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WHAT TO DO . .

IT was, as we recall, Josiah Royce who said that the one thing a moral agent needs is a universe on which he can work in order to improve it. These are not the precise words, but the sense is probably accurate enough, serving to narrow down to a single point the contents of a letter recently received by MANAS. This correspondent finds himself disturbed by articles and reviews in the June 22 and June 29 issues, particularly by the review of William Longgood's book, *The Poisons in Your Food.* Our reader says:

Ordinarily, I manage to get along rather well on a simple diet, but after reading all that you quote and comment on I find that even my diet is contaminated. You remark: "Mr. Longgood has done what he could to stir public opinion. The rest of us can at least read his book."

> The point is, I don't especially *want* to read his book. I felt better before I read about it in MANAS, and I am far from sure that my reaction is only a symptom of wanting to live in a fool's paradise. You see, it is a matter of encumbering my mind with a lot of facts (or presumed facts) concerning which I may be able to do very little, and which, after all, may not be exceeding important. The *Bhagavad-Gita,* which you often quote, remarks the need of the individual to endure the ills of physical existence, and Buddha told the householder Nakulpiter, "For one carrying this body about, housefather, to claim but a moment's health would be sheer foolishness. Wherefore, housefather, thus should you train yourself: 'Though my body is sick, my mind shall not be sick.' Thus, housefather, must you train yourself."
>
> Is it not at least conceivable that we may become too exercised about such matters? Someone has said, concerning stomach ulcers, that they come not so much from what you eat, but from what is eating you.
>
> Couldn't we say that it isn't the food we eat that causes our troubles, but what we do to the food with our emotions as it enters our bodies? Even if those who put the poison in our food are cunning enough to avoid it themselves, will they not also be affected in subtler ways? Does it do any lasting good to attack them for what they do? Meanwhile, it is at least conceivable that our minds may have an immunity to the poisons in what we eat.

Replying to this letter is a task somewhat more complicated than it may at first appear. For if you present a simple justification of criticism of irresponsibility and even corruption in the food industry, how much other criticism of the same sort do you justify? The things that are wrong with our society at this level are practically endless. To do a thorough job, you would have to hire hundreds of experts and come out with a magazine bigger than the Congressional Record. And who, after all, is going to read a magazine that big?

Admittedly, these values are relative. It is probably not so important for the reader who wrote the above letter to study the labels of the cans of food he buys to see how much benzoate of soda is in the tomatoes, or whether his peanut butter is hydrogenated or not. With a lot of care, he might live a couple of months longer, but look at the time it takes to be sure about your food!

However, there are other ways to look at this question. A mother, for example, may take the view that diet can prevent polio. A child stricken with polio is a heart-breaking sight. Leukemia is worse. The children, you could say, if you wish to generalize, need opportunity to reach some reasonable plateau of physiological maturity in order to consider the meaning of philosophic indifference to the ills of the body.

It is of some interest, here, to note that the *Bhagavad-Gita* is by no means silent on the subject of food. In the seventeenth discourse, Krishna says:

> "Know that food which is pleasant to each one, as also sacrifices, mortification, and almsgiving, are of three kinds, hear what their divisions are. The

> food which increases length of days, vigor and strength, which keeps one free from sickness, of tranquil mind, and contented, which is savory, nourishing, of permanent benefit and congenial to the body, is that which is attractive to those in whom the quality of *sattra* prevaileth. The food which is liked by those of the *rajas* quality is over bitter, too acid, excessively salt, hot, pungent, dry and burning, and causeth unpleasantness, pain, and disease. Whatever food is such as was dressed the day before, that is tasteless or rotting, that is impure, is that which is preferred by those in whom predominates the quality of *tamas* or indifference."

Mr. Longgood's volume could easily be regarded as a rather impressive appendix to this passage of the *Gita.* So far as we can see, even a wise man—and certainly a wise parent—is going to be interested in having a choice about the food he eats. Philosophic indifference is indicated concerning matters in which we have little or no choice.

If this be conceded, the question is no longer whether or not the quality of the food we eat is important. Now we must ask, *how* important is it?

To answer this question, it is necessary to push certain arguments to ridiculous extremes. What would happen, for example, if *everybody* devoted as much attention to the quality of food as Mr. Longgood has given it? The food industry would revolutionize itself over night. This is the only possible answer. And that, presumably, would be a good thing. There would be dozens of other consequences. All this interest in wholesome food would of necessity involve comprehensive study of intelligent diet. People would change not only the products they buy, but their eating habits, too. And people, it must be admitted, do not change their long-established habits without having powerful reasons for doing so. It follows that all sorts of reflective evaluations of food would be going on while the changes were taking place. Pretty soon, it would no longer be a simple question of getting good food, but a consideration of why good food is important. Now we are in the realm of ends. Now we are going to have to make judgments about health and why we want it. It will begin to appear a little foolish for us all to become food scientists, since food is obviously not an end in itself. Not even the euphoria of good health is an end in itself, since, as Buddha pointed out, it is at best temporary, and you can get temporary euphoria from a bottle of wine, without all this bother about diet and the reform of large-scale industry.

