

THE PROMISE OF AUTONOMOUS MAN

THE decision of whether to give primary attention to what is going on in the minds of human beings, or to concentrate on what is going on in the world, is not an easy one to make. There are of course people who have quick and ready answers for such questions, as though there were no mystery at all in the relations between the objective and the subjective worlds, but if there is anything important to be said about the present, it must include at least a notice of the growing importance of conscious subjectivity in human thought.

How can we explain this "half-way house" of the detachment of the human being from his environment? Metaphysical explanations are not hard to come by, if your taste runs in this direction. You can argue that the evolution of man is toward some kind of autonomy—some kind of independence of his environment, even while he deals with the limitations it imposes. And then you can argue, further, that new thinking about man's relation with his environment will of itself, and in time, accomplish radical changes *in* the environment, since the matter of which our environment is made—even in highly organized forms—is a fairly neutral stuff, apart from human thinking about it.

But if the big intuitions of metaphysical explanation do not attract, there is another explanation to consider concerning the advancing subjectivity of the times. It is that the big generalizations about the objective world no longer hold together—or, if they hold together, they no longer seem important.

The world is in intellectual and moral turmoil today because no one is able to make a satisfactory generalization either about what is or about what ought to be. The only thing that human beings cannot stand is a prolonged

endurance of intellectual and moral confusion. We say a lot about the "extreme situations" of war and how they tear people apart. The fact is that human beings can learn to cope with extreme situations so long as they can make credible generalizations about their meaning. The men who fought under Col. Evans Carlson of the United States Marines probably went through conditions as tough as any encountered by combat troops anywhere, during World War II, but there were practically no psychoneurotic casualties among Carlson's men. Carlson held regular sessions with his men to make the meaning—or what he regarded as the meaning—of the war clear to them, and the immunity of Carlson's Raiders to psychoneurosis became a medical legend of the war.

That now, in retrospect, we might say that the generalizations given to those men about the war were filled with mistaken assumptions and illogical conclusions, has little to do with the case. At that time, for those men, they were believable, perhaps because they came from a distinguished leader who was without self-interest.

The point is that, leaving aside such limited instances of dramatic faith, the world is running out of believable generalizations of meaning.

Take for example the recent United Nations meeting of statesmen from all over the world. What is the final impression of this meeting? After all the arguments are forgotten, along with the particulars of sharp interchanges, what you remember is the uneasy impression that things are getting out of hand. The little countries aren't orderly and properly "humble," any more. The sober, experienced people on whom we rely to maintain good management haven't lost control, but when the newspapers scream "triumph" at every little advantage gained, it is hard to avoid

the conclusion that a certain nervousness has overtaken our representatives. The balance-of-power theory of international equilibrium will not work for very much longer if all these *little* countries are going to explode like firecrackers whenever their leaders get good and mad.

Such discouragements have a tendency to discount the moral authority of traditional political philosophy, leaving only the politics of naked nuclear might to fill the vacuum. And the politics of might is not a satisfactory generalization. It represents rather the break-down of generalization, so far as the aspirations of rational men are concerned.

The other big generalizations, of religion and science, are in a like decline. In years past, there has always been a safe distance between our daily lives and the meanings of science and religion. It was possible, that is, for interest in science and religion to be a somewhat serious, after-dinner-type preoccupation. A big, practical, unaffected area of life gave men their roots, and no one expected them to practice the consistency known only to martyrs and heroes. But now, if you are a Christian, you have to face the awkward question of what Jesus would have to say about nuclear weapons, and whether he would want them used to "save" the values of our "Judeo-Christian" civilization. Christian ethics, with almost the insistent presumption of "creeping socialism," is moving in on our private lives. It tests our faith, and our faith is not found strong.

Science was to have instructed us in reliable truth about the universe and ourselves. But science at work—at work in both war and peace—has proved to be completely reliable and completely irrelevant to any kind of important truth. The image of the great researcher impersonally devoted to an abstract ideal has no more leverage on the decisions of modern man than the image of Jesus of Nazareth delivering the Sermon on the Mount. Not these images, but the world, is too much with us. We find ourselves pressed to ultimate decision concerning ethics and

truth long before we are ready to answer. The neutral ground which gave us leisure in belief has been taken away. To be made to answer before we are ready is demoralizing.

There have been lots of other generalizations about the world and its meaning besides the religious and the scientific—partial generalizations which used to make us feel comfortable about the things we were doing. If you think back to the days when it was "interesting" to read the *Scientific American*, and stimulating to turn the pages of *Asia* magazine and pore over articles in the *National Geographic*, and not in the least difficult to find out what ought to be done by turning to the liberal press, you realize that everything is now changed. The world is no longer a collection of somewhat-worked-over raw materials, waiting for our conscientious attention to complete the job of constructing an earthly paradise.

