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WHO WILL START DOING BETTER?

AN editoria1 office where a magazine like MANAS is put together is a focus for endless mail containing peoples' ideas about what is wrong with the world. Books, articles, and letters come nearly every day. You get, for example, a paper by Harrison Brown and James Real, with a foreword by Reinhold Niebuhr, entitled *Community of Fear,* and published by the Fund for the Republic's Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions—a discussion, in part, of what would happen if a ten-megaton thermonuclear warhead exploded over downtown Los Angeles. You get for review a book by Richard J. Barnet, *Who Wants Disarmament?,* published by Beacon Press, which makes you feel the determination of the writer to spell out in simple terms the meaning and importance of disarmament and the obstacles which stand in the way. You read the words of dozens of people who know at least something of what is going on in the world, and who care a great deal about it—more, perhaps, than they care about anything else.

And then, if your office happens to be in or near a city, you may look out of the window and watch the cars going by, wondering what all the people "out there" think about the great problems of war and peace. You wonder how the concerned people are going to *reach* the driving-around-the-city people with the importance of what they have to say, and what might happen if they did. You wonder if those who say that nothing short of "revolutionary change" can help the situation are right, and then you wonder what they mean by revolutionary change. You can study the reports of the opinion-makers to see what they say about shaping public opinion in one direction or another. But the opinion-makers know mostly about how to sell goods or elect candidates to office. They haven't had much experience in getting people to go against the grain of the times and the dead weight of habit. And then, of course, you're not really sure you know what you want to get people to do. The whole system is so complex. Further, getting people to "do something" sounds a little like manipulating them and it seems probable that one of the causes of the terrible tensions in the world is that too many people have been manipulated into having the wrong kind of interests, leaving a great void of apathy in areas where they *ought* to be interested. Then you ask yourself, "Who am I to tell people what they ought to be interested in?", and the whole idea of manipulation grows more repugnant.

But the mail keeps on coming in. More and more people are beginning to feel like the man who said, recently: "There's really no one running the show; we're on auto-pilot, now—all of us." Things keep on happening, *as if* someone had a grip on the affairs of State, but you develop the ugly suspicion that the causes of what happens are so complex and so immeasurable, that for everyone in the world, there is only a vague "they" to be held ultimately responsible.

What would you say to one of the people driving around out there—if you had him in a corner, and he showed some inclination to listen? What would you say if, finally, he asked, "All right, what do you want me to *do?"*

Some people think they have a few answers to these questions. The following is a letter from a reader who has been looking at them.

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One of the most common things for people to do today, especially those who have become frustratedly aware of the abnormality of our present world situation, is to engage in some kind of criticism. Undoubtedly this is a natural reaction to an increasing awareness of the hopelessness of

national and international military commitments. The threat of war looms ominously over the whole of mankind; a war, if once started, will result in an incalculable amount of horror and destruction. This kind of realization—thrust, as it were, upon us—creates a burden both mental and physical which is impossible to bear without some devastating effects to our inner contentment. The fact of the matter is that we cannot sensibly retain an apathetic attitude of mind and still think of ourselves as being to some degree *human.* So our inward sense of responsibility forces us into some kind of action, which usually takes form initially in some spoken or written criticism.

Probably we begin to write to our local newspapers and tell them how we feel and what we think ought to be done. And probably they don't print our letters for a whole list of reasons—most likely because what we say is considered to be too "controversial" and would not make agreeable reading for the average subscriber. Finally, when this gets us nowhere, we start writing to our state and national government hoping that here, perhaps, we will exact some response at least. But this is likely to have as little success as our newspaper correspondence; or if we do receive a reply it comes as a form letter assuring us with a few well-polished and concise paragraphs that the-powers-that-be also share our concern and that they are doing everything within their power to insure world peace and the "good life" for people all over the world.

This kind of task eventually appears to be pointless. We feel that we might just as well write notes to the television set, because we never really get in touch with anyone. We know that there are people behind the letters we receive (or don't receive), but who are they? What do they really think? We have difficulty getting confronted by anyone, even for censure.

Sooner or later some people get tired of this kind of word-gaming and decide that something else is needed to wake man up to the fact that he is unknowingly sitting in death-row. An article in the *Philadelphia Inquirer* (Nov. 16, 1960) tells of one man who apparently reached this conclusion. He is twenty-eight-year-old William Henry. At the launching of one of our new submarines armed with sixteen ballistic missiles, nuclear-tipped, this young man attempted to swim in the path of the departing vessel, but was unsuccessful. According to our newspaper, his act of defiance "marred" the "historic occasion." While this is undoubtedly true, it's a pity that no more important significance could be attached to it. The article went on to state that this submarine is worth $110,000,000, and that by the end of 1965 the Navy hopes to have forty-five of them in operation. Mr. Henry probably feels that this is the kind of insurance mankind can do without.