But this dramatic alteration of people's eating habits is not going to happen—not all at once. People are not single-minded zealots who work out their problems one at a time. Mr. A would rather write a symphony than avoid stilbestrol in his fried chicken. Mr. B is thinking hard about ways to produce low-cost housing. Dark-skinned Miss C is sitting-in at a Woolworth's lunch counter in the South, waiting to get a ham sandwich in the white section. She'll eat it on white bread and count it a victory, regardless. If dark bread is a sign of discrimination, she'll *demand* white bread. And if Thomas Whitehorse, off the reservation, wants to order three fingers of Old Crow at the bar, who are we to tell him to join the temperance movement? Maybe he'll get to that later.

People live at different levels and they want different things for different reasons. So then, if Josiah Royce is right, and what the moral agent, man, needs, is a universe to work on to make it better, then the first thing to get clear is the kind of a universe we have to work on.

Why do people, most people, look around to see what they want to change? They look around because they feel sick. They have pain. This is not an abstract problem. Pain is concrete. But there are many kinds of pain. We study and classify the kinds of pain. We try to assign causes for the pain. Much of the time we are wrong about the causes. We know this because after we do something about what we think are the causes, the pain comes back again, in the same form or a different form.

One of the by-products of this kind of activity is that we notice that while we are working hard on eliminating the causes of pain,—the *general* causes of pain, the pain that affects all men, or a lot of them—we stop worrying about our own, private pain. It grows unimportant. Doctors wear themselves out healing other people. Revolutionaries get put in jail or get shot trying to change economic conditions. Men take beating after beating for what they believe in. And they keep on doing such things.

Out of this experience, the people who work against pain begin to discover what seem to be some of the elements of a good life. Transposed into a universal key, the discovery suggests that the good life is some kind of Promethean mission. It is the bringing of light. Philosophy, we might say, is a general light. Reform is a particular light. There is a dilemma here, for it seems clear that the particular light of reform doesn't do any more than a temporary good unless, somehow, part of its light has philosophical meaning—unless, that is, the reform also makes a contribution to the general illumination. But people who are hurting want the particular illumination. They want to get rid of the pain. They don't seem especially interested in the light of philosophy. So you might have a very bright philosophical light and still not be able to use it. "Alas!" Lao-tse exclaimed, "the barrenness of the age has not yet reached its limit." He went on:

> I am like an infant which has not yet smiled.
>
> Other men have plenty, while I alone seem to have lost all.
>
> I am a man foolish in heart, dull and confused.
>
> Other men are alert; I alone am listless.
>
> I am unsettled as the ocean, drifting as though I had no stopping-place.
>
> All men have their usefulness; I alone am stupid and clownish.
>
> Lonely though I am and unlike other men, yet I revere the foster-mother, Tao. . . .
>
> Thus the Sage wears coarse garments, but carries a jewel in his bosom.

Krishna spoke in another way of this situation:

> In whatever way men approach me, in that way do I assist them; but whatever the path taken by mankind, that path is mine, O son of Pritha. Those who wish for success in this life sacrifice to the gods; and in this world success from their actions soon cometh to pass. . . .

Lao-tse, you could say, was only a philosopher, so he complained about the indifference of men to philosophy. But Krishna was a God. He did not complain, but sought men out according to the paths they chose. He knew that every man has to experience a long round of both success and failure before the longing for philosophy is born in him. He knew that philosophy is born of the understanding of success and failure. Lao-tse knew it too, of course, and his complaint is only a manner of speaking.

The effort, then, of the moral agent, in attempting to contribute some measure of improvement to this world, eventually seeks some sort of balance between the particular reform and the general light of philosophy or meaning. This balance will vary from epoch to epoch, according to the forms of human experience and the values which men attach to them. Part of this effort will naturally be devoted to the correction of one's perceptions—in philosophic terms, the overcoming of illusions. Where do we get our illusions? We get them from all over, but a prime source of a large number of our illusions is the publicity we read in behalf of the commercial institutions of our time. If you believe this publicity, you believe a lot of things which are not true.

