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RESOURCES FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

IT sometimes happens that after absorbing a particularly effective piece of social criticism, such, for example, as C. Wright Mills' *The Power Elite,* or, much more briefly, the letter from Alex Williams in MANAS for April 22, one is overtaken by a drab feeling of hopelessness. What is to be done? The things seen to be wrong are fixed in a framework of well-established institutional practice, on the one hand, and ignored or noticed with indifference by the great majority of the population, on the other. Once in a while, some proposal for change has the good fortune to catch the popular imagination, and with skillful advocacy and effective political organization it wins through to adoption, but such victories seem extremely slight in comparison with the goals of even modest Utopias. The shadow of bigotry and jingoism haunts the wings of the theater of public discussion, while lethargy is a force which even benevolent Machiavellians must reckon with and occasionally employ.

Practical reformers are inevitably confronted by the stolid reality of blind resistance to change. Campaigners for the Georgist program of land ownership reform, for example, admit with melancholy resignation that even if their theories were much more widely accepted, there would still be tremendously stubborn obstacles to the "transition" from the present scheme of ownership to arrangements approximating a contemporary version of the Georgist ideal. Let any such program become an actual "threat" to the *status quo,* and all the forces of yellow journalism and a dozen brands of demagoguery would wheel into action. If there is anything to be learned from recent history, it is that it is impossible to control the direction of such energies, once they have been released. In fact, the emergence of Fascism in the twentieth century is to be explained at least partly by the resort of disillusioned social reformers to repressive methods that promised some kind of control. From disillusionment to cynicism is only a short step, and cynicism in politics offers practically no resistance to the dogs of corruption which lie in wait wherever the idea of the good is linked with the idea of political power.

This is not to declare that the tried and true methods of constructive change through legislative reform are useless. The intent, here, is rather to suggest that all movements for change which are essentially political must depend for their driving energy upon the resources afforded by the people at large. These include the gamut of the human emotions as well as the body of opinions somewhat indifferently shared by the electorate. Many years ago, Leon Trotsky asserted that a massive revolution such as he and Lenin contemplated could not possibly be accomplished without a calculated appeal to the selfishness of the people. Whatever Trotsky intended, this was not, we submit, a final judgment of the nature of human beings, but an estimate of the resources of the people of Europe, as he knew them, for revolutionary change.

In this country, today, the managers of our national affairs seem to be depending chiefly upon *fear* as the lever to gain acceptance for the policies they are pursuing. In the past, self-interest and acquisitive ambition were familiar targets of political address, but lately these have been replaced by what we loosely term "security," which is the generalized psychological opposite of everything that we fear. Politics of this sort soon degrades the currency of social thinking, confirming rather than resisting the descent of popular attitudes to the level described by Ortega in his *Revolt of the Masses.* Borrowing from the language of thermo-dynamics, we may say that this condition is a state of *moral entropy.* Even if

we admit that numerous and notable exceptions to the rule can be found—men like Dr. Hutchins, Stringfellow Barr, Supreme Court Justice Douglas, Joseph Wood Krutch, Erich Fromm, Lewis Mumford, and dozens of others, all of whom give frequent and persuasive expression to ideas embodying authentic vision—the brute fact remains that in political terms the following of these men is not large. They bring us an articulate minority report, widely read and appreciated by people of liberal and humanitarian outlook, but it is a serious question whether any one of them could survive a political campaign for a major office in the national government.

It is true enough that there are great conjunctions of history when it becomes possible for a Washington or a Lincoln to gain the mandate of political leadership from the people. Both these men, however, rode to office on a wave of heightened emotions related to war or portents of war. Further, in Washington's time, the level of political debate was far above the present low floor of controversy, as only a little reading in the *Federalist Papers* and the writings of Thomas Jefferson will show. The simple circumstances of a revolutionary situation enabled a man like Tom Paine to be heard by the populace. Or, for a contemporary instance, there is the leadership of Gandhi and Nehru in India. History collaborated with these men by producing issues which could be dramatized in both moral and nationalist terms. We have no such issues in America, today.