But is it the *world* which is changed, or have we? Hans Meyerhoff has some comment in the *Nation* for Aug. 20 which bears on this question. Discussing the inability of Americans to formulate for themselves an idea of national purpose (President Eisenhower recently appointed a Commission to discover our "national goals" and invited its members to "sound a call for greatness"), Prof. Meyerhoff quotes from various literary and religious critics to show that present-day self-criticism now has a new theme: "it sounds a general, non-specific alarm and says something quite subversive—that something is wrong with the American way of life itself." Summarizing the current jeremiads, he says:

This is the age "of the shrug" and of "emptiness of the heart"; or, if you prefer, ours is a society of "cynical immorality," "spiritual flabbiness" and "dry rot." We are a nation of idolaters worshipping the Golden Calf—the bitch goddess of success and money. We are wallowing in a pool of iniquity brewed by peyote and payola. In short, we are a fat, lazy, selfish and corrupt people.

This is quite a different dish of tea. It's the human, moral or cultural context of the case of the

missing purpose. It's not the search for a political purpose. It's a kind of collective soul-searching. It's not a shot in the arm to cure a case of political anemia. It's a confession of anomy.

Prof. Meyerhoff points out that this sort of self-analysis is not of itself new, but that—

What *is* new is that an "agonizing reappraisal" of the American way of life can now be conducted profitably in the pages of the mass media. What used to be a private preoccupation, or neurosis of the unhappy few has become respectable copy addressed to the uneasy many. "Never before in history has a people enjoyed the mass prosperity now to be found in this country. . . . Yet, never before have there been such widespread signs of deep uneasiness."

Is the *malaise* of the present only an American disease?

Ah, but there are always the Russians and the Chinese and the havenots everywhere. They have a national purpose. They know where they are going. And we are envious. But why? In politics, we let them keep alive a revolutionary ideology (long since discarded in the Soviet Union) which puts us on the defensive because ours is put on the inactive list. And in human terms, of course, they are hungry and have a long way to go in the kitchen debate. But they'll get there, and when they do, they will also have a great debate on what to do about being human in their spare time.

No, the American dilemma will be everybody's dilemma before long, because the American way of life is setting the pace and the goal for human life everywhere.

The number of writers who find themselves able to look at both capitalism and socialism with the insight of a single analytical viewpoint is becoming impressive. See, for example, how David Potter, professor of American History at Yale, subtracts validity from the ideological claims of both these systems:

Granted, that democracy and socialism have both promised optimum human fulfillment, and that both in important ways have failed to attain it, then the dialogue between them, which has dwelt obsessively upon the alternatives of individualism and collectivism must be regarded as irrelevant to the objective. The answers which we gave with such intense ideological conviction were, in a sense,

responses to the wrong question, for the objective was not how to attain equality, but how to attain fulfillment. . . . The long-standing, overarching, ideological controversy between right and left, conservative and liberal, have and have-not, has led us to assume that these present the polar extremes of all possible social thought. Because of this assumption we sometimes fail to note how many social questions there are on which the traditional opposing positions fail to offer any solution at all, much less alternative solutions. Both left-wing and right-wing thought accept the idea of a rationalized society, which is to say the depersonalized system in which man tends to become an interchangeable part of a link in the chain. Both accept maximum productivity as an economic goal without any attention to what economic abundance implies for the imperative of productivity. Both treat work as a necessary evil to be borne for the sake of compensation rather than of fulfillment. Both look at the vast, impending problem of free time (not to be confused with either leisure or relaxation or recreation) with a blank stare. . . . (*New Republic*, May 23, 1960.)

Added to this is the growing distrust of heavy-handed theories of the universe, given explicit form by Everett Knight:

Man's inhumanity to his fellows seems to depend upon the extent to which he can succeed in regarding them as objectives—objectives which, in certain historical circumstances, may come to be identified with precision and which therefore may be manipulated. This is one of the functions of religious and political Absolutes, to make it possible to govern by the manipulation of objectives rather than by the consultation of subjects.

Here are attacks on the conceptual base of modern civilization, on its practical economic ideal ("maximum production"), and on the net results for individual human beings. And the critics are usually themselves candid enough to refuse to pretend to have answers. For the radicals of the present, this is a time for the setting of problems, not of sponsoring "crusades." David McReynolds writes in *Liberation* for July-August, 1960:

I believe that the radical Left has not only failed to deal with the real issues, but has also missed the challenge of our century—the need for Man to

develop a new conception of himself. . . . Our problem is that we do not realize that *we* (the radicals) have a problem. We seem to feel that we are competent to shape the future of our society when, in fact, we do not even understand the forces at work. A liberal education is no longer enough. A radical set of values is not sufficient. What is needed is an integration in our thinking of our historic values with the contemporary developments of science. Unless our solutions flow from such an integration we will remain isolated from the drift of real events, while technology remains the master instead of the tool.