Take the claims made in behalf of processed food products. It is Mr. Longgood's contention that these claims are in some measure false. Not only are the claims false, but the people who make the claims, he suggests, are indifferent to the possibility that they could make food that is really good for people, about which honest claims could be made. They would probably argue, if you

could get them to argue at this level, that producing really good food would not fit into the typical pattern of distribution in this country. They *have* to use preservatives to keep food "fresh" on the shelves of stores, or in railroad cars travelling across the country. Then, they want to make it look pretty, so you'll buy it, etc. And if you say that we'd better get some other kind of distribution pattern, so long as this one seems to require "poisons in your food," they'll tell you that's an un-American idea, that anyhow there isn't enough poison to hurt anybody, and what do you want them to do, go out of business?

At this point it seems worth while to stop worrying about the food, *per se*, and worry about the country and this idea of making progress in the American Way with small amounts of poison in your food. This, it seems obvious, is a bad state of mind—bad enough to be important to know about. And when you do know about it, it will probably seem important enough to try to make some tentative moves toward the sort of society which has another and better state of mind. One move would be to start living on cottage cheese and organically grown apples. Fortunately, this is not the only way open to us.

Fortunately, also, labors toward a better state of mind have a way of spreading out to include a wide gamut of values. The people who believe in pure food usually believe in other good things. And again, fortunately, there are people who couldn't care less about pure food, but who care mightily about other matters which need attention. The caring and the working at what you care about is the thing. Some day, the elements of the best of all possible worlds will somehow get together if enough people do this. Meanwhile, our reader has our permission not to read Mr. Longgood's book. It might give him ulcers.

Letter from **JAPAN**

TOKYO.—Earlier this year, Pearl Buck was on her way to Japan to collect additional material for her novel, *Tidal Wave,* which is soon to be filmed. About midnight in a hotel room in Honolulu, she was awakened by a sudden telephone call from the airline, asking her to come to the airport immediately. Aboard the plane, she learned that a real tidal wave, originating off the coast of Chile, was approaching the Hawaiian islands. Miss Buck was safe up in the air, but when her plane landed at Tokyo the following morning, she was told that the tidal wave had already reached Japan, causing considerable loss all along the shores of the islands. The waves had crossed the ocean a little faster than her jet plane!

Some explanations for the speed and force of the waves were made by Japanese scientists. There were three causes. First, this seismic disturbance began in an extraordinarily deep spot under the ground, giving great power and reach to its influence. Situated in a focal point across the Pacific, Japan was affected more than the west coast of America or the Pacific islands. Finally, the triangular shape of many of Japan's bays multiplied the disastrous force of the waves.

A few weeks later, when President Eisenhower started on a good-will tour of the Far East, he had to change his plan to stop in Japan, for the reason given by the Japanese government—that the president's personal safety would hardly be secure during fiercely raging demonstrations in Tokyo. Though many kinds of comments have appeared on this matter, both in Japanese and foreign papers, no one has published an accurate analysis of this unprecedented upheaval of mass resistance in this country. However, having experienced these two unprecedented events—the tidal wave and the political demonstration—within a course of weeks, one can not help but sense some similarities between the causes of the tidal wave and those of the mass protest. Certainly, President Eisenhower was not the reason for all this trouble. He was, so to speak, in the same position as the American author in the case of the tidal wave. Both were victims, not the causes, of what happened. In some sense, even the much-blamed Mr. Nobusuke Kishi, the Japanese prime minister, was only a bystander, for his fast-declining popularity indicated that only a matter of weeks would see him out of office. What, then, were the real causes?

Here we are reminded of the three factors which enlarged the effect of the recent tidal wave. If we apply similar reasoning to the social event, we could say, first, that its roots go deep beneath the surface to the profound abhorrence of war which has been so widely shared by the Japanese people since 1945. Second, Japan is a focal point in international politics, especially after the break-up of the summit conference in Paris. Japanese observers are well aware that their country is the main focus of warnings given by the Russian government about any further U-2 plane flights from near-by bases. Statements by Communist China rejecting the validity of negotiating peace with "imperialistic" nations, and claiming that even nuclear or other advanced weapons may not exhaust her huge population, scattered over her vast territory, are a great menace. And third, Mr. Kishi's cabinet attempted a confusing trick to make the Eisenhower visit salvage its political fortunes. These causes, along with others, including immature political attitudes on the part of parties, labor unions, and students, gave rise to the unprecedented, almost accidental disturbance which stopped the good-will tour of the American President to this country.

Now that the President is back in Washington, and Mr. Kishi has agreed to resign, normal and quiet self-examination has begun to be the mood of the people. What foreign commentators have been saying is now able to attract more attention of the readers of the newspapers here. In the discussion of experts,

one thing is already clearly agreed upon. The President's visit to this country could have been carried out peacefully enough, if our government had avoided setting the date of automatic ratification of the revised security pact at the time of the president's arrival. As a political tactic, Mr. Kishi set June 19 for both events. In other words, if demonstrations were to protest the pact, a hearty welcome for the president's visit would be impossible. On the other hand, a welcoming parade in a quiet, friendly atmosphere would nullify efforts to protest the pact to the Diet. (Actually, with the help of the police force, the pact was passed without more time for questions, as was expected.) Most of the newspaper editorials and even Sohyo (the powerful Federation of Labor Unions) agreed to welcome the president without much disturbance, until the threat of the enforced passage of the pact at the same time.