So it is a fair question to ask if the location of the "ivory towers" has changed without our being especially notified. It used to be that a concern with individual morality and attitudes was regarded as wholly irrelevant and even a little indecent, from a social point of view. Such concern was thought to be a form of pious escapism from the responsibilities of the citizen. The issues of private morality were regarded as a smokescreen of personal preoccupations which encouraged a man to feel virtuous while he walked along well-worn paths of large-scale social injustice. The foundation of this criticism was the contention that human beings are largely the products of their environment and that the good life for all will come only from an environment supplying the conditions for its development. Those who could not see this were condemned as relics of outmoded "aristocratic" thinking who selfishly resisted the progressive course of history. The judgment was over-simplified, but it was often just, and history had not yet provided the qualifications and discouragements which we now apply to all "collectivist" thinking about human problems.

The judgment continues to be made, of course, but it no longer represents the opinions of well-organized minorities of dedicated men in the liberal and radical movements. These movements have largely lost their fervor, due to various disillusionments and due to the lack of any clear theoretical program such as seemed easy to devise during the first half of the twentieth century. Further, it is likely that individuals who thirty years ago might have been drawn into liberal and socialist and labor groups are now found in the ranks of the pacifists. The imperatives of war have a way of dissolving political coloration. A socialist bomb is no more considerate than a capitalist bomb, and the absorption of the energies of socialist states in the processes of war and preparation for war equals when it does not outrun capitalist activities in this direction. Accordingly, the humanitarians whose eyes are open tend to find opposition to war more important than opposition to social injustice; or, at least, they see that the fight against injustice does not mean much except in conjunction with opposition to war.

The issues of humanitarian enterprise, in short, are being redefined.

This is a period of history, in other words, which lies between epochs of active political achievement. It is a time for reorientation and the rebuilding of the resources of constructive change. Those who do not see the point of this analysis

might find it useful to study the work of Arthur E. Morgan, an American flood control engineer who has devoted a lifetime of reflection and labors to the moral resources of society. Sensing, years ago, the weakness of popular political assumptions and the weakness, as well, of widely held educational assumptions, Dr. Morgan sought to discover the secret of the shaping of human character. An early work by Dr. Morgan embodying the fruits of his thinking is *The Long Road* (National Home Library, 1936). An *Atlantic* article (February, 1942) on the small community as "the Seed Bed of Society" put his reflections in the form of a positive thesis, and this material was later incorporated in his book, *The Small Community*.

In these various works, Dr. Morgan attempted to isolate for study the process by which the moral qualities of society are transmitted from one generation to another. He is in pursuit of those situations and relationships in which a kind of social-personal alchemy takes place, producing as its end-result human beings who are needed to make a good society. Obviously, more than any "formula" can contain is involved here, but from his wide-ranging investigations Dr. Morgan has assembled a large mass of illustrations and shrewd judgments, conducting the reader at least into the vestibule of truth concerning the mystery of human character. Dr. Morgan has many admirers and students, yet the full impact of his work has yet to be felt in the fundamental thinking about the problems confronting modern society. His concern is with the quality of human beings, as a matter of far higher priority than the usual preoccupations with types of government, economic theories, and even theories of education. Probably no man was better fitted to pursue research of this sort, since he has a distinctly Yankee reticence when it comes to the use of mouth-filling phrases and familiar sociological jargon. He is after the thing itself—vision and integrity in human and social relationships—and his vocabulary is the vocabulary of an intelligent, non-specialized man who uses ordinary words to say what he wants to say. There is bedrock of understanding in his work, and if modern sociology has not been set on fire by its penetration, the explanation may be that modern sociology has not the same interest as Dr. Morgan in ideas that can actually be put to work for the common good.

Dr. Morgan believes that the practical situations of home and small community life are the places where real education takes place. These are situations which are scaled to individual responsibility and competence. They provide a touch between whole human beings and other whole human beings, in circumstances where the pressures and irresponsibilities of the mass society are reduced to a minimum. It is not that such contacts do not occur elsewhere, but that they seem to have the best chance of developing in small community life. No doubt human ingenuity can and some day may devise or grow relationships of equal benefit in quite other circumstances, but if this happens, it will be because men finally recognize that the values they represent are priceless and, once lost, virtually irreplaceable.