Even among pacifists, such a stunt draws many diversified opinions. Some are in favor of it, while others feel that it is inconsistent with pure non-violent sentiment. Others remark with disgust that these are angry people who defeat their own purpose, and that they should think things through more carefully before dashing off half-cocked and creating public disturbance. Other people, like myself, have mixed emotions and refrain from offering any opinion, pro or con. The thought of playing leap-frog on a government missile base or taking a dip in the ocean to protest war is a little disconcerting if not downright "scary."

In concluding I should like to say that, agree or not with this sort of thing, there are many factors to be weighed before we offer too much criticism. We should ask ourselves what these people are standing for, and decide if the principle is right or wrong. It may be true that if mankind is to survive the twentieth century, it will necessitate having more angry men of this caliber.

———————

Well, we can do what this correspondent says—ask ourselves "what these people are standing for?"—and we can also draw back a way and ask some other questions. Is this, for one thing, a time that is essentially different from other

periods of history? It certainly seems to be, in one respect.

The people who are anxious about the world and what may happen to it in the almost immediate future are often just ordinary people—that is, you have no way of predicting from whom the next letter will come. The threat of war is just as much a private problem as it is a public problem. Now it is true enough that in the past, the public problem of war was a private and very personal problem for the individual who was in danger of getting killed in the war; but today, every private person stands in some danger of being killed in the next war, so that it is not unreasonable to say that the public problem is also the private problem of *everyone.* This, you could argue, makes the present period of history different. The private man has as much reason to think about the public problem as anyone else. The problem is, then, neither public nor private, but universal.

This is only one way of speaking of the matter. More is involved, for many people, than just getting killed. The universal problem is also a problem of the quality of man's life. Living in an atmosphere of dread expectancy is unhealthy and possibly immoral. On this basis, the private individual has overwhelming reasons for thinking about the condition of the world and how to improve it. That he often is not doing this kind of thinking is an explanation of why someone like William Henry tried to swim in front of a Polaris submarine armed with sixteen ballistic missiles. William Henry wanted to "get through" to the people who aren't thinking. No doubt he did get through to some.

Are there any good reasons for remaining comparatively indifferent to the dramatic appeals for attention of men like William Henry? Well, you might compare our situation to the chiliastic doctrine of the end of the world. The people who think that the final decision between good and evil is in the hands of God are mainly interested in being personally "ready" when the awful time comes. Then there are the people who quite seriously believe that worldly affairs are so inextricably involved in sinfulness that only a private virtue is possible for human beings. These are not surprised by the imminent triumph of evil; they expected it.

Another group who might not be especially responsive would include the "realists" who feel that the situation is hopeless and not worth bothering about. They look on what is happening with either a quiet or a cynical tolerance—depending upon their temperaments—and suggest that the Doomsday Machine has already acquired too much momentum to be arrested in its course toward total destruction. The great majority, however, are likely to reflect the view that our national leaders are doing the best they can in an extremely difficult situation. "What else can they do?" would probably sum up the commonest response. Added to the feeling of obligation to trust the nation's leadership is the impression, gained from many sources, that the Government, despite its enormous problems, has the situation "well in hand." For example, a primary grades teacher in a suburban community in the Los Angeles area recently took time to explain to a class of eleven-year-olds how "safe" they would be in case of nuclear attack. The promise of safety was conveyed mostly by mood rather than specific claims, although a pedestrians' tunnel under a main highway, used by the children on their way to school, was cited as a handy "bomb shelter." A happy complacency seemed to be the keynote of the occasion, as reported by one child. A parent fresh from reading the Harrison-Real paper, which told about the fire storm which would rip away the atmosphere for a radius of twenty-five miles from the strike, and the knee-high ash and smoking piles of radioactive rubble that would fill the devastated area, wondered where the teacher got her cheery material and why the public school system feels obliged to spread this infantile propaganda of "security" in the primary grades.

Finally, there are those whose personal interests are so engrossing and whose horizons are so circumscribed by their immediate activities that they neither know nor seem to care about the destruction which threatens the world.