Somewhat like the timing of the U-2 on May 1, just before the start of the summit conference, this planned coincidence of automatic ratification of the security pact on the scheduled date of the president's arrival threw the country into confusion. We may not be able to recover now what we have lost, simply by crying over the spilt milk. But the experience has left with us a grave lesson.

Here, we felt not a little relieved when we saw June 20 dawn in peace. We know from our past history how violent people can be when they are so desperate, as when the sons of poor farmers rose up in violence against corrupt politicians and business bosses before the war in Manchuria. This time, however, throughout the night of June 19, many college and university teachers went to sit in protest around the Diet and before the prime minister's office, at the same time making great efforts to persuade the young people not to use violence and not to be tempted into conflict by right-wing radicals, who had been successful in stirring up bloodshed between the police and students a few days before. Though the demonstrations were wild enough to stop the president's visit, it was felt that the peace maintained throughout the night showed that a critical point has passed without outbursts of violence, with the people feeling less desperate, and looking forward to the coming general election.

CORRESPONDENT IN TOKYO

REVIEW
"EPITAPH FOR AN ENEMY"

GEORGE BARR'S recent novel of this title (Harper and Popular Library) is an excellent companion tale to a story often recalled in this column—David Davidson's *The Steeper Cliff*. Like Davidson, Barr was led by his own wartime experience to cut through barriers of conditioned hatred and prejudice to a sense of understanding compassion. Both in *The Steeper Cliff* and in *Epitaph for an Enemy*, the plot revolves around the gradual discovery by an American officer in the occupation forces that an exact "opposite number" to himself, in temperament and attitude, had fought on the other side. (After serving in two theaters of war and winning six battle stars and the Bronze Star, Barr was called upon to play a role on the Nuremberg Prosecution Staff.)

In *Epitaph*, Sergeant Baxter, taking charge of displaced civilians after the Normandy invasion, is first astounded and then perplexed as he learns that the villagers admired and respected the German commandant who preceded him as arbiter of their village life. Many conversations of the following sort take place, leading Baxter finally to see beyond any limited meaning the war might have to a greater reality in terms of principles and attitudes in human relations:

> "You must understand that the commandant came as our friend," the old woman said.
>
> "That may be what he told you," Baxter said. "But he was an enemy as far as I'm concerned."
>
> "Enemy, pah," the old woman said fiercely. "He was our friend right from the beginning. He was a friend of France long before he even came to our country."
>
> "Do you mean to say that they invaded your country because they were your friends?" Her stubbornness irritated him. A German officer had been nice to them, so right away he was a friend. Besides, what man wouldn't be nice to them? He felt himself blushing and he stopped stroking Lili's hair.
>
> "I'm speaking of one man, the commandant, not of the Germans. Besides, those who were here with him behaved well. As to the rest, nobody likes invaders, not even if they come as friends. Of course many Germans were our enemies, men in high places and many others too. But was he responsible? They gave him his orders and he went where he was told to go."
>
> She was silent for a while, thinking about those early days of the occupation and the arrival of the commander of Merville. "Do you think one can hate anybody indefinitely?" she asked. "Someone who's around all the time, practically living with you and never doing you any wrong?"
>
> "I don't know," Baxter said, "it's never happened to me."
>
> "Of course not, but I wondered whether you'd thought about it. You see, you can't even hate an enemy, a real enemy, I mean, if he's only around long enough. Now for example, if you were guarding German prisoners and you saw them every day, getting to know them better and better—how they talk and think and laugh and read their letters from home and all that . . . could you hate them?"
>
> "I don't know, really."
>
> "Could you keep remembering that you'd been shooting at one another and all that?"
>
> "I couldn't tell you," Baxter said. "Of course if you put it that way—"
>
> "So you agree with me," the old woman said quickly, suddenly stretching out a hand and gripping his wrist.

Not all soldiers in World War II were privileged to have Baxter's experience, nor were many sensitive enough to translate the experience into the meaning for the future which it ought to have. For contrast, we can lift a short paragraph from *Enemy General*, also involving the French country side during war, in which the thinking of an American captain is of an entirely different nature:

> The war labored on about him. It was a strange war to him. He was an American soldier. He knew this, but it held no reality for him. Headquarters was an omnipresent force that determined his actions, but in actuality it was just a voice from London. He had no sense of destiny, he cared for none. He was a robot, an unfeeling mechanism that ravaged and killed on order. Moreover, he had been so long in France that he thought like the French. He moved in an enemy world, knowing no joy, living only to destroy. His war was microscopic. He saw neither

battalions nor platoons. The big picture came from the lips of others, distorted by hearsay and hopeful lies.