But what, in truth, is "the drift of real events"? Is it "automation"? Is it the cosmic hot-rod competition between Russia and the United States, with prospective flights to the moon, preparatory satellites already in orbit? Or is it the questioning of man's relationships with the dominant institutions of the time?

How much should a man "take" from a satellite? What should he be willing to "give" to the whole space-travel enterprise? Surely, the general context of ideas, hopes, and attitudes in which people pursue such ventures is at least as important as the venture itself. Before we get "carried away," we need look closely at the framework of myth in which such undertakings gain sponsorship. Learning how to scale the resources of technology for use by individual human beings is of course a necessary project. Ralph Borsodi began working along these lines at least thirty years ago, but for such ideas to become popular, and to take hold, there will have to be some kind of rediscovery of the individual—some impact-bearing realization that purposes are purposes, and never techniques, no matter how magnificent. Only individuals have purposes.

Dr. Edwin Halsey of the Claremont (California) Graduate School has an article in the same issue of *Liberation* (July-August) concerned with the idea of "national purpose," which is directly on this point. Actually, the article was written for *Life* magazine, more or less at *Life's* request. (There is hardly a need to explain why *Life* did not use the material, which appeared, instead, in the May 20 issue of the Pomona

College *Student Life*, and in *Liberation*.) Dr. Halsey began:

Defining America's rational purpose in 1960 is like trying to legislate "the American way of life." The whole project—like many projects—is misconceived. The attempt is "un-American" according to our best standards. Maybe we should just say that the purpose of the American nation-state today is to become obsolete.

One of the troubles with being an editor of *Life* is that one loses the ability to think freely. For that one has to remain an amateur and a person of no public importance—a *non-V.I.P.* Meanwhile *Life* editors think up debates like "What should be our national purpose?" It never crosses the back part of their minds that nations do not or should not *have* purposes, that nationality today is almost a synonym for moral purposelessness. A modern nation is a large group of people who have forgotten the purpose of life. Insofar as these people can share a *national* purpose, it is nefarious, involving massive retaliation and public hatred and tribal religion. National leaders behave like juvenile delinquents.

Dr. Halsey draws a contrast between the present and America's historical past:

Originally, the deepest consensus of our people was centered in Biblical religion; it was a unity that could neither be enacted by legislation nor administered by officials nor "promoted." The laws of God and the promise of eternal life provided purpose for early Americans. Recently and gradually, we have come to believe that the "nation" can establish its own mundane purposes, and that politicians, businessmen, and journalists can provide the vision that Isaiah believed essential for the survival of any people.

Let us stop inventing organizations with fictitious "characters" and "personal rights," such as our modern corporations and nation-states are supposed to have. We are seeing things that aren't there. These organizations are merely the idols of our modern polytheism, the beasts in a jungle of unbalanceable power which destroys the world-wide brotherhood of individual men. Having put our credulous faith in engineers and generals, even in the entertainers, we are now a lonely, threatened crowd. And perhaps, above all, we have chosen to believe in death—in our power to inflict death on those we momentarily disapprove of, and the necessity of our having to suffer its final victory over us.

The foregoing seems a mature reaction to the displacement of human purpose by the massive institutions of modern society and an accurate if brief account of the consequences to human life of that displacement. Dr. Halsey's analysis is of course a diagnosis rather than a proposal for helping the situation. What is needed, obviously, is not a "plan," but some kind of broad growth in response to a basic insight about ourselves and what is valuable and necessary to us. What, for example, is going to take the place of "Biblical religion," as the source of a sense of purpose?

All that we have, at present, is a kind of "readiness" for a new inspiration—a readiness born of progressive disillusionment. It is this readiness that we need to examine, since it represents the withdrawal of large numbers of human beings from the old position of acceptance of conventional goals and theories of progress. But already new ideas are coming in to occupy the space left by abandoned beliefs. The character of these new ideas is so independent of old conceptions that they bring with them a noticeable feeling of detachment from even the obsessive events of a world on the brink of war. There is, for example, the thinking of the "self" psychologists and their increasingly structured account of the inner life of human beings and the forms of fulfillment which seem to come, almost "naturally," to those whom we are able to call mature individuals. The "good life" of these people seems to have practically no connection at all with familiar "collectivist" goals. Then there is the slow infiltration into Western thought of the Buddhist idea of the Self with its radical rejection of the typical Western norms of "sound motivation." Here, again, it is difficult to find much connection between the "progressive" spirit and this new-old philosophy, which is flowing into Occidental culture at a rate which must signify, at least, that it has touched and is somehow satisfying a profound hunger of the human spirit. Finally, there is Western Existentialism with its determined opposition to *all* ideological measures which would twist and distort the present life of

individuals in behalf of some mythical future of "peace and plenty."