Over against this summary of negative attitudes in respect to the private problem which has become a public problem, must be set the general considerations for which attention may be sought. Portions of the concluding chapters of Mr. Barnet's book will serve to summarize some of the questions that need answers. He asks:

> Where can we put our trust in a world where we have abandoned our trust in arms? If an international authority with police power over the major nations is impractical, what alternative stabilizing mechanisms would be available? How much (or, more realistically, how little) would Russia have to change its approach to international relations before the United States should take the risks of substantial disarmament? And what would be the effect of disarmament on our national goals? In a disarmed world would we retain the capacity to guarantee the security of our allies against Communist infiltration? Against spontaneous revolution? . . . Are we irrevocably committed to the prevention of Communist expansion merely by military means, or must we for our security resist all Communist encroachments by whatever means effected? Would we dare to contend with Russia in a world without arms for the friendship and loyalty of the emerging underdeveloped peoples, or would any competition bound to become so threatening to one side or the other that the use of force would be resumed? In a world disarmed would a revolutionary power be more likely to moderate its ambitions, or would it exploit the physical defenselessness of its neighbors to work their destruction through the treacherous use of force?

Mr. Barnet has a lot more questions, but these will do to sober us at the moment. How do you answer these questions—the questions which are all really one question: *What will people do?*

Do you want "scientific" answers to these questions? There is only one place to get them—from the account of what people have done. On the whole, the account of what people have done is discouraging. But if you want exact answers, if you want the only kind of certainty the world knows about, you go to descriptions of things which have happened.

But people, someone will say, will have to do *better!*

This is the heart of our problem. We should like to say to one another that people must, can, and will, do better. How shall we get to be able to say this, and believe it ourselves?

Mr. Barnet has a cautionary paragraph:

> To be "for" or "against" disarmament in our world... seems a singularly unrealistic approach. Neither the military planner who sees no end to the arms spiral nor the pacifist who calls upon the world to make itself over by a sheer act of will offers any practical basis for progress towards peace. To tell the world to go on making and testing nuclear weapons is like telling a drunk to go on drinking. To say "there has *got* to be progress in disarmament" is as fruitful as telling the drunk to pull himself together.

Mr. Barnet believes in thinking about all the practical and moral questions which come to a focus in the issue of disarmament and he has tried to assemble these questions in his book. He concludes:

> While many aspects of disarmament are highly technical and are perhaps completely comprehensible only to experts, the ultimate decisions, whether to take one kind of risk or another, are appropriate to the democratic decision-making process. Indeed, no statesman—of whatever stature—could make the kind of commitment which disarmament requires unless he had the public with him. In the final analysis, the public must sit as a jury to weigh the opinions and recommendations with which we are confronted, as best we can, and then decide. And the decision cannot be delayed. The longer the arms race continues, the more difficult a decision becomes and the greater the risks of war. It is, therefore, more urgent than ever to face the challenge of disarmament and decide whether we *want* disarmament, for upon our decision may well depend the future of civilization on this planet.

These are brave words, and who can fail to agree with them?

But we are still looking out the window at the people driving around. Do they want

disarmament? Or, as Thomas à Kempis might put it, "Maybe they want disarmament, but do they want the things that make for disarmament?"

There ought to be a better, a more hopeful, way of finishing this discussion. In another place, Mr. Barnet remarks:

> It seems plain that attempts at disarmament proposals which try to hedge against all conceivable risks will not only fail to build confidence but will actually further inflame the atmosphere. Any agreement for meaningful disarmament requires an awareness of the risks involved, as objective an assessment of those risks as it is given to humans to make, and, ultimately, an act of faith.

It is this "ultimately" which seems most important of all. We have plenty of people who can supply the other necessities, but where will we get the *faith?* Of what is "faith" made? And what sort of faith is needed? What does the capacity for faith grow from?

Do we need simply a faith that honest acts of good will will be rewarded in kind? Should we define our need at this level, or are profounder depths involved?

With these questions in mind, you may be able to look out the window without so much inward disturbance. The people driving around are no better and no worse off than the rest of us in this matter of faith. The technological and intellectual skills required to break down the problem of peace-making into manageable elements are good to have—we can hardly make peace without them—but faith has no noticeable relationship to technical skills or intellectuality. It is faith in *people* that must be justified, and technical skill in relation to human behavior relies almost wholly on history of one sort or another. What did the people do? They'll do it again. That is the technical man's answer.

But we have already stipulated that there is not much hope unless people get themselves ready to do better. It seems a tremendous waste of time and energy to talk about peace and peace-making without acknowledging this central fact.

Letter from **ENGLAND**

ROBERTSBRIDGE.—NOW that the trial of Penguin Books on a charge of publishing an obscene book is over, the probable consequences of the verdict of the jury that D. H. Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover* is not obscene by reason of the "four-letter words" used by the author, are being pondered. The situation is a curious one. For the verdict means this: a book of literary merit is justified in the use of these words, but not a work deemed below that level. In other words, the issue becomes an issue of *de gustibus non est disputandum.* There is now a general expectation that there will shortly ensue a rash of books resorting to these words. But whenever this contingency arises and the Public Prosecutor takes action in the criminal courts, juries of ordinary men and women will have to assume, to fulfill that function, the role of literary critic. The question can no longer be: Is a book using these words obscene, but, Is this work, using these words, good or bad as literature? That may well seem absurd. Only time—and not distant time at that—will reveal the consequences of this historic test case, one in which an Anglican Bishop appeared as a witness for the defence.

Some fifteen years or so ago a curious individual, familiar on the streets of London in a mediæval style of dress and proclaiming himself the true King of Poland, was prosecuted in the same court for the same offence. He was sent to prison for six months, though his poems were never published, but halted at the printers who—one wonders why—instead of declining the work, ran to the police with the four-letter poems. Other times, other manners. A little while before Lawrence wrote this much-advertised and overlauded book, he had an exhibition of paintings in a small London gallery. I visited it out of curiosity. The paintings, whose merits as art I am not in a position to judge, were curious as to their subject matter, all heavily erotic so that the women who were circulating in front of them were either much embarrassed or moved to titters. The show was shut down by the police. This enraged Lawrence. I have always believed that it was because of that action that Lawrence sat down to write deliberately to shock public opinion, and in the mood, somewhat, of the small boy who defaces walls with rude pictures and the aforesaid four-letter words. But of course, I may be wrong here. As to the merits of the book, it is surely the least important of the works of a major novelist, and written—a circumstance unduly overlooked—when he was in an advanced state of T.B., a condition that has, at times, produced psychopathological symptoms in the patient. Quite aside from this particular case, there has been, during the last decade, a remarkable trend towards license in the matter of pornography, that is, fictional works obviously written to secure sales via the prurient, the sex-starved, and the silly. There are in London many small bookshops that offer the public nothing else. Sooner or later, then, the problem will reassert itself inevitably, as the result of the Old Bailey acquittal of Lawrence's publishers. These are, by any standard, people of the highest professional standing who were faced, in projecting a complete Penguin edition of a famous author, with the problem of the omission of one of his best-known books.

—ENGLISH CORRESPONDENT

REVIEW
THE MEANING OF RUSSIAN HISTORY

WE should very much like to persuade every MANAS reader to invest a dollar in the summer issue (1960) of the *Texas Quarterly*, to obtain Lobanov-Rostovsky's "Rhythm and Meaning in Russian History"—about the most useful piece of background reading on Russia that we have ever encountered. André Lobanov, as he has long been known to appreciative students in several American universities, was born into the Russian aristocracy before the Revolution, and was trained, as other Lobanovs before him, for the diplomatic service. Ideatively, though, he belonged neither to the old order nor the new; he was and is a man so perceptive that ordinary partisanship is utterly impossible for him. So far as your reviewer is concerned, it is entirely conceivable that Lobanov today "knows more history" than any man alive, but whether or not this is the case, it is certain that no one has a better background for explaining the meaning of Russian history, past and present.

Even from the most commonplace of motives, there is ample reason for wanting to understand the complex character of the Russian people and the unfolding scope of their history. Whether American foreign policy will before long move towards peaceful, cultural cross-fertilization with the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, whether the "cold war" will continue indefinitely, or whether a mutually annihilating war will some day actually be fought, there can be no doubt that the more one understands of the amazing vitality of the Russians, the better. Throughout this article Prof. Lobanov draws close parallels between the cyclic transformations of the Russian, English, French, German, and American societies, showing that the periodic alienations of Russia from the Western world have usually involved one or another sort of time-lag imposed by historical conditions over which Russia had no control.

While it is impossible to summarize an article which is itself a brilliant summary, we can at least pass along some bits of historical background of which few are aware. Russia first emerged as an integral nation in 862, after the infiltration of large numbers of Vikings. These Scandinavians, or Varangians, established the great cultural center of Kiev and ruled Russia from the ninth to the close of the sixteenth century. A Mongolian inheritance was added during the 250 years following the Mongol conquest.

During the great days of Kiev, Crown Prince Vladimir, direct descendant of the first Varangian ruler, established relationships with the courts of every civilized country, and royal intermarriages linked Russia with the kingdoms of England, Germany, France, Norway, Poland and Hungary. It was Vladimir who chose Greek rather than Roman Christianity. Thus were planted the seeds of that fertile culture we know through the great Russian writers; indeed, Russia was far ahead of Western Europe during the Carlovingian times. One of Lobanov's points is that no element of the cultural richness of Russia, once developed, has ever been lost, and if it can be demonstrated that the cultural continuity has been preserved throughout difficult transitions of the past, one may assume that the same heritage will be constructively influential at some time in the future.

As for the origins of the Communist State, it is interesting to see how closely linked the ideals of the Revolution were with the most progressive currents of European thought. As Lobanov puts it, "the story of the Russian revolutionary movement bears out the saying that revolutions start from the top, particularly if we remember that both Catherine the Great and Alexander I in the early years of their reigns had fully endorsed, in theory at least, the ideals of the French Enlightenment." He continues:

> In the following decades the movement gained in amplitude and power. A downward spread of education produced the emergence of a mixed intelligentsia, composed not solely of nobles, and new ideological influences penetrated from Germany with the growing vogue for the German romantic school of philosophy, particularly for Hegel, Fichte, and Schelling. Under the influence of Hegel's philosophy of history, the question of the position of Russia with reference to Western civilization became of paramount importance, and one school of thought known as the "Westerners" argued that in so far as

> Russia had adopted Western ways she was civilized, while in so far as she differed from the West she was barbarous. The opposite school, known as the "Slavophiles," claimed that the West was decadent and that the development of Russia should be rooted in her own past and follow her own traditional lines. In the prevailing intellectual and political climate of the day, the "Westerners" held the stage throughout the century, the "Slavophiles" being wrongly accused of supporting the reactionary policies of the government. But a number of outstanding "Westerners" soon became disillusioned with the West and highly critical of what they saw during their travels in Western Europe. Refusing, however, to pass into the "Slavophile" camp, they projected their admiration for Western civilization into the future by accepting the most radical ideologies propagated at the time in France and in Germany as the goals which the Russian intelligentsia should strive for. Thus emerged a left-wing group in the "Westerners" camp which propagated, first, the teachings of the French Utopian Socialists, St. Simon and Fourier, then came under the influence of the socialism of the 1840's, particularly that of Proudhon and Blancqui, and finally in the early 1880's accepted the theories of Karl Marx.

Another paragraph of "Rhythm and Meaning in Russian History" bears particularly on the shifts in Russian policy in the twentieth century. Russia has always struggled for the right to an independent destiny, and the inevitable social upheaval of the revolution following World War I brought the need for large-scale industrial development, precipitating a difficult problem:

> The development of industry was dependent on capital investments, and these, to a great extent, had to come from abroad, since Russian capital was insufficient for the purpose. Thus a dilemma was created, a dilemma vividly brought to light by the fact that the breakdown of Russia in the World War of 1914-1918 was due to the fact that her armies were not supported by an adequate industrial potential in the rear. Without industrialization on a large scale Russia could not remain a great military power while the influx of foreign capital to build this power menaced the economic independence of Russia, particularly since foreign concessions in places such as Siberia or the Caucasus covered vast areas. The danger of becoming an economic colony of the West was very real and was for Russia the alternative to losing her status as a great power. We know that the Soviets solved the problem by the drastic and costly method of driving Western capital out and pulling themselves up by the bootstraps through the Five-Year Plans. This in turn led to the great conflict between the city and the village which resulted in the elimination of the *kulaks* and the imposition of the collective farm system.

Prof. Lobanov's conclusion seems to us well put, with an implied prophecy which thoughtful men everywhere can only welcome:

> In the flush of victory immediately following their coming to power, the Soviets believed they could wholly eliminate the past and remould Russia entirely according to their ideology. But with increasing vigor and obstinacy those elements of the past which survived the great onslaught began showing their vitality and reasserting themselves—elements such as the Orthodox Church, the impact of the Russian national and historical traditions, and conversely, the rising tide of nationalism of the minority republics. From the pure Marxist ideology must be deducted these factors, as well as those we have previously analyzed. A process of mutual adjustment seeking a new balance in Russia is taking place.
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> Lastly, we may point out that the present estrangement between East and West is not a condition preordained by history, as some believe, but merely a well-known phenomenon of revolutionary upheavals: the conflict between a new order challenging the fundamental principles upon which civilization was based in the older order. We find such a conflict arising in the Reformation when Protestantism challenged Catholic Europe and at the end of the eighteenth century when the tide of democracy engendered in the twin American and French Revolutions challenged the European monarchies. That the present challenge with its world-wide nature is infinitely more grave is not to be denied, but this is a question of degree and not of difference in type of phenomenon. History seems to prove that in the long run these great conflicts are resolved by a process of adjustment and attrition which makes eventual coexistence possible, or by the emergence of some totally new and unpredictable factors which render them obsolete.

COMMENTARY
THE ROOTS OF FAITH

THIS week's lead article sets up a problem which could easily have the meaning that a Christmas editorial ought to seek. Toward the end comes this question: "What does the capacity for faith grow from?"

Perhaps the question starts too far along. Why do we get interested in such large matters as "faith"? One reason for considering the idea of faith is the feeling that our lives are continually being blocked or confined. Much of the time, we don't seem to be able to do what we want to do. The question is, why?

Whatever answer is made to the "why" question, there is always one further conclusion, and that is that people need to learn to live with a certain amount of confinement or frustration. *All* the obstacles are never put out of the way. The importance of faith, then, lies in our need to feel that it is worth while to go on. A man's faith is what he believes is the *real* situation, as distinguished from the way it looks, and how it throws him back, yesterday, today, and even tomorrow.

Usually, people who are looking for a faith start out by trying to decide what kind of a world this is and what the rules are. If they go at it honestly, they are likely to come to the same end-of-the-line that Tolstoy came to. Tolstoy's discovery was that you have to find out about yourself before you can find out anything important about the world. He had moral reasons for reaching this conclusion, but you could also have commonsense reasons. That is, we haven't the time to be sure about the kind of world this is, and insisting on certainty may make you extremely dependent upon what other people say. And the fact is that you can't get faith from other people. This is the limitation of the scientific theory of knowledge. It is a collectivist theory and can have nothing to say about the faith that human beings forge for themselves and which occasionally makes them great.

In our lead article, "faith" has to do with faith in others. But this may be a backward approach. How could we have faith in others without first having faith in ourselves—that is, faith in a program for living, *no matter what others may do?* When you say that a man lives by principle, you mean that he is unswervingly devoted to principle, regardless of the decisions or actions of others. And if you need a difficult thing done, you will go to that man for help because he can be relied upon.

Faith in others, then, begins in faith in the capacity of human beings to live by principle—which is a faith that has to be experienced at least a little in our own devotion to principle. If we can't believe it of ourselves, we won't be able to believe it of others.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves

NOTES

NEWS concerning the most interesting campaigns for desegregation in the South, the "Sit-ins," comes in the form of statements by the participants. When a young person, colored or white, risks community displeasure or the threat of bodily harm by insisting that stores which sell to both races should also serve both races at the lunch counter, he does so because he conceives the sit-in or accompanying picketing as a worth-while symbolic action. Often the participants have discovered in themselves—sometimes to their surprise—a latent capacity for the discipline of Gandhian nonviolence. So the thinking these youths do is important, and the attitudes generated are of immeasurable potential significance.

Sit-In Students' Report, issued by CORE (Congress of Racial Equality), consists of letters from six student participants. What the average reader of news stories on the sit-ins may not realize is that widespread support for this movement in the South is expressed on many nonsegregated, "white" university campuses. As the New York *Times* remarked a short time ago: "This issue appears to have aroused the present campus generation as have few others." One of the letters in the *Sit-In Students' Report,* written by a Columbia undergraduate, is representative:

> People have asked me why northerners—especially white people who have been in the majority in our picket demonstrations in New York—take an active part in an issue which doesn't concern them. My answer is that injustice anywhere is everybody's concern.
>
> Sitting at a lunch counter may seem like a small thing to some, but the right to do so is inextricably bound up with the American idea of equality for all. The world's eyes are upon us. We and our democracy are on trial. All of us are being judged by what occurred in Little Rock in recent years and by what is happening in the south today.
>
> That is why students in the north have identified themselves with the movement in the south. U.S. students have been challenged to shake off their traditional political apathy and take a stand.
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> As a student at Columbia University and as a member of New York CORE, I am aware that northern students have wanted to speak out for integration for some time. But, aside from listening to speeches with which we agreed—there was little to do. We were waiting for the leadership to come from the south. . . .

Well, the leadership came, and students throughout the nation expressed their approval with varying degrees of cooperation. In the East, Yale, Harvard and Princeton were heard from. The Columbia letter continues:

> At New Haven, 35 Yale medical students picketed local variety stores in four shifts. At Saratoga Springs, 20 Skidmore College faculty members joined 200 college girls in a demonstration.
>
> These are typical of student activities which are taking place from coast to coast. While initiated on individual campuses, these activities are supported by such national student organizations as the National Student Association and the National Student Christian Federations. In college towns, picketing of the variety stores has been established by the students, themselves. In the cities, college, as well as high school, students have been the mainstay of picket lines organized by CORE, NAACP and other established organizations. Labor unions have helped by manning many picket lines.
>
> This is the case in New York where I, a student at Columbia University, have been a CORE picket captain. We set up our original line at a Woolworth store in the heart of Harlem on the second Saturday after the Greensboro sit-in. Within a half hour the store was cleared of customers. Hardly anybody on this busy thoroughfare crossed our picket lines. I looked in through the glass doors and could see that the employees looked puzzled at the store's emptiness on such a busy Saturday afternoon.
>
> Passersby voiced approval of the picketing. Many asked to join the line and some did.
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> One woman told me she would be glad to join, but she was waiting for her husband. For a while I observed her watching from a distance. Then, a man arrived and she came over to me saying: "My husband and I would like to help: what can we do?"

They stayed three hours distributing leaflets and returned the following Saturday to hand them out the entire afternoon.

On a cold February afternoon, a young man appeared on the picket line looking half-frozen. "Am I glad you showed up: I've been waiting for you since 9 o'clock," he said. "But we weren't scheduled to start picketing until 2," I told him. "Well, I read in the newspaper that CORE was going to picket this store, but the article didn't give the starting time, so I just took the morning train in and decided to wait for you," he explained. "The train?" I asked in surprise. "Yes, I live in Lakewood, New Jersey," he said. Lakewood is 75 miles from New York.

A foreword to the *Sit-In* pamphlet (available from CORE, 38 Park Row, New York 38, for 25 cents) is provided by Lillian Smith, who writes:

I was deeply moved by these stories. There is validity in them; and thoughtfulness, and modesty, and a nice understatement. But courage shines through—as do the high spirits and gaiety and refusal to resent which turned some nasty ordeals into significant experience, and even into adventure.

Do not misunderstand, please, my use of *"adventure."* These students are highhearted, they can laugh, thank God, at the crazy, mad absurdities of life in a segregated culture; they can shrug off the obscenities; and I honor them for it. But they are serious, they have suffered and will suffer again; they have made grave, enduring commitments and have found the courage to risk; but none of it has been easy. Nor should it be easy for us to accept their sacrifice and suffering. Let's not forget that these students are going to jail not only for *their* freedom but for yours and mine; not only because *they* have been hurt by the indignities of segregation but because we all have been hurt.

As I watch them, as I see the movement spread from college to college and city to city, I am deeply stirred as are millions of other Americans. What is it we feel? what do we hope for? I can answer only for myself: For me, it is as if the *No Exit* sign is about to come down from our age. It is the beginning of new things, of a new kind of leadership. If the white students will join in ever-increasing numbers with these Negro students, change will come; their experience of suffering and working together for what they know is right; the self-discipline, the refusal to act in violence or think in violence will bring a new spiritual life not only to our region but to our entire country.

Sooner or later, this spirit will have to take firm hold of the lives of all men. We are fortunate, perhaps, in having public rehearsals of its inspiration and power in the limited theater of race relations, as a means of making the idea of this sort of commitment slowly seep into our awareness. Thus the Negroes, we may some day realize, will have become the great social pioneers of the twentieth century.

FRONTIERS

Notes on Scientists on Religion

A GREAT deal has been written concerning the social responsibility of scientists. We should like to increase the already heavy burdens of the scientific fraternity by proposing that its members also have philosophical and sociological responsibilities—adding, however, the qualification that so does everyone else.

These reflections come as a result of turning the pages and reading here and there in *Science Ponders Religion*, a book edited by Harlow Shapley and published by Appleton-Century-Crofts (1960, $5.00). Dr. Shapley does pretty well by his philosophical responsibilities in his Preface, where he lists some of the questions dealt with by the eminent contributors—all scientists—to this volume. It is a considerable achievement to have persuaded scientists to discuss in public such matters as the following:

> Is the administration of the universe purposeful?
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> Are the "great" religions, the most widely spread cults, on their way to extinction because of the rise of science and naturalistic philosophy? Or rather, do the religions have a validity and a capacity to revise that provide a continuing light unto men's feet?
>
> Will the now widely accepted hypothesis of highly developed sentient life throughout the stellar universe affect religious creeds?
>
> Have other biological societies and civilizations on the earth arisen independently of religion?
>
> Is the "reverence for life" (Schweitzer) a cramped version of humility and reverence—a cramped idea in view of what we now know about the emergence of life out of the lifeless? These facts make logical an equal reverence for the inanimate *and* the animate. Would it not be more reasonable to be humble before the phenomenon of *total* existence rather than only before a biochemical digression or before a display of atoms and stars?
>
> Will it be possible to develop an ethical system more suited to our dramatic times than are the ethical systems of less sophisticated cultures?
>
> Does Pantheism make sense—a world view where the natural is divine, where Nature is God and God is Nature?

You could hardly ask for more open-mindedness than this from the scientists of the mid-twentieth century. How do they handle these questions? Gingerly, no doubt as they should. But at times they handle them prejudicially, as they shouldn't. Take for example a paragraph from Dr. Shapley's own contribution—"Stars, Ethics, and Survival." He writes:

> We need not be concerned about what man, at his most explosive worst, may do to the universe. We need not worry about a cosmos that has human ingenuity running wild. For man's power, cosmically speaking, is negligible. He can do himself in, of course, possibly blow up his planet and put an end to terrestrial biology. But it would be only a local disturbance. Such an episode would leave the stars untouched and unconcerned.

How does Dr. Shapley acquire all this confidence that man run amok cannot significantly mess up the affairs of the universe? He ought at least to have added, "In the light of our present knowledge of the scope of human causation, we need not be concerned . . . ," etc. If an evil son can break the heart of a mother, it is just conceivable that an evil planet might darken the light of a sun. "The stations out there," as Kenneth Patchen has said, "don't identify themselves." Until they do, we had best be less sure about such matters.

R. W. Gerard of the University of Michigan, who has "worked for over forty years on the nervous system," who recently moved into behavioral science and is now a member of a new Mental Health Research Institute, provides an anecdote concerning metaphysics:

> The origin of the new, whether in science, art, or religion, is basically the same neurologically; the same kind of subjective experience is involved. The new idea for the scientist is associated with the same feeling, the same ecstatic mood of artistic fulfillment, of emotional satisfaction, of exaltation that, I am sure, the religious experience brings. The critical difference, the great power of science, is that, after this individual experience, there are means and criteria that allow him and others to make critical tests of it. I remind you of that illuminating story of the physicist, Robert Wood.
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> On the platform one time the chairman twitted him, "Mr. Wood, please make clear in your talk the

> difference between a physicist and a metaphysicist." "On this question," Wood said, "I can illustrate the difference by an experience of my own. I was bothered about the meaning of some observations. Tossing in bed one night, suddenly an idea came to me. It seemed like a good idea, but knowing one isn't too critical at such times, I just slept on it. In the morning I thought about it again, marshaled all the facts I had in mind, and they fitted. I thought it was a darn good idea, rushed to the library and read everything relevant, and all this fitted. I thought it was a damn good idea, and tried it out in the laboratory . . . and it didn't work!" "Gentlemen," he concluded, "the metaphysician has no laboratory."

This makes a good story, but what it fails to disclose is the fact that the metaphysician, like the scientist, has to create or at least *find* his laboratory, and it is certainly not remarkable that the scientist has not found himself working in a metaphysical laboratory by accident. The proof of a metaphysical proposition may be difficult, or obscure, but to admit this is not the same as declaring that it is impossible. Before anyone can say with authority that metaphysical ideas are incapable of verification, he has to tell us how he has exhausted the possibilities of such proof, and why what he has done *does* exhaust these possibilities.

Of course, the demonstration of a metaphysical proposition such as, say, the immortality of the soul involves the acceptance of a lot of assumptions which most scientists are not prepared to admit. Further, the demonstration may not be of the same sort as a scientific demonstration; that is, it may be a matter of first-hand experience only to the individual who achieves it, and this, it could be argued, is hardly the "public" sort of proof we are accustomed to expect from the scientists The defender of metaphysics will have to bow to this claim, yet he can make a counter claim which has some substance. He can say, for example, that the proof of the Einstein Theory is hearsay for all those who have not mastered the mathematical vocabulary that Dr. Einstein uses, and who have not completed the astronomical observations which gave the theory its empirical support. Some proofs, in short, require an incredible discipline. You could say, further, that complicated mathematical demonstrations of the sort now familiar to theoretical physicists were wholly unknown a few thousand years ago, so that a thoughtful man of that time could with reason say that there was "no laboratory" for that sort of demonstration. He could not say it now.

One point more: Human beings exhibit an invincible tendency to think in metaphysical terms. The maturity of an age might possibly be measured by the way in which men regard the idea of metaphysical certainty.

Our age often regards it with some amusement. Mr. Gerard has another story to tell:

> . . . at a symposium such as this, the toastmaster, a theologian, introducing the speaker, a philosopher, said: "A philosopher is like a blind man on a dark night in a deep cellar looking for a black cat that isn't there." The speaker conceded "I think, perhaps, that is a fair characterization of a philosopher; I will only point out that, under exactly the same circumstances, the theologian would produce the cat."

Well, *Science Ponders Religion* is hardly a joke book, and these few notes are hardly a survey of its contents. We'll doubtless return to this volume again. Meanwhile, the admission we keep on wanting to find in such books is that scientists are slowly coming around to realizing that the profoundest hopes of the human heart are *metaphysical* hopes, and that they can hardly be vain. Some day, perhaps, our scientists will wear out the vanity that they are much smarter than the metaphysicians, only because they refuse to deal with the ultimate questions that form the ground of metaphysical thought, and begin to turn their acute intelligence in the direction of authentic philosophical investigation.