Part of Sergeant Baxter's enlightenment stems from his sympathy for the simple people he is supposed to keep out of trouble—which mostly means out of the way of allied artillery. At first he was impatient that they should resent being moved around, but as he began to see another side to the picture, he also saw why all wars simply war against humanity:

> What did it matter, really, if they did not understand that there could have been no return to that way of life had the Americans not come? Why should he assume they would understand the effort and the sacrifice of their liberation? "Liberation," he murmured, "liberation?"
>
> But what meaning had liberation to those whose houses were burned, whose orchards were destroyed, whose families were decimated? "Of course," he murmured. All he had read, all he had heard or thought, whatever concept he had had of his own role as a liberator and hero underwent a radical change at that moment. Whatever conceit may have been left within him vanished into the night forever. Now he knew that they had all been conceited and willfully blind to some truths: pretending to themselves they were selfless heroes fighting the wars of others, fighting for the liberty of others. The complexity of the world was such that they had to come to France to fight in order to preserve their own liberty, and they were indeed very fortunate that they could fight their battles in other people's countries.
>
> I thought they didn't know, he reflected, and all the time I didn't know myself. He felt very close to the people of Merville and lonely no longer.

COMMENTARY
THE MASS MEDIA

OUR "Letter from Japan," concerned with the recent political demonstrations in Tokyo which led to changes in President Eisenhower's tour of the East, is a further illustration of the need for reporting which avoids simple stereotypes (see Frontiers). Most of the news stories we read about the protests kept saying that they were stirred up by "leftists," and gave no further explanation. It was not even pointed out that for the most part the "leftists" involved were young Japanese Marxists of Trotskyite persuasion, and Moscow has no bitterer enemies.

The average American reader, no doubt, would regard it as something of a burden to be obliged to distinguish between different brands of Marxists. And the average newspaper editor is not about to suggest that there is something to choose between among Marxists, even though the United States, with its guarded friendliness toward Tito, has already demonstrated that practical political differences exist.

In general, the mass media follow an easily recognizable policy—it is to keep the reader malleable to emotional manipulation. The constant repetition of a few simple stereotypes, some marked "good," others marked "bad," helps to accomplish this end. We are not suggesting, however, that the editors of these publications are Machiavellians with long-term political ends. The policy is founded on the desire to offer simple explanations of everything that happens. Complicated or difficult explanations would soon lose the attention of mass media readers, with resulting decline in circulation. And then the editors would lose their jobs.

In the next column is a letter from Dwight Macdonald in behalf of the Spanish refugees from Franco's Spain. We think of peace of a sort as having been established in 1945. For most of us, at any rate, the terrible pressures of wartime conditions were eased during that year. And in the time since, many of the "displaced persons" of Europe's battlefields have eventually found homes. But these people of Spain have no real homeland any more. Their homeland is in the hands of a political power which is alien to their principles—a power supported by the United States. While individuals cannot give the Spanish refugees back their homes, individuals can give them evidence of human solidarity and respect for their principles, whatever governments may do. We are not as "impotent" as we sometimes think.

A LETTER

To the Editor of MANAS

Dear Sir: I believe that many of your readers may be interested in helping some of our Forgotten Refugees. They are the exiles from Franco's Spain, who have been living for the past 21 years in France. Some 500,000 of them crossed the border in 1939 at the end of the Spanish Civil War, 150,000 are still living there and about 5,000 exist miserably and are dying for lack of food, warmth and human care.

I am among the sponsors of Spanish Refugee Aid, a committee organized seven years ago to help these people. It is the only agency in the United States devoted to filling their needs. Pablo Casals and General Lazaro Cardenas of Mexico are the Honorary Chairmen, and other sponsors include Dorothy Day, Salvador de Madariaga, James T. Farrell, A. J. Muste, Reinhold Niebuhr, Sir Herbert Read, Ignazio Silone, Norman Thomas, and the late Albert Camus.

Our greatest concern is for the old people. One quarter of our cases are over the age of 60, many have no family living in France who can help them and they "survive" on tiny pensions of 60 francs a month (the minimum cost of living is 250 francs a month). We are planning to open a FOYER PABLO CASALS (in Montauban, France), a center for these old people, where they can go to keep warm, talk, find entertainment and friends. Coffee, tea, cocoa and crackers will be served every day and 75 individuals will receive gift parcels of food each week to supplement their tiny incomes. Movies and entertainments will be planned each month and there will be a piano, phonograph and records, books and games available.

The cost of opening and running the center for one year will be $25,000. Our first grant of $1,400 came from the Oxford Committee for Famine Relief in England and an additional $2,600 has been raised in the United States. We are now raising the rest and hope to be able to open the center in the fall of 1960. We hope you will send us a contribution for the Foyer to Spanish Refugee Aid, Inc., 80 E. 11 St., New York 3, N.Y. And thank you very much for anything you can do.

Very sincerely,
DWIGHT MACDONALD
for Spanish Refugee Aid

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves

YOUTH "APATHY"—AND SOME EXCEPTIONS

LAST week's contribution by a nineteen-year-old college student serves as background for some current news stories. *Newsweek* on June 13, for instance, under the heading of Education, brought to light some sharply contrasting attitudes at the college level: When the Johns Hopkins alumni magazine asked 281 graduating seniors to submit essays for publication, dealing with the oft-repeated charge of "apathy," only one senior student took the trouble to answer the invitation—twenty-six-year-old Navy veteran, E. G. Shower, Jr. *Newsweek's* quotations from his essay hardly make a defense; they rather seem an account of psychological situations which make anything better than apathy quite unusual. Mr. Shower wrote:

> From the fraternities we will go on to the country clubs, from the glut of campus officerships into business wheeling and dealing, from the exclusive bull sessions into private neighborhood social "sets". . . . Left without roots, without inspiration, without direction, what can we do but adjust?
>
> We are not so much "lost" as "rootless." We have severed our connection with the older generation, not with the defiance of a Fitzgeraldian rebel, but with resignation. For we did not choose to make the old ideas obsolete; the changes which rendered them so were foisted upon us.
>
> We are resigned to a position of grayness and indecision. If my generation seems inert, it is not because we do not care; it is because we feel helpless.

But things have been far from apathetic at Vanderbilt recently. The university's chancellor, Dr. Harvie Branscomb, stirred up a real hornet's nest when he suspended a Negro divinity student for participating in a non-violent campaign designed to end segregation in Nashville, Tenn. This student, seminarian James Lawson, Jr., had previously served three years in prison as a conscientious objector, and is characterized by *Newsweek* as "determinedly dedicated to Gandhi's philosophy of nonviolence, which he observed in India as a Methodist missionary." Lawson, who had organized sit-down protests at Nashville lunch counters, was arrested on a charge of "conspiracy to disrupt trade and commerce." Chancellor Branscomb immediately suspended him and later denied him readmittance so that he might complete his studies.

When Branscomb took this stand, seventeen students withdrew and sixteen faculty members resigned, led by the Dean of the Divinity School, Dr. J. Robert Nelson, with twenty-five more faculty members contemplating resignation. This was a hard decision for both Dr. Nelson and the students, and the former dean summed matters up by saying: "We are about as miserable as we could be. But we came to the end of the rope. We had no other choice." (In the meantime Nashville lunch counters were "integrated.")

A youthful correspondent has attempted to explain the nature of the transition from apathy to principled action:

> It is very difficult to help anyone who doesn't care. Fortunately, though, there are many who would like to change, who would like to progress, and whose main obstacle is their fear of taking the first step. They want to move on, and yet are afraid to stand alone. And so this great portion of humanity continues its life of "quiet desperation," trying to straddle the line between the "better" and the "dearer," and ending up with neither.
>
> What is the cause of this mass "inferiority complex"? Perhaps it is the result of a misconception about the nature of Man and his purpose on earth. Each person sees himself at a disadvantage, and, taking the personality to be the "real," blinds himself to the great, silent genius supraliminal to the conscious mind. By *thinking* himself weak, a person becomes weak, and so needs the feeble warmth of other personalities to help in carrying the burden of life and death. But this is not enough, for all personalities differ, so that, believing ourselves to *be* our personalities, we will ever feel separate from our fellows.

A solitary "protest action" on the part of a seventeen-year-old boy has occupied a good deal

of attention in the New York press. Young Stephen Bayne, president of the student organization at Westbury (Long Island) high school, startled and disturbed an audience of 1,000 classmates, parents and Westbury faculty members by rising to decline a Senior honor conferred upon him by a local post of the American Legion. Bayne made the rejection unequivocal: "I refuse to accept an award from an organization whose policies I can't respect." Westbury's principal immediately apologized to the officiating legionnaire, and after a hasty meeting with faculty members Bayne was stripped of two other honors he was meant to receive, two other students being named in his place. But after the new recipients learned that the honors were originally intended for Bayne, they returned the awards, stating that they could see no relation between Bayne's action and the awards that he had earned. This youth, who had received several other departmental awards and also a scholarship to Harvard College, *may* have been "impudent," but he certainly demonstrated courage and a conception of principle.

A letter in the New York *Times* for June 17 expresses the feelings of a number who sympathized with Bayne:

> Without "burying" the American Legion and its contentious views on citizenship, let us praise and morally support the act of Stephen Bayne, 17-year-old graduating student president and honor student of Westbury High School in his declining "to accept an award from an organization whose policies I can't respect." In our age of sparse dissent, when organizations often perpetrate their collective ideas in the easy void of acquiescence, it is doubly honorable for a youth to turn away from what he considers tainted honors. No doubt it would have been easier to be silent, with private reservations, as so many of our public figures are, and hypocritically accept. Therefore let it be known that Bayne's germinal cry in the wilderness—his citizen's duty to speak out—is not without appreciation and recognition in the world of men at large.

Another *Times* news story reported the results of an interview with Mrs. Bayne, Stephen's mother, and also a letter addressed to Stephen from Sloan Wilson, author of *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit.* Said Mrs. Bayne: "We have received hundreds of letters from all over the country that very clearly indicate that the writers know what the issues are." Mr. Wilson wrote: "I can't respect them either, even though I am a veteran of many months overseas in World War II. . . . I think your action was a courageous one and I wish that more of your elders shared your fearlessness."

FRONTIERS

The Cuban Revolution

READERS who would like to work up some indignation concerning the American press and its failure even to attempt impartial reporting will find ample material for their purposes in two stories on the Cuban revolution—Lyle Stuart's personal report on what he saw and heard during a thirteen-day visit to Cuba in April and May, in the *Independent* for June, and Barbara Deming's article, "Dialogues in Cuba," in the *Nation* for May 28. Lyle Stuart is editor and publisher of the *Independent*, a monthly newspaper issued by a man who takes pleasure in proving that lively, personal journalism with total independence is capable of economic survival in the United States, even if only on a monthly basis. Barbara Deming is a writer who has published fiction, poetry and criticism in national magazines. (The *Independent* is $3 a year, 225 Lafayette Street, New York 19, N.Y.)

Both stories are headed with the same quotation from Herbert Matthews—"In all my thirty-eight years on the New York *Times*, I have never seen a big story so misunderstood, misinterpreted, and badly handled as the Cuban revolution." After reading these articles, about the worst thing that you can say of the Cuban revolution is that it has a bad public relations department—in fact, it seems to have no public relations department at all. Lyle Stuart devotes much of his space to cataloguing and replying to the charges against Castro's Cuba made in the press of the United States. His story is "impressionistic" in feeling, but he also puts together a lot of facts, along with useful comparisons of conditions under Batista and under Castro. Barbara Deming's story is impressionistic, too, but in a different way. The keynote of her investigation was, "*Why* did Castro make such violent charges" against the United States?

> I had started asking this question [Miss Deming explains] on the day he made the speech [March 6, when Castro implied that the United States might have had something to do with the explosion of a Cuban munitions ship], and the first answer I had been given seemed strange to me. "Don't you see? He was so *hurt!"* It seemed strange to hear the statements of a head of a state explained in such personal terms. And, I told her, most Americans felt that in the face of Castro's abuse of us, our government had behaved with astonishing restraint. In the coming days, however, I was to hear repeatedly the same expression. "You must understand, he was hurt," and to mark a look of wonder that I could not appreciate the human fact.

The Cuban people, Miss Deming found, are unable to understand American indifference to the contrast between Castro's revolutionary government and the Batista regime. She writes:

> Everyone with whom I spoke would bring up the subject of the Batista henchmen to whom we allow asylum: Ventura, Laurente, Masferer, Pedraza, others. These are not political refugees, they would say; they are known mass killers and sadists. There is a gesture in Cuba where the speaker touches the corner of his eye, meaning: I have seen it. This gesture was repeated for me many times. There is scarcely a person to whom one speaks whose family has been untouched by Batista's torturers. About 19,000 Cubans were murdered by them. In Havana alone they castrated 300 men and boys, so people said. Some of the tortures they perfected are almost unspeakable. One woman told me with emotion of the treatment dealt out to her cousin. A Batista henchman had had a man jump up and down on the boy's stomach until everything inside him was broken. The fellow responsible "is now a leader of the 'anti-Communists' in Miami," the woman told me. "There is your anti-Communist man! You must try to understand why we are so hurt."
>
> When the Batista men were mentioned, I would urge the difficulties of forbidding asylum. And it was through a mistake, I would point out, that Pedraza had been allowed to enter the country. No such mistakes seemed to occur, they pointed out, when anyone tried to enter whom the United States had named a Communist. And the United States knew, they all said, that Batista's men were not idle there. Men known to be plotting against, say, the government of England, would never be given such freedom.

Lyle Stuart discusses a familiar charge:

A constant smear, particularly in the American news weeklies, is that Cuba is "Communistic."

This is based on "four" allegations. Foremost, of course, is the agrarian reform program.

During the French revolution, the theory was that "property is robbery." The Cuban revolution doesn't take that extreme view at all. If there was robbery, it was by United Fruit. Three million acres were taken by that company for one cent an acre.

In 1935, the conservative Foreign Policy Association suggested that when land was reclaimed in an agrarian reform program, the government should pay 3½% on bonds issued for the land. Cuba has promised to pay 4½%.

The second allegation is that the leaders of the revolution are communists. This, if I may say it bluntly, is utter rot. The Castro brothers are so thoroughly nationalistic that their nationalism seems almost archaic.

(In ten hours of constant speeches at the May Day celebration, I heard but a single reference to Soviet Russia.)

It is said that Dr. Ernesto Ché Guevara is a communist. I visited Dr. Guevara's office. He directs the National Bank of Cuba. He is, in every sense, a banker. . . . Recently, "Ché" Guevara told students at the University of Havana: "I am not a communist and we are not communists. But there is no point in repeating this, for they will not believe us." This was not reported in the American press.

If you ask the average Cuban if Cuba is communist, invariably the answer is "no." A man high in government told me: "If Fidel became a communist, as much as we love him we would throw him out. If the government became communist we would throw it out."

Are there communists in the government? Of course. Are they influential? Perhaps more so than they would be in the United States Government. But as a whole their numbers are few.

The third "justification" for the charge is that Cuba is friendly with Russia and recognized Russia. Franklin D. Roosevelt recognized Russia many years ago. (The comparison isn't too far-fetched. Major programs in the United States such as social security, unemployment insurance and old age pensions were all called "communist" when they were introduced.)

Cuba has negotiated a trade agreement with Russia. I have a copy of and have read every word of the agreement. It is an excellent capitalistic trade agreement from Cuba's point of view. . . . The Cuban government took pains to point out: "The Soviet-Cuban Agreement is of a commercial, not political, nature, and the obligations assumed by both countries are of an economic, not political, character. . ."

(Argentina and Uruguay have both bought and sold in Russia for many years. Brazil recently signed an agreement with Russia for $200,000,000.)

It is impossible, of course, to "prove" anything important about the character and political coloring of the Cuban revolution with a few quotations from writers who have been in Cuba recently. All that these quotations show is that Americans who return from Cuba and report their findings with what seems a spirit of impartiality and normal human sympathies have a story to tell which is quite different from the stereotypes which appear in the American press in general.

But this is of enormous importance. Journalism unencumbered by the stereotypes endlessly repeated by the commercial press is always enormously important. This sort of journalism is the only protection we have, other than a basic suspicion of all forms of over-simplification and bias, against the sloganization of our thought processes.

Our problem, in respect to the news, is by no means simply a problem of finding out what really has happened in Cuba. This would be good to know, but probably pretty difficult even with expert reporting of everything that takes place there. Our problem lies in the possibility that we have for so long been served up "the news" in the form of stereotypes that we would find it difficult to accept the stories of accurate, conscientious reporters. We have, for example, well trained reflexes which make us likely to say: "Yah, this Guevara says he isn't a communist. Everybody knows the communists are liars. If Guevara is a communist he would naturally lie about it to us. That *proves* he is a communist."

Obviously, this sort of "reasoning" will not help us to understand the Cuban revolution, even

though Guevara should turn out to *be* a communist!

We need, instead, to find somewhere or other reports by people who reveal through the things they write about, and get interested in themselves, that they are not taken in by stereotypes. Such reports are honest evidence—probably the best we can get. So, in this instance, we recommend getting a copy of the June *Independent*, and a copy of the May 28 *Nation*, and reading these stories in their entirety. This is not as good as going to Cuba yourself, but it is certainly better than the deciding about Cuba from the depersonalized self-righteousness which pervades most of the newspaper accounts of the Cuban revolution and the actions of the revolutionary government.

The trouble with present-day commercial journalism is that editors seem to feel that it is necessary to fit all political stories into the formula of "Communist" and "anticommunist" policies, as though this exhausts every possibility of human behavior. To include other possibilities might "confuse" their readers, and a nation poised on the brink of war *dare not* allow the people to be undecided on such questions. It is better, the argument goes, to be *wrong* than undecided.

We don't know any easy way out of this mess. It is obvious that a solution predicated on political power will not work. The need, therefore, is to look for another sort of solution—one which, at the outset, will certainly involve support of papers like the *Independent* and the *Nation.*