It is at least conceivable that these few symptoms of a change in attitude—modest, perhaps, in the present, but increasingly in evidence among people who feel pressed to think about themselves and the world—may eventually become signs of a world-wide withdrawal from the beliefs and loyalties of the past. And this, after all, comes close to being what we want: a new relationship of people to the instruments and institutions which today seem so all-powerful. It is neither likely nor necessary that any of the morally neutral facilities evolved by modern technology be abandoned. What is necessary is a less worshipful, less *dependent* attitude toward them. Again, it is quite conceivable that the things the reformers would like to do by "plan" can become morally practicable—practicable, that is, on the basis of freedom—only through a new, virtually *casual* attitude toward technology and what we can make it do in the service of human beings.

There is no question but that the wealthy nations with the "know-how" ought to give the under-developed peoples the assistance they need to feed, house, and clothe their populations. But if after a hundred years of getting the "good life," solely by production and more production, and then discovering that the life we got is *not good*—if, after making this discovery, we do not help our friends to make the same discovery with less pain and disillusionment, then our "great achievement" is surely a fake and a fraud.

Meanwhile, the exciting thing about the present is the slow birth of a sense of identity among human beings which is not "identified" with anything other than human qualities. We are beginning to say to ourselves that the good of man lies in being human, and in asking ourselves for a fuller account of what this means.

REVIEW

NOTES ON DEPRESSING NOVELS

IN an interview with a correspondent of the Manchester *Guardian Weekly* about a year ago, Sean O'Casey expressed himself critically about a group of young writers who seemed immersed in despair. Since O'Casey had once been quoted (incorrectly) as saying that he was "an exile from everything," the *Guardian* writer wondered if the Irish playwright could not easily identify with what "the angry young men" are doing in print, but the older writer demurred:

I have never been exiled from life and that is the only thing that matters. I'll be exiled enough when I go off at the end from all the things I love and participate in. Most of the modern writers are so god-damn gloomy. They reject life in every concept, yet they cling to it if they get a cold or a fever and rush to the doctor and appeal to him to set them on the road again. You'd think they would welcome the way to the tomb, but they don't. I want to live as long as I'm active and can more or less look after myself and not be a burden or a nuisance to myself. I can't understand how the hell any young man is despairing in life.

When "gloominess" becomes faddish, it does indeed seem a travesty of the natural vocation of men who should be providing the world with stimulus for thought. On the other hand, how can any writer say anything dramatically which is untouched by a compelling desire to break through complacency? In a novel called *Tresa*, Benedict and Nancy Freedman present a heroine who believes that primitive peoples were much saner than we are today, because they lived close to death all the time, knew that they did, and knew how to let this awareness assist them in the business of living to the full. The young American who pursues Tresa—she is a concert pianist, as well as an amateur philosopher—is constantly encountering an aspect of her nature which frightens him. In the following passage, Tresa has just emerged from a period of brooding, and her young friend is overjoyed to the point of becoming fatuous:

We walked on, crossing the crest again in the direction of the hut. Behind us we could hear the children resume their game.

"That's better," I said. "Be like the children, forget your troubles, enjoy yourself. We've got it licked, haven't we? The rough days are all behind us. You've got your music again, you've got me, you've got Rijstafel, you can erase everything else and get back to a normal, happy, optimistic outlook."

I should never have opened my mouth.

Tresa stopped dead in her tracks and swung on me fiercely.

"Fred." She pronounced my name as though it took all her self-control to say it levelly and decently.

"Yes?" I said, my feeling of bewilderment mounting.

"Tell me something. What were those children doing?"

"You mean the children we just passed? Why I don't know. I suppose they were playing house."

"Shall I tell you what they were doing? They were building a bomb shelter. Those seven-year-olds were trying to protect themselves against the madness they've already found in the world. Of course it was play and they'll forget about it when they're called for lunch. But it was dead serious too. Now do you begin to understand? Does some faint glimmer of what life is about begin to penetrate your calm, mild, peaceful, well-adjusted soul? Are you still dabbling your fingers in happiness? Why those children are more grown up than you. Don't you dare tell me that I should be happy. I don't want to be happy, normal, optimistic. I'm fighting again, that's all. Here you are by my side half the day and you misunderstand everything.

"A century is accomplished in ten years now. And in the last ten years we've taken a long hard look and we've crossed out certain words from our vocabulary. Happiness was the first to go, it's archaic. And so is faith in the future and progress and peace of mind. Ask those children, they were born into this new decade."

She turned away from me and started back alone, as though she had done with me, as though this was the parting of the ways. And why? My God, what had I done?

But the authors of *Tresa* are not really pessimistic; they are simply—or we should say, subtly—affirming that you can come to terms with

both life and death if you are willing, now and then, to turn yourself inside out.