What is wanted, at all events, is a restoration of the life of wonder, and the romance of individual existence, in which every child becomes aware from a thousand friendly informants, animate and inanimate, that he is setting out upon an Odyssey—in which nothing is ready-made, nothing of any importance, that is. We need to abandon to a dark limbo of superstition the idea that we can do anything of value for our children except to inspire them to undertake life as a quest. The certainties that we are able to bequeath to them are not the things they need to know. The earth is a solid mass and it will certainly support them, but no one can tell them in what direction to walk until they determine where they want to go.

There is only one way to create this sort of environment for our children, and that is to begin to create it for ourselves. It will not be anything especially "new." Our ancestors, the ancient

Greeks, were people in whom this spirit bloomed with a splendor never duplicated since. If they had not filled the historical record with their wonderings, someone might be able to convince us that the thing is not possible that the temper we speak of is only a utopian dream. But here, as in so many other things of worth, the Greeks are our exemplars. In *The Heroic Age of Science*, William A. Heidel has this to say:

> The Greek seemed to have felt, as did Wordsworth, that "the world is too much with us"; its very jostlings gave him a sense of being an alien until he could, as it were, keep it at arm's length long enough to glimpse its meaning. Its significance and relations fascinated him—if he could discover these, the brute facts interested him little. That many of his guesses went wide of the mark, means only that he was human; that he returned again and again to the attack, and never gave up the attempt to read the hidden meaning of the world by the light of his limited experience, proves that he possessed the spirit of the scientist and the philosopher. Once one realizes the irrepressible urge of the ancient Greek, his every enterprise acquires an interest for the thoughtful student, who values the idea more highly than the material in which it may chance to be embodied. Where the pioneers with the light heart of youth and inexperience thought to clear at a leap abysses which the ages have not sufficed to bridge, one must have grown old indeed if one fails to admire their adventurous spirit. May it not be that in that spirit, informing everything they attempted, there is to be found the richest legacy which a highly endowed race has bequeathed to the modern world?

This is a quality and temper of life which needs to be sought, not as a means to some other, "social" end, but for itself, as the substance of satisfaction in what we are and what we can do, here and now; yet it is also a certainty that without the spirit of wonder and search which animated the Greeks, every change that we undertake in common, or collectively, will be for the worse. We cannot possess collectively a vision we lack as individuals; we cannot embark upon a common enterprise of daring unless we have gained a zest for daring in our private lives. Much has been done for us as physical organisms, and much has been done for us as pleasure- and comfort-seeking animals, but nothing has been done for us as human beings. The quality of a human being is what he does for himself. This is the great secret embodied in every high culture, wherever it has existed, and which we now have sore need to rediscover. It is the truth by which alone we can make all the other, less important truths—the political and economic and educational truths—work.

Letter from AFRICA

> "If you discriminate against me because I am uncouth, I can become more mannerly. If you ostracize me because I am unclean, I can cleanse myself. If you segregate me because I am ignorant, I can become educated. But if you discriminate against me because of my colour, I can do nothing. God gave me colour.
>
> —NEGRO STUDENT

JOHANNESBURG.—It is not my intention to predict the future of South Africa as the natural outcome of what the situation is today. The future, as I see it, depends on the attitude and the measure of activity of all those who call South Africa their home. In that future there is no room for meaningless sentimentality, nor for unreasonable harshness—only for thorough planning based on true analysis of what each individual in this multi-racial country can contribute to the common pool of knowledge, leadership, labour, moral stamina. In that future the religious conscience has to take the lead, while the social conscience (it is generally being accepted as being right, so it *is* right), should play a minor role.

The words of the Negro student of South Africa should make it evident that the approach to South Africa's problem must shed all connection with colour. The present constitution of South Africa's population is as follows: Three million Europeans, of whom sixty per cent speak Afrikaans, and forty per cent English; nine million Bantu (the collective name for native tribes); one million two hundred thousand Coloured (persons of mixed white and Negro blood, living mostly in the Cape Province); and 421,000 Asiatics, mostly in Natal.

When, three hundred years ago, the Hollander (later French, German, British) settlers made South Africa their home, they brought with them all the advantages that their European civilisation had bestowed on them and in the years that followed the contact between the new country and Europe became steadily closer through improved transportation. When gold was discovered, diamonds, coal, any amount of other less valuable minerals, the Europeans took the development of industries in their stride—a development which left the Bantu in a state of complete bewilderment. Although many years have passed since then, and while, attracted by the novelty and the chance to earn more money, they have entered this new world, the majority of the Bantu people are still inclined to wonder why these modern inventions cannot be treated like the more primitive utensils they use in their own environment.

The answer—naturally—is education. Provincial Councils and Mission Stations have done an enormous amount of good work, not only by teaching the three R's, but also in making the young Bantu children acquainted with Western ways and languages. The time has arrived, however, for uniformity in that education. The Government has taken over and has drawn up a program which might well be the answer to the need of Bantu development. Both elementary and secondary schooling is free, but not compulsory, a ruling which seems sensible. The shortage of teachers makes it imperative that classes are attended by those who are keen. Although the right to education is a generally accepted fact, little is said about the responsibility it puts on the shoulders of the pupils of every group, of every nation. For that education, money is needed and lots of it. The money is contributed by the community and thus it is the duty of the pupils to make the most of it.

The detailed program should allow for a constant broadening in either academic or vocational fields and—above all—it should emphasize the nobility of work in whatever field it may be. There is a tendency amongst the educated Bantu to look down on those who are less educated and the latter resent it bitterly.

Only those who are gifted should go to the High Schools. This is not to hinder, but to help to avoid failure. Who are the star pupils in the vocational training schools, who show the gift of leadership, a scientific mind, who should go to a University?

There are a few non-European Universities and more are planned, but even if the syllabus of those institutions should be exactly the same as at the European Universities, I deeply regret the present

move to close the doors of the so-called open Universities (Johannesburg, Cape Town, Durban). Here young people of all groups meet. They have learned to reason, to analyse, to understand; and again, there, the wisdom of the elders—the professors—can be of such great help to create understanding between individuals, leading to a better understanding between groups.

There is one difficulty which will have to be solved and soon. Some Bantu parents, at great sacrifice, keep their children in school until the day when the certificate showing that they have successfully passed the final High School examination is in their possession. Although education is free, the child has to be fed and clad until the age of 17 or 18. A number of guidance bureaus should be established. A shortage of teachers, while bright youngsters sell newspapers at streetcorners to make a living!

Vocational education among the Bantu youth, which until recently has not been part of a clearly defined school policy, but has depended largely on training by European leaders of various mission societies, nevertheless led to the establishment of a fine corps of capable builders who have recently given a shining example of what teamwork can do in the erection of badly needed houses. In the vocational schools now in existence 22 for girls, 23 for boys—a definite preference for certain branches is shown. In the girls' schools Domestic Science leads, in the boys' woodwork, closely followed by building. Observation should be given to the necessity that at accepted stages a worthwhile field of labour be open to them.

Again, through education one can overcome the tendency of many Bantu workers to adjust the amount of energy to be spent to the money needed to live. After they have worked a couple of weeks and have enough money in hand to see them through the next week, they are apt to say: "Why work next week? We won't go hungry." The need for steady production so as to be able to guarantee a steady source of income is another factor in western life which is strange to those whose background was for ages saturated with the accepted rule: Fate will decide.

The future of *apartheid* (separate development)? I know that some people honestly and truly believe that apartheid will contribute to the spiritual happiness of the Bantu. They even try to prove it by Bible texts. But there is no indication whatsoever to prove that the Christian spirit is best demonstrated by dividing God's creation, the earth, into separate chambers without a common open space.

As in other countries with a multi-racial population, there are three trains of thought in South Africa. One group, a small one, calls for anti-apartheid measures immediately: equal rights, equal opportunities this very moment, ready or not ready. I am afraid that these can be classified either as agitators or idealists who only feel, but do not reason.

At the other extreme is the "never-never" group, of just as little use to the solving of the problem as the first one. The middle group, and I dare say that this group is much larger than the outside world realises, is analysing the difficulties, weighing the pros and cons, and consulting conscience so as to be sure of the guidance of sound ethical principles. They have come to the conclusion that a gradual, progressively religious, educational, economic and political integration will alone procure a happy homeland.

Some time ago there was a 3-day meeting of prominent South Africans of all races in Johannesburg. Of course, in three days they could not solve the problem, but they concerned themselves with drawing up a program for the building up of economic, human, and political rights and duties in a multi-racial state. That is what I want from the future—building together, not destroying each other.

CORRIE VAN DEN BOS

REVIEW
"RELIGIOUS OVERTONES IN PSYCHOANALYSIS"

A MOST interesting paper with this title has already been mentioned twice in MANAS. In our opinion, it not only merits extended review, but as wide a circulation as possible. Prepared by David C. McClelland, of the Harvard Center for Research in Personality, this suggestive comparison between the ethos of psychoanalysis and certain aspects of Christianity affords a springboard for much discussion.

Mr. McClelland is not the first, of course, to intimate that the psychoanalyst is often sought by those who wish to substitute his authority for that of the priest. But the specifics of the comparison reach considerably beyond any such comment, offering what seems to be insight into one of the instinctive orientations of the religious consciousness—that is, the outlook of those who look for some kind of assistance in achieving a liberation of the self.

In his introductory pages, Mr. McClelland points out that Thomas Mann, in *The Magic Mountain,* aptly dramatizes the psychoanalyst as he may appear to those who are desirous of his ministrations. A passage from *Magic Mountain* makes clear the symbolic nature of "Dr. Krokowski's" role:

> It seemed at the end of the lecture Dr. Krokowski was making propaganda for psychoanalysis; with open arms he summoned all and sundry to come unto him. "Come unto me," he was saying, though not in these words, "Come unto me, all ye who are weary and heavy laden." And he left no doubt of his conviction that all those present *were* weary and heavy laden. He spoke of secret suffering, of shame and sorrow, of the redeeming power of the analytic.

Mr. McClelland adds that "perhaps Dr. Krokowski is pictured as proselytizing a little too openly for the Psychoanalytic Institutes of today, but I can personally vouch for the fact that his missionary zeal is not altogether dead among contemporary psychoanalysts. They are committed people. They *believe* in the 'redeeming power of the analytic' in a way which many Christian ministers might envy." But to get to some of the essentials of "Religious Overtones in Psychoanalysis":

> It is a technique for helping the mentally ill and for discovering some of the ways in which the mind works as a contribution to scientific psychology. But whatever its conscious intention, as a *social movement* its functions are much broader than these. Its leading practitioners have charisma: they are looked up to, admired and treated as beyond the ordinary run of humanity in much the same way as ministers and priests have been at various times in the past. It has managed to give meaning to life to many troubled intellectuals who could find no meaning elsewhere. Its metaphysics—Freudian and neo-Freudian conceptions of the nature of man and existence—are seriously discussed by leading intellectuals of the day in much the same way as theological questions were discussed in an earlier day. Above all it *heals* and we should not forget that one of the basic and most fundamental appeals of Christianity as described in the New Testament was its healing power. At least on the surface then—and the idea is by no means original with me—psychoanalysis has many of the characteristics of a religious movement.

Freud's structure of analytical theory, Mr. McClelland suggests, is reminiscent of Jewish mysticism. He writes:

> The goal of psychoanalysis is practically identical with that of Jewish mysticism—to release and fulfill the individual by contact with emotional, irrational forces. Freud's image of man is of one hemmed in by conflicts and anxieties arising primarily out of the thwarting of natural impulses by society. The central problem of neuroses is the need for freedom, for release from guilt, from an oppressive superego representing the demands that society makes on the individual. For example a common cause of mental disturbances is the Oedipus complex according to psychoanalysis. What in its simplest terms is the Oedipus complex? It is an *inevitable* tragedy which arises in the development of the impulse life of man from being born into society, or more particularly into a family. Every little boy is fated to fall in love with his mother, to hate his father, to feel guilty, to suffer—because he is a human

> individual born into a matrix of other individuals. He must obtain release from the tragedy of social existence, and psychoanalysis is the instrument for obtaining release just as mysticism became the instrument for obtaining release from the oppressive social responsibilities of Jewish orthodoxy. In other words, Freud and the Jewish leaders of psychoanalysis saw man's central problem in terms of his need for self-fulfillment as over against the oppressive forces of social obligation.

We think Mr. McClelland is quite correct in pointing out that psychoanalysis has not only found its chief favor among intellectuals, but is especially effective when applied to the intellectual psyche, to the complicated man who has become aware of the ethical conflicts in his culture, and, more specifically, of the pressure upon himself of conventional morality. On the one hand, this sort of man seeks a clear definition of his own individuality, while, on the other, he is apt to have a far more imaginative conscience than those who are content to run in traditional grooves. Moreover, since psychoanalysis "has just never been comfortable with the problem of providing people with a consistent set of values, even when 'moral education' is what is obviously needed," it works best for those who literally do need release from "an oppressively moral upbringing." Here, then, in the interplay between the religions of the past, a science of the future, and the increasing need for self-definition, the appeal of psychoanalysis resides. McClelland's most penetrating paragraph follows:

> It should be easy to understand why psychoanalysis has had such a great appeal for American intellectuals. It fitted in readily with their spirit of revolt against Christian orthodoxy, with the nineteenth century spirit of romantic individualism which was concerned with fulfillment rather than one's duty to social institutions, to the state or to the church. Its insistence on the evil in man's nature, and in particular on the sexual root of that evil, suited the New England temperament well which had been shaped by a similar Puritan emphasis. In fact to hear Anna Freud speak of the criminal tendencies of the one- and two-year old is to be reminded inevitably of Calvinistic sermons on infant damnation. Echoes of Calvinism can also be found in Freud's thorough-going determinism, and his insistence on the inevitability of certain emotional conflicts like the Oedipus complex. After all, for people schooled to believe in Predestination or even more, in the complete absence of chance in the universe because God controls everything, it takes no great stretch of the imagination to accept scientific determinism. In science Nature simply replaces God in making everything inevitable. But above all psychoanalysis could succeed among intellectuals where traditional religion failed because it was presented as science, not religion, in an increasingly secular age. That is, it provided many of the values which religion had traditionally provided, but did so without consciously posing as religion. If the intellectuals who so enthusiastically espouse psychoanalysis knew that they were supporting an honorable off-shoot of religious mysticism, they might be considerably less enthusiastic about it. It is because it is not religious but scientific that they can let themselves believe in it.
>
> Is it then my purpose in calling attention to the religious roots of psychoanalysis to discredit it in their eyes, to destroy their faith? Certainly not, although there is no doubt that we have laid upon an issue which was a matter of grave concern to the founders of psychoanalysis.

Recently, in discussing Marya Mannes' *More in Anger*, we suggested what seemed to us a characteristic difference between the psychiatric and the religious criticisms of our culture. Psychoanalysis, from the perspective afforded by Mr. McClelland, seems to be reaching beyond the merely humanitarian sentiments which characterize most Protestant thinking, to the need for a mystical delving into the forces which so often harass the individual psyche. Though generalized psychoanalytic evaluations are based, as another MANAS piece suggested, upon "man in the mass," it is also true that the method of assistance depends upon protracted *individual* attention to the problem of helping the patient to discover his true *individuality.*

COMMENTARY
THE UNCHANGING OPPRESSIONS

FROM the moral point of view, and certainly from the psychological point of view, an element commonly possessed by both Christianity and Psychoanalysis (see Review) is the idea of an external savior. While exceptional men in these fields will be found insisting that the individual must make the major contribution to his own salvation, the *popular* appeal of both lies in the opportunity to shift one's burden to stronger shoulders.

Two sorts of men stand ready to deal with this plainly apparent characteristic of human nature—the educators and the Machiavellians. In modern times, at least, every social situation or problem breaks down, in some important aspect, into this equation. A classical statement of the issue, never improved upon and seldom equalled, is Dostoevski's chapter, "The Grand Inquisitor," in *The Brothers Karamazov.*

The Machiavellians move around. In some centuries they appear mostly in religion, at other times in politics. Sometimes they declare their opinions boldly and assume power openly. It depends upon the prevailing myth or metaphysic of authority. In an age like the present, they work by the manipulation of symbols. They justify what they do, to themselves and to others, by calling attention to the Emergency. Education, they say, is a fine thing, and we shall have a lot of it after our arrangements are complete.

That is the difficulty with all educational programs. They are no good in an emergency. An educator cannot guarantee results. He may be able to create the conditions in which moral courage and just intentions ought to emerge, but he can supply you with no manufacturing schedule of these qualities. Maybe they will appear, maybe not. In the long run, the educator proposes, his program will foster the development of people who are not emergency-prone. But, he says, you will have to give me time—time, generosity, patience, and faith are what the educator needs to do his work well.

What does it take to make people want to give the educator the time he needs? What does it take to make people want to find in religion a way to strengthen their own shoulders, instead of a hod-carrier for their sins? By what means may the popular impressions of science and of the new knowledge of psychology be converted into an actual understanding of their true role and applicability to the life of man?

These are the questions which ought to have the highest priority in all serious forums of modern thought.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves

AN article in the February *Aryan Path,* the Bombay monthly, describes two ancient universities which existed during what might be called the Buddhist period of Indian culture. Founded by men whose outlook was pre-eminently philosophical, Takkasila and Nalanda proceeded on a most enlightened basis. Though what we would term "religious" interest was high both among teachers and pupils, this was *philosophical* religion—something far different from "religious philosophy." Nalanda, for example, brought together students of all creeds and faiths, in a fashion not dissimilar to the Eclectic Theosophical school of Ammonius Saccas, and both were in existence in the fourth century. Part of the description of Nalanda reads as follows:

> It was essentially a post-graduate institution, although provision was made for primary (for students between eight and thirteen) and secondary (between thirteen and twenty) education. Admission was scrupulously restricted; rigorous oral entrance-examinations were conducted by the *dvarapanditas* (gate-professors), and not more than two or three out of ten could pass. Only the most brilliant and accomplished of the students could hope to enter the portals of Nalanda. Once the student was admitted, he was in for discipline of a severe kind. Hiuen-Tsang notes that during the several hundred years it endured Nalanda did not witness a single rebellion. And the students who assembled here belonged to diverse schools and creeds and countries, but there was perfect harmony. A historian has aptly described Nalanda as "an experiment in liberality of teaching"—students discussed and disputed on an intellectual plane only, and differences did not jeopardize happy human relations. The entire university lived and progressed as one family. It is interesting to note that the general affairs of the university were administered by a democratic body of the students themselves.

The most interesting phase of this description, in our opinion, is that it claims a successful synthesis between "discipline" and "democracy." Nalanda lasted until the twelfth century, and began as a center of philosophical culture nearly three centuries before the birth of Christ.

The chief founders of Nalanda were Mahayana Buddhists, but, without any show of partisanship, Theravada Buddhist schools were also adequately represented—in an atmosphere which led naturally toward synthesis by each student for himself. Buddha's first principle—that "all that men are is made of thought," and, likewise, that all they may *become* will be "made of thought," was fundamental to the purpose of this eclectic study. But the unspoken intent at Nalanda was apparently to help each student attain a truer and deeper *gnosis* for himself.

The chief educational method was tutorial, with small groups of five or six students under the care of one teacher. But the small group functioned as an open forum for discussion, and the instructor was chiefly a moderator. The students meantime attended lectures of the most eminent professors in the land. Often one hundred lecturers were available on any given day—and an excellent library was always at their disposal. Once accepted, a student at Nalanda was supplied all the necessities of life; there was no tuition charge, the whole enterprise being financed by the revenue of some two hundred otherwise tax-free villages.

As the *Aryan Path* writer, Shri S. K. Ramachandra Rao, describes it, we see Nalanda as a dynamic and influential center of learning. Rao speaks of it as "a vast educational complex, celebrated throughout Asia, and it continued to be prosperous for about seven centuries. There were, according to Hiuen-Tsang, 10,000 resident scholars: 1,500 teachers and 8,500 students. There were students from China, Japan, Korea, Mongolia, Tukhara. I-tsing counted 56 scholars from abroad. Hiuen-Tsang himself was a resident student for five years, and I-tsing for ten years. A student from Nalanda was held in high esteem throughout the country and even abroad."

The university of Nalanda also represented a transition connected with the broadening influence

of Buddhist philosophy. Nalanda was a *vihara*. The *vihara* differed from earlier centers of learning known as *gurukula* in that the students were no longer limited to the instructions of a single man. The time had come when the impartations of a special "guru" were to be replaced by an opportunity for genuine self-instruction. And in Nalanda, the teachings of the Vedas, though revered, were revered in a different way. The traditional formulations of religious beliefs were held to contain the key to important truths, but the lock was to be turned by each one for himself. So well did the instructors of Nalanda comprehend this that there seems to be no record of disputes between professors on the basis of their reputations.

Speaking of our present universities, Robert Hutchins once remarked that it might be a good idea if the whole plant were burned down every so often so that the political grooves of administration and departmental organization would have to be rechannelled. But Nalanda regenerated itself continually. As one of the quotations from Mr. Rao indicates, the teachers of Nalanda saw no reason to doubt the philosophical capacities of young children. An eight-year-old child could begin to "do philosophy" if he had the inclination, and in so doing develop the capacity for more self-reliance and responsibility than has been associated with most education in the West.

On the other hand, and at the opposite end of the scale, it is apparent that not only the teachers of Nalanda but also the *students* achieved spontaneous recognition as worthy counsellors in community and political affairs. The "scholar," from what we are able to gather, was a man considered to be capable of rendering valuable services to his society. In relation to religion, it was the function of the priests to preserve the traditions, but the function of those who had become philosophically mature was to vitalize the meaning of those traditions by relevant applications. Asoka was not the only king in India who conceived his counsellors as something more than yes men, or who would select them precisely on the basis of their capacity to transcend the provincial outlook of even kings.

These brief notes on a great university of ancient times suggest that it is devotion to *philosophy* which brings enlightenment. In all the centuries that have passed since Nalanda's founding, the "trial and error" inclination of Westerners and continual partisan disputes have failed to reach the balance and harmony—and probably the profundity—of Nalanda and its companion school, Takkasila.

FRONTIERS

Whose Honor, What Duty?

RECENTLY a friendly critic proposed that MANAS give some attention to "the national problem of universal military conscription in peace time." The best way that we can think of to do this is to call attention to John Swomley's "The Growing Power of the Military" (January *Progressive).*

If a person really wanted to go into this subject, he might, before taking up Swomley's article, read Alfred Vagts' *History of Militarism,* adding, for spice, John T. Flynn's *As We Go Marching* (one of Flynn's early and *good* books). Then, after finishing Swomley, he could read C. Wright Mills' *The Power Elite.* With this not inconsiderable background, he would then be in a position to "do something." At least, an intelligent person is likely to feel like doing something, having absorbed this material. But he is also likely to feel something else—disgust.

What is the use of reading things that make you disgusted? One answer is that this is the kind of a world in which a man has to risk disgust, if he is to be of much use to anyone besides himself. The problem of overcoming disgust is a kind of watershed in human decision. People who have never been tempted to give way to disgust are people who have never taken a close look at the world, or even their own lives. It is the man who has been filled with disgust and then put it aside as being less important than other things he feels, who will work along without ever being overwhelmed by disappointment.

If you read Vagts, you learn that back in the nineteenth century when the liberals and political reformers began to take hold of the national affairs of the Western nations, they turned their backs on the growth of the military institution. They knew it was the Enemy, but they also thought they might *need* it, some time.

Then, when you read Mills, you realize that they still feel the same way. The military is a bad thing and it is moving in on our national life, but *what can we do.;*

The real problem is that, in psychological terms, the question of what to do about the military is an all-or-nothing issue. Theoretically, it is probably possible to formulate a careful, rational defense program with just enough army and navy and air force, but not too much. Somebody just might get a plan like that on paper, and it just might work if the population were made up of people who approach matters of national decision like a scