knows no life save that of the abyss, and the tragedy of a war society is that it pays homage to the abysmal values.

COMMENTARY
SOVIET EXCHANGE STUDENTS

A REPORT on "Soviet Students on an American Campus" in the *New Leader* for Feb. 29 makes an interesting comparison with what is said in this week's Frontiers article. Our Roving Correspondent remarks that his contacts in Moscow were restricted to "official" circles, allowing him to meet only PR-trained workers and intellectuals. His conclusion from discussions with these people and from observation of "Youth" and "Peace" activities in Russia was that "the West's conflict with Communism is genuinely a conflict of values, of ideas and ways of thinking."

Lewis Feuer in the *New Leader* presents an encouraging contrast. Mr. Feuer is professor of philosophy at the University of California. In this article he tells of his experiences with the several Soviet exchange students who have come to the university campus. Briefly, Mr. Feuer finds no unbridgeable gap separating these young Russians from American students and teachers. He writes:

> There have been several groups of Soviet students at the University of California during the past two years. Some have stayed the entire academic year, others were on a week's fleeting visit. I have participated in long discussions with these young Soviet intellectuals. As a student of political language I can say this: Under the clarifying stimulus of free discussion the young Soviet intellectual uses his words naturally much as we do; when he says "freedom," he means, despite two generations of Hegelian word-training, what we do.
>
> If these are ideologically orthodox, Party-selected students whom we are permitted to see and talk with, then we can report, nonetheless, that an ideological dialogue is possible, useful, and fruitful. The pilot projects of student interchanges indicate that where the young intellectuals can speak to each other, they will find a common idiom and ground for mutual understanding. The Soviet students, at any rate, are not ice-hardened, cold warriors; they have no congealed emotional investment in cultural isolation, no fixations of political semantics.

Mr. Feuer goes into some detail about his conversations with the Soviet students. Those who can get hold of a copy of the Feb. 29 *New Leader* and read his article will almost certainly be glad they did so. The young Russians were sturdy defenders of their political faith, but they also exhibited their own sort of intellectual honesty. To the end, Mr. Feuer says, the students "had some powerful criticisms of American life." But they also had some eye-opening experiences of America. And after attacking Pasternak's *Dr. Zhivago* as a bad book, they were obliged to confess that they ought to read it before condemning it! It was pointed out to them that another Nobel prize-winner, Sinclair Lewis, had bitterly satirized American life (*Babbitt*, etc.) to the general applause of his readers—a treatment somewhat different from that received by Pasternak.

Toward the end of his article, Mr. Feuer has a moving passage on the values of intercultural exchange:

> The young Soviet intellectual—reading Mark Twain, tasting the bitter comment on human cruelty in *The Mysterious Stranger* and human deceit in *The Man that Corrupted Hadleyburg*, sensing his sympathy for the derelicts and ne'er-do-wells who have not quite known how to succeed, experiencing his horror at the people who chose submission rather than struggle in *A Connecticut Yankee*, and feeling that universal, unsentimental sympathy that Twain had for the runaway Negro, the despised Jew, the exploited Kanaka, and the mutilated Congo native—is moved by values common to all human existence, not to Western civilization, or Soviet civilization, but all civilization. He will acquiesce less readily to the superimposed ideological idiom which aims to suppress his common humanity.

"The universal human being," Mr. Feuer concludes, "with his common human drives and hopes, survives and outlasts all ideological compression."

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves
NOTES ON THE QUEST FOR IDENTITY

ONE of the most influential books in the field of education, concerned with the emotions, is still Erik H. Erikson's *Childhood and Society* (1950, W. W. Norton). Prof. Erikson describes what he terms the "life cycle" of eight stages, from childhood to death, each stage focusing on a typical problem or crisis which must be resolved. Prof. Erikson's work was made the basis of the deliberations of the Mid-century (1950) White House Conference on Children and Youth. As the editors of *Children* (published by the U. S. Department of Education) remark in the March-April issue: "Erikson's eight stages of psychosocial development, each harboring a special crisis which must be fought through before the next stage can be reached, have become as familiar to students of child development as the dangers confronted by John Bunyan's Christian were to the persons who guided children a century ago. They have been emphasized not only in the training of psychiatrists, but also in the training of teachers, nurses, social workers, and parent educators and in parent discussion groups."

The first stage, occurring during infancy, presents the inevitable task of reconciling the child with the fact that care and attention cannot be perpetual. When the mother removes herself physically from the presence of the child, even if only briefly, a six-month-old baby suffers what Erikson calls a "sense of loss." The task for the infant is to discover that this separation from his mother need not cause unhappiness. It is important for the "discontinuity in care" to correspond to what the adult would call a rational and orderly pattern. Too much attention one day and not enough on the next can foster a sense of fear or mistrust. Such feelings, according to Erikson, may last throughout life. What the child really needs is trust in himself, and during infancy this is encouraged by helping him to feel confidence in his environment, so that he is not beleaguered by the question, "What will happen next?"

The second stage, early childhood, brings instruction from the parents as to what the child's obligations are; the conflict between "duty" and his spontaneous wants must be relieved of tension. Otherwise the same ego-capacity which lets the child feel the value of exerting his own *will* can register a deep sense of shame and doubt at failure to do so. The child must not be led to expect defeat in every battle of will with those who are older and stronger.

During what Erikson calls the "play age," there is an intensification of the problems of the second stage, brought about by the child's emerging ability to construct elaborate fantasies. At this stage the child's autonomy of will is often hidden from the parents. If the child is made to feel overburdened by behavior requirements, and guilty for his failures at proper behavior, he may also feel a thousand-fold more guilty for his life of fantasy beyond the parents' knowledge. When the parents are overfond of moral strictures and upbraidings, this combination of circumstances may develop in the child what the editors of *Children* call "a deep-seated conviction that he is essentially bad, with a resultant stifling of initiative or a conversion of his moralism to vindictiveness."

Stage four brings the first contact with school and the child's need to create a balance between his longing for achievement and the fact that there are always those who can do better. Here, of course, it is important that the child receive recognition for his efforts, showing that it is his intention rather than the actual accomplishment which establishes communion and mutual appreciation.

During the fifth stage, that of adolescence, the young person is actually required to do a recap of the psychological tasks already performed. He must, in Erikson's words, "refight many of the earlier battles." Further, "There is bound to be some sort of identity diffused, since at the new

level of appraisal the young person is seldom able at once to reconcile his own feelings with those he attributes to his parents."

Stage six presents the complex challenge of establishing a harmonious relationship with persons of the opposite sex. Here the task is to learn to give of himself without fear of losing identity. Unless this stage is successfully passed, a youth may feel isolated, even if externally popular.

In stage seven, that of adulthood, there is potential tension in the work of establishing and guiding the next generation, through having children, because of the self-absorption which is possible, but not desirable, save in relation to some field of creativity.

In the eighth stage, that of old age, the sum of the person's management of the previous stages shows itself, manifesting either as what Erikson calls an "accrued ego integration," a sense of integrity, or in dissatisfaction and disgust.

We take these various stages in Erikson's "life cycle" to be useful points of departure in the evaluation of typical psychological problems, and flexible enough to avoid oversimplification. Many of the actual problems of the child-parent relationship cannot, of course, be correctly represented by any formula, because of the tremendous variations in individuals. Gardner Murphy (in the Fall issue of the Menninger *Quarterly*) illustrates how the child may be frustrated by a too-systematic approach:

> Our discussions of the American family have often implied an ideal, a standard for the American mother. She is expected to be warm, strong, direct, to enjoy her femininity and her motherhood, to give affection and support, to protect her children, to be firm but not overbearing, tender but not mawkish; to provide stimulus and support for the child's growth and his ultimate achievement of independence.
>
> We have recently begun to learn, however, that in this picture some basic realities are missing; for one thing, the factor of individual differences. What is simple and natural for the mother to give may not completely meet the needs of every child. One research group making studies of children as they grow up in Topeka has observed an affectionate, tender mother whose infant boy wanted more vigorous handling, desired to bounce and jounce, developing from early months a puppy-dog-like need for energetic activity. He not only put pressure on the mother to be something that she could not become, but to the mother's bewilderment the child seemed incapable of fitting into what she thought was adequate mothering. In a contrasting case, a vigorous mother had an infant son whose sensitivity needed a degree of gentleness which was actually beyond what she was capable of giving. Each mother can only do her own best.
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> Despite both the biology of the hereditary tie and the family continuity, which leads the mother to re-enact a good deal from her own girlhood, at times there are these wide discrepancies in what is wanted by the child and what the mother is capable of giving. A very verbal child and an active mother result in a storytime hour demanded by the child but boring to the mother. Some children when taken to the supermarket will sit still looking at comics or movies, but not all mothers have this type of child. . . .
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> Family relationships are very individualized, and the mother who is equally good for all the children cannot be found in every home. In one family there may be children with different temperaments, each of whom may or may not get what is needed for optimal growth at a certain time. This situation is sometimes balanced, or complicated, by the father's temperament which may fit into the child's needs or fail to fit in at any given time.

In his closing paragraphs, Dr. Murphy also refers to Dr. Erikson's "life cycle," and it seems to us that formulations of this sort are generally useful in showing that human development proceeds from one stage of psychological initiation to another.

When parents and teachers realize that all human beings, including themselves, are committed to the task of further "initiation," simply because they *are* human beings, it becomes easier to sympathize with and assist those struggles for discovery and clarification which manifest during all the "stages" through which the young must pass.

FRONTIERS

Letter from Moscow

AFTER three weeks in Moscow I have come to one conclusion. The West's conflict with Communism is genuinely a conflict of values, of ideas and ways of thinking. Solution of political problems will not necessarily solve this conflict, since the real ground of distrust lies somewhere else. I don't know how briefly I can support this conclusion.

There is a strong peace movement in the Soviet Union. That we would not immediately recognize it as such, that we would disagree with its methods and probably with many of its aims, is no reason for ignoring its existence. In fact, we will ignore it at our clear peril, since it is currently at least as keen an instrument for the building of world Socialism as any of the others, including technical and scientific advance, and success in economic development.

It is extremely difficult to assess this peace movement. Like everything else in the USSR, its major qualities are determined by some center of power or authority. One must try to identify that center, and to appraise its purposes, though this attempt may not be successful.

In the nature of things, since we have been here on business with Government and other agencies, we have met with officials, professionals, intellectuals; we have not had contact with common people. It is therefore not at all clear to us whether this movement, which one strongly suspects of being contrived, has roots among the people. The trouble with reaching a judgment is simply that in the circumstances one can, and may, whether he knows it or not, reach a conclusion strictly in accord with his preconceptions.

But that "Peace" is the word of the moment in Moscow admits of no possible doubt. The peace apparatus is there for all to see, and its pursuit of peace and disarmament is relentless, dizzying and wearisome. The kingpin in all this seems to be the Soviet State Committee for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries. One learns that any title beginning "Soviet State Committee . . . " means THE TOP, since such organizations depend in some manner directly from the Government's center of power.

Below this level are several "public" (*i.e.*, supposedly *non*-Governmental) organs: The Committee of Youth Organizations; the Committee for the Defense of Peace; and a sprawling seven-days' wonder called Friendship House, creature of the Committee for Friendship and Cultural Exchange with Foreign Countries, to name only those we actually know. We have found in these organizations some exceptionally attractive people, with zeal to burn, all engaged under obvious pressure in pursuit of a massive program in support of peace and disarmament. Every road leads to one or more of these organizations; there are no bypasses, no way we discovered of detouring around them.

Take the Committee of Youth Organizations, for example. We have dealt directly with it, since much of our business related to students. This committee organizes everything from Youth Festivals to volunteer work camps. It handles all outside invitations to Soviet youth, and it deals with all youth who propose to come to the Soviet Union. Shall we ask some Russian Orthodox youth to a Seminar in Western Europe? The invitation must be processed by the Committee. Shall we ask some Russian Baptists to another such Seminar? Same answer. If we propose a youth Seminar in the USSR, the Committee is delegated to process the proposal, and then to operate the Seminar.

Or take the Committee for the Defense of Peace. We attended an evening affair at which Paul Robeson handed out awards to various members of the Soviet artistic professions, and to a dance troupe which had recently toured the U.S., for outstanding contributions to peace. Six hundred people attended, listening in what I

thought was markedly apathetic style to Robeson's speech, to the presentation ceremonies, and to the performances of a long string of artists of various types. When at 11 o'clock a great, grey box was rolled out and a puppet show appeared, we decided the bottom had been scraped and went to our hotel. But each person spoke, and each item was intended, somehow, to emphasize the theme of peace and disarmament, even to the comic-hall singer whose offering, well received by the audience, was unintelligible to us except for his refrain rhyming of "America—hysterica." It all pays off, one way or another.

The Committee's big, two-day, All-Union Conference on Peace and Disarmament was held in the lovely Theatre of the Kremlin itself. Speaker after speaker referred to the great, peace-loving, world-leading Soviet Union, and hammered at the "imperialist" powers said to resent and resist disarmament and peace. The list of speakers, taken from notes of two sessions, includes a poet, an engineer, a film producer, the poet again (this time for an hour), a labor union leader, the Secretary of the Peace Committee, Secretary of the Young Communist League, another film producer, the Patriarch of Russia (Russian Orthodox Church), an airline pilot, a petroleum engineer from Asia, a leading hero of sport, and the President of the Canadian Peace Congress. Robed dignitaries of the Church were seated prominently in the front rows, including a red-robed Roman Catholic functionary from Esthonia, several Metropolitans of the Russian Orthodox Church and the Patriarch, as well as the more drably garbed leaders of the Moscow Baptist Union. Also seated publicly were foreign visitors and representatives—an unimpressive lot.

Speeches at the Conference varied in quality. The Patriarch spoke for eight minutes, his message being that the Russian Orthodox Church, moral seed-bed of Russian society, for centuries defender of freedom and of the faith, was heart and soul behind the Soviet Union's drive for disarmament and peace. This was, it seemed to me, a high point—predictable in final conclusion, perhaps, yet the basic substance was unexpected, at this time and place. Its quiet dignity was impressive.

The short speeches of the sports hero and the airline pilot were remarkable only for a fawning expression of gratitude to the Government and the Party for their care and solicitude, and their determination to foster Soviet leadership.

Others were clear stereotypes. The dominant motifs were proclamations of the new strength, power and dignity of the Soviet people; attacks on the Western world, chiefly the U.S., for hypocrisy, breaking treaties, ringing the Soviet with bases, obstructing agreements for peace and disarmament, and against war-mongering Western interests. The Canadian's performance seemed in singularly bad taste, from its opening statement that this Conference proclaimed the unanimity of the Soviet people, on through an amazing claim that, "This sort of Conference could not be held in the U.S.A., since the FBI would prevent it." If the Patriarch was the high point, this was clearly the low.

The place of Friendship House and its Committee in all this is less intense, but perhaps broader. Here is the home (meeting rooms, cinema halls, committee rooms and offices) of the many Soviet Friendship Societies with other countries. We met the head of the American Section, which is about to sprout an American-Soviet Friendship Society. She is a friendly, intelligent, dignified, quiet, pleasant person. One likes her, she is most helpful, and one recalls the American phrase, "the soft sell." In addition, the Committee has twelve "Technical Sections," devoted to cultural exchange in specified lines: the several arts, medicine, law, etc., each headed by a top Soviet figure in his field. We have had something to do with the work of one Section. The quick judgment is that this work is good, though the cautious would add *caveats* at several points.

This is the briefest possible outline of the Soviet peace movement. I have tried to be objective, though judgments insist upon obtruding. I add nothing about the propaganda content of its activities except to say, first, that it is always there; and, second, it is much less blatant, or more subtle, than I expected.

All this is very interesting, yet my point really lies elsewhere. Two things frightened and depressed me on the intellectual level in Moscow. The first was our almost consistent failure, in repeated conversations with intelligent people, to get some substance into the subject of current political importance. To illustrate: We met at Friendship House with five Professors of the Law Institute, headed by the Director, an outstanding legal figure, former Soviet member of the International Court of Justice, in The Hague. We wanted to discuss significant principles which underlie Soviet law, and to exchange ideas with one or more legal specialists who might subsequently be invited to act as consultants at international meetings. But no: the only subjects upon which talk could proceed at all were the status of Berlin and the importance of disarmament. And the level was the level of propaganda, of pat, prepared position, of an exceedingly sterile sort of debate. Each attempt we made to inject substance, to face up to a difference, or an inconsistency, or a misunderstanding, was met by a detour to some prepared position, almost as though the object of the exercise was at all hazards to *avoid* discussion and exchange of views.

The second frightening aspect of relations at the intellectual level in Moscow was our consistent failure to bring off any real discussion of ethics or social motivation. We met with six Professors of the Institute of Philosophy, and asked them to describe for us the ethical imperatives most significant in Soviet life. Was this naïve? I am forced to conclude that it was. Again and again we were confronted by the question, almost literally put: What are you going to do about Berlin? In ninety minutes we failed to progress beyond this level of relationship. Looking back on the occasion, perhaps the warning note of my first conversation with the young man assigned to interpret for us should have been more closely heeded. I asked him, as a friendly conversation-opener, what his job was. Said he: "I am a Research Worker, specializing in bourgeois ethics.

But our failure in this matter extends more widely. In a long dinner-and-discussion in the home of a leading Soviet engineer we were smoothly deflected from our inquiries in this field. We spent much of the evening around the piano with the engineer's warmly friendly wife. She played and sang her own compositions, set to poems of Robert Burns and certain Soviet poets. We sang spirituals and other folk songs that know no borders. Maybe this was more significant, anyway, than a discussion.

The Soviet world, as revealed to us during this experience, seems monolithically pragmatic. If something works, and achieves the ends you seek, short-term or long-term—why, then, adopt it. Living in a world like that—or even half like that—is just a bit frightening.

ROVING CORRESPONDENT