Pierre Boule's *Face of a Hero* is indeed, as the *Saturday Review* remarked, a book of "savage irony"—a mood which the author of *The Bridge Over the River Kwai* is adept at conveying. The central character, the "hero" in reverse, is an impeccably virtuous prosecuting attorney who has come to take up a new and important post in southern France. After picnicking with his fiancée who dozes in his arms near the bank of a river, he witnesses an accidental death by drowning in the turgid waters. Startled and paralyzed for a moment, and dimly conscious that he fears risking his life by way of a rescue attempt, he ends by doing nothing—and is subsequently unable to report the drowning because his own courage would so obviously come into question. When a young man of unsavory reputation is accused of murdering the girl, the prosecutor still delays coming forward and finally, through the intricacies of rationalization, becomes convinced that this young man should die for a murder he did not commit.

Along the way, the public prosecutor becomes an apparently courageous crusader who resists every temptation to compromise. The final trial scene is a brilliant portrayal of how a "virtuous" man, the apotheosis of meticulousness in law, can become little less than a fiend:

When he paused for a moment, exhausted by the painful pleasure of the sacrifice he was making, Mireille's face was suffused with a glorious inner radiance.

He recovered his breath and went on, addressing his remarks directly to the jury:

"If I have spoken like this, gentlemen, if I have hung out all this dirty linen, it is only because I have heard that attempts have even been made to influence the jury. I should like to put them on their guard. If you grant the accused extenuating circumstances, the whole country will say—and with reason—that you were obeying the meanest, lowest instinct of all: fear . . ."

There had indeed been a rumor that certain members of the jury had been suborned. It was this

last scheme that the Public Prosecutor was anxious to frustrate.

This final thrust of his, at this particular stage, made victory seem certain. He felt that it would not be in vain if he appealed to their sense of human self-respect. He mentioned a number of cases in which jurymen had apparently yielded to threats, and the disgrace they had thereby incurred. Still drunk with the sound of his own words, he recalled the phrase a former Attorney General had used at the trial of a well-known anarchist, and quoted it. He hurled it at them, investing it with all the scorn he felt for men of faint heart:

"Is there anyone here who is afraid?"

He had wound up with an impassioned peroration, leaving the leaders of the guilty clique at the mercy of the crowd's contempt. He had come to the end of yet another address delivered against the forces of Evil, which had gradually assumed a place of major importance in his mind, eclipsing the Vauban case and reducing it to the insignificance of a petty detail. He had devoted himself so wholeheartedly to this cause that he forgot to pronounce the words that, a mere convention in themselves, were essential to the accomplishment of this final task and were eagerly awaited by everyone in court. He sat down, still trembling from the effects of his outburst, happy in the knowledge that in ruining his own career he had saved the honor of his profession. He realized he had forgotten something when he noticed the look of astonishment on some of the faces around him.

But it was nothing very serious. There was still time to repair the omission. He rose to his feet again, apologized for his oversight, then embarked in measured tones on the necessary conclusion. In a voice that was once more deadly calm and as incisive as a saber, the Public Prosecutor demanded the death penalty.

If there is a common denominator for these two novels, so different in many respects; it might be found in the authors' conviction that belief in one's virtue is often deceiving—that we should strive to find some way of living which stretches beyond "the good" to true respect for individual integrity.

COMMENTARY

"PROTRACTED CONFLICT"

ABOUT a month ago (MANAS, Sept. 28), we reported from a *Time* story how President Truman rebuffed the Japanese peace feelers of July, 1945, which came to him through Stalin at the Potsdam Conference. Some background on these efforts by the Japanese to sue for peace is given by the authors of *Protracted Conflict* (see *Frontiers*), in illustration of the Soviet method of using the troubles of other peoples to serve the purposes of expanding power:

The manner in which the Soviet Union dealt with Japanese peace overtures in early 1945 furnishes another instructive example of controlled warfare. Although the first Japanese attempt to obtain Soviet mediation was made in Tokyo during February, 1945, the Soviet government concealed this information from the United States until the Potsdam Conference five months later. Obviously, Stalin did not wish to see the Pacific war end "prematurely." He intended to exploit it in two ways: first, by extracting maximum concessions from the United States for his promise to enter the war against Japan, and second, by using his actual participation in the war to establish his claim to a major voice in the Far Eastern postwar settlement. There is now little question that the Soviet Union held it within its power to take a step which could have led to the termination of hostilities even before the dropping of the atomic bombs. . . . Japan had sought Soviet help in obtaining from the West a less severe armistice formula than "unconditional surrender." But the Soviet Union could not accede to such a request without forfeiting the chance to profit politically from having taken a belligerent's part in the defeat of Japan. Nor could the U.S.S.R. flatly reject Japan's overtures without prompting Tokyo to make a more direct appeal to the West. Thus Stalin shrewdly led the Japanese to believe that there was some hope of softening the harsh terms of unconditional surrender. At the same time, Stalin assured the Western leaders of his loyal adherence to the policy of "unconditional surrender." That he fully intended to enter the Pacific war at the most advantageous juncture is borne out by the hasty Soviet military assault on Japan just forty-eight hours after the first American atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima.

The argument most frequently given by Americans to justify the atom-bombing of Japanese cities is that it shortened the war, thereby saving the lives of many American soldiers. In view of the Japanese bids for peace before the bombing—kept secret for months by Stalin and rebuffed by President Truman when he learned of them at the Potsdam Conference—this argument has little meaning, any more. And Soviet moralizings about the bombings have still less meaning, if that is possible.

THE FIVE REVOLUTIONS

The October *Foreign Affairs* has an article by A. Whitney Griswold, President of Yale University, in which the writer attempts to sketch a broad background of world trends against which to view current events. Dr. Griswold's article is titled "Wormwood and Gall," indicating the chagrin felt by many thoughtful Americans at their country's growing unpopularity. He writes:

When Vice President Nixon was stoned in South America, it was said that this was not such a bad thing after all because it taught us the importance of understanding and keeping up with what is going on in the world. How much it may have taught us and how much we have yet to learn remain to be seen. In the Castro revolution, for example, we are dealing with economic and social forces that had become clearly visible in Cuba a decade ago. Similarly, the Tokyo riots took our officials unawares in a country in which we had had unusual opportunities for first-hand observation and study.

It would be rash indeed to suggest that these events were entirely and exactly predictable, and equally rash to attribute them wholly or even mainly to the machinations of Khrushchev. Perhaps it will help us to see more clearly if we take into clearer account the five distinct yet simultaneous and interrelated revolutionary forces that common knowledge tells us have been and are at work in the world. The first of these is a scientific revolution, the second is an industrial revolution, the third is the Communist revolution and the fourth is a revolutionary movement toward national independence. The fifth is a restiveness on the part of the younger generation which is evident in almost all countries and reaches revolutionary intensity and proportions in some. . . .

Of all five revolutionary forces the restiveness of youth which seems the most familiar, is perhaps the least well understood. This restiveness manifests itself on the surface in forms ranging all the way from jazz festival riots in the United States and England to the overthrow of governments in Turkey, South Korea and Japan. It impels nations now one way, now another. . . .

There is more to this force than the normal friction between the generations. There is something in the minds of young people today which they themselves have not been able to make wholly articulate. . . . The first thought is that youth is far more disillusioned with war than most of its elders—who think that they too are disillusioned—realized. With this disillusionment goes a disbelief in the old concepts of patriotism and codes of chivalry that used to find their ultimate fulfillment and sanction in war. Yet patriotism is not dead and youth still feels the primal urge to fight. The Great Deterrent wrings the last drop of glamor, even of honor, out of war, but does not stop our young men from fighting in Korea; or serving the armed forces of their country with courage and devotion; or, at high school age, fighting one another in gangs for the sole purpose of proving their courage to themselves; or, as college students, withdrawing into the symbolic rebellion of the beatnik, or actively contesting or rioting against any and all semblances of authority. Where there is plenty of freedom and the living is good, they riot at jazz festivals. Where there is not plenty of freedom and the living is precarious, they riot to overthrow the government. One thing that gives continuity to these actions is their thoughts about war. In Japan, for example, when non-Communist students were asked what they were thinking about when they joined in the Tokyo riots, they are said to have replied, "The day the sky turned red and our house burned down." I am sure that in the American and English riots touched off by jazz rather than by treaties of alliance the same feelings and thoughts about war (though we might have to probe more deeply to discover them)—the same skepticism, mistrust and unbelief concerning everything and everyone connected with war—were present in the minds of the rioters as were present in the minds of those in Tokyo.

Dr. Griswold's awareness of the complex factors in the unrest of world youth gives a particular light to his discussion of the revolutionary tendencies of the times.

CHILDREN

. . . and Ourselves

COUNSEL FOR OLD . . . AND YOUNG

WE are indebted to a retired sociologist, Thomas D. Eliot, for sending us a stimulating and delightful bit of writing, *On Being Retired*, by T. V. Smith, published by the University of Syracuse Press. In the following paragraphs we find what may be called a layman's illumination of ancient ideas such as are found in the *Bhagavad-Gita* and the *Upanishads*, and an explanation of why the traditional Chinese felt that grandparents could sometimes do a better job with the children than the intermediate generation. Speaking of those who have given up active work in a profession, Prof. Smith observes:

We must learn to forgive ourselves the guilt of abstaining from action before we can properly and positively glorify the quiet life. I think that of all the goods to which we are privileged to retire, the most precious one to me personally is this riddance of the animal, the irrational, impulse to act upon every possible occasion. "For God's sake do something!" That there is such an impulse is certain and no less certain is it that resistance to the impulse leaves a sediment of guilt. But it is a part of virtue to resist this pressure of primal conscience, as one resists other temptations. There is a heroism of omission no less profound, but much more difficult to exemplify, than the heroism that comes from the all too easy commitment to action. The "true believer" is committed to falsity—or worse.

I, for one, will welcome the right of old age to withstand all easy commitment. All my life I have been abashed at having to decide things in the name of reason for which there were no adequate reasons. I know there were not, because equally reasonable men are always deciding such things differently. And the more important the issues, the more differently they get decided. I do not complain at what was necessary in the days of my prime—and this commitment to action is a necessary adjunct of our animal life—but I do now rejoice that those days are gone.

No longer will I have to claim that I know how to raise grandchildren when I didn't know how to raise the children that begot them. I can love the grandchildren and share know-how with them,

without having to preach to their parents. No longer will I have to rationalize my party preference, when I never could keep the parties dependably apart anyhow. I can now love my country as much as ever, and can be as stout as any partisan, without straining myself to give reasons which show the other partisan to be unreasonable. No longer will I have to stand up and be counted when I much prefer to sit down and think; or to think hard and consecutively when what I want to do is to enjoy the unassessable ramblings of reverie. Yes, it's quite a treasure-trove to which this seventh bead tells me the way.

One of the good things deriving from having a grandparent of this sort, incidentally, is that the child *might* learn something about "quiet" during his formative years.

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This long paragraph from a recent *Penny Pages for Peace*, circulated by Acts for Peace in Berkeley, is reprinted as an experiment. After a third reading, we began to think that this "peculiar" piece might be intriguing to readers in any age group, beginning with adolescence. How does it strike you?

Perhaps it is time to try a new way of living. Apropos of this, what are you doing now? Do you expect a war? Are you planning on it? Have you built a bomb shelter? Do you think it will work? Do your friends like you? Do you like them? Are you in love? With whom? Do you love all men? Was Christ wrong? Why? Are you right? Do you know anything? How much? Would you like life to continue? How long? Do you seriously believe that the proprietors of the mass media are telling us the truth? Do you believe that there is such a thing as beauty? How much? Where? Do you miss something? Does it make you cry? How much is a life worth? Are you for or against killing Americans? Chinese? Frenchmen? Russians? Deer? Are you humble? How humble? What conclusion do you draw from nihilism? I mean *practically speaking*. Will the next war be the last one? Does loving one's enemies work better than war? Was Buddha right? Was Christ? Are men evil? How many evil men can you name? Do movie stars eat from spoons? Football heroes? The owners of soap factories? Generals? Marxists? Are there any Marxists? Are there any Christians? Does capitalism exist? Did it ever? Does anyone in America know what's coming off?

Does anybody anywhere know what's coming off? Why doesn't everybody come off it? Do you look at stars? Are you afraid of life? What would God say about all this? Does the universe progress? Were neon signs and TV sets inherent in the aboriginal ether? Is man basically savage? Are you? Have you ever felt anything better? Worse? Does living interest you? How much money do you make? Do you want to be happy? How are you going about it? Do you want glory? How much? Do you believe in killing children? Russian children? Have you ever lived in a democracy? What was it like? Have you ever made a value judgment? Do you like cherries? Peaches? Women? Sunshine? Does the Arms Race make you feel secure? Do you have any Arms? What is your definition of murder? Can you murder by apathy? How is your reputation today? Do you trust groups? Which groups? Do you trust yourself? Why are flowers? Does this seem like the last days of earth? Whose earth? Whose fault is it? Is it anyone's fault? How much time is left? Why don't Cubans believe in the United Fruit Co.? Is there anything better to believe in? God? Man? Freedom? Freedom to what? Are head men equal? How many happily married people do you know? How many mixed up people do you know? Does the environment have anything to do with this? Is everything wrong except the system? Is there such a thing as human nature? How does it smell? Is space infinite? What do the people beyond infinity think of advertising? What do they think of people just standing there shooting each other? Are stockholders really necessary? Are people really necessary? Can you imagine absolute nothingness? Does anybody love anybody?

As to whether "people are really necessary," it is interesting to reflect that, from a professional stance, neither the orthodox religionist nor the scientist has ever been able to answer such a question in the affirmative. God, it appears, is not likely to be in need of man—and he can create any replacements his fancy favors. And from the standpoint of physical evolution, the human appears as a kind of intrusion, upsetting rather than establishing ecological balance.

The philosopher, however, may feel that he has grounds for defending the existence of man as the most real and most stable factor in knowable existence simply because he can question himself and everything else, choose and re-choose. If

anybody does come to love anybody, moreover, it results from an act of free will, ordained by neither God nor the Cosmic Process.

FRONTIERS

Why Did it Happen This Way?

THE burden of *Protracted Conflict*, a book by Robert Strausz-Hupe, William R. Kintner, James E. Dougherty, and Alvin J. Cottrell (Harper, 1959), is that Soviet Russia and the United States are so unlike in their national policy, their long-term aims, and their conceptions of war and peace that the meaning of Soviet action is consistently misunderstood by most American observers. This is a carefully written book, the fruit of much research, with careful weighing of conclusions. It deserves the study of all those who have an interest in the means to world peace.

Protracted Conflict grew out of an early project of the Foreign Policy Research Institute. The title of the book is intended to embody the concept of the method chosen by the leaders of the Communist world, following Lenin, to weaken, dismay, and finally to defeat the capitalistic democracies. Essentially, the book is an analysis of the conflict situations which have arisen between the United States and Soviet Russia in the fifteen years since the ending of World War II. Lenin's theory of protracted conflict was an expansion of Clausewitz' principle, to the effect that if war is the continuation of policy by other means, peace is the continuation of war by other means.

Soviet policy is largely interpreted by the authors in the light of this principle, and this interpretation, bolstered by numerous facts, is on the whole convincing. There is certainly no tendentious argument or special pleading in this book. What is missing, however, is a general frame of reference which will enable the reader to understand, not simply what has happened, is happening, and is likely to continue to happen, but *why* it happened at all.

The central problem, more or less concealed by the immediate threat of Communist domination, is the need for an explanation of the fact that an extraordinary intellectual elite, the

creators of Communist theory, men nourished at the bosom of European culture, were totally alienated from the traditional moral ideas of Western civilization. An understanding of this alienation is more important than the settlement of the ideological issues which haunt the modern world, since if it happened once, it can happen again.

Either there is a rational, historical explanation for this alienation, or there is *no* explanation, but only an ugly, jutting, incomprehensible fact with which we must deal without understanding its origin.

Actually, in serious current studies of the world situation one finds little or no effort to seek such a rational explanation. There is consequently no really humanist quality in these discussions. It is as though the men who programmed the project of "protracted conflict" were somehow infected by a diabolical virus from Mars, and thereafter behaved like the enemies of mankind. So long as this view of the origins of the East-West impasse continues, there can be very little hope of intelligent peace-making. For peace-making is a rational activity, and the parties to a peace must themselves be regarded as rational.

Like many other observers, the authors of this book say that the entire world is in the grip of a "revolutionary situation," but they do not define the meaning of this expression with much particularity. Perhaps such a definition is impossible, today, but the reader of this book begins to long for some conception of the changes going on in the world which throws light on the human qualities of the Communists, instead of leaving us with the naked conclusion that the Communists have no peace policy, but only a war policy. If we take the argument of this book as correct, and it seems undeniable, as far as it goes, the Sino-Soviet method of protracted conflict is a fixed, frozen, and unchangeable reality. If we admit the argument and say that this is so, we are entitled to some discussion of *why* it is so. The bitter determination to destroy is not a normal

human attitude. If this attitude is a product—or a byproduct—of Western civilization, then what produced it? Why don't these extremely intelligent authors write a book about this?

Left as it is, the prospect of meeting the strategy of protracted conflict can only strike with cold horror the people whom it confronts. "More nuclear weapons" seems the sole resource to fall back upon. The authors are well aware of this dilemma. They say:

The development of proper attitudes toward protracted conflict will be immensely difficult. The Communists possess a mentality that is much better suited to protracted and controlled conflict than that of Western peoples. According to Marxist-Leninist theory, history has always been on the side of Communism. The Russian Communists are, by now, convinced that, indeed, it is. They are patient and tenacious in their efforts to win the inevitable victory. . . . The West has neither a doctrine of protracted conflict nor an international conspiratorial apparatus for executing it. What is more, we do not want such a doctrine or such a political apparatus, for it would be a tragic piece of irony if the men of the Free World, in trying to combat the Communists, should become like them.

The authors of *Protracted Conflict* are at great pains to show that the managers of the Communist effort to win control of the world have what seems a better understanding of Westerners' behavior—of their scruples, their hesitations, their desire to be "legal"—than the Westerners themselves. In other words, they are able to see the conflict in a wider perspective. As said in the concluding chapter:

Up until now, the Communist leaders have understood far better than the leaders of the West the revolutionary character of this era. Furthermore, by utilizing the principles of protracted conflict the Communists have been able to capitalize on their superior insight and make for greater inroads into the Western system than would have been likely in the light of any objective analysis of the real power positions of the opposing camps.

Now comes about the only encouraging note to be found in this book:

Notwithstanding all this, the long-range prospects for the West are infinitely superior to those of Soviet or Chinese Communism. While short-range trends may favor the Communists, the Western concept of man and Western institutions correspond far more closely to reality than does that pseudoscientific residue of the nineteenth century called Communism.

Agreed, but what *is* the Western concept of man, and why did the makers of Communist doctrine abandon it? What mutilations of this concept were they exposed to, that could cause them to be so deceived? If we are to undeceive them, we shall have to have a rational answer to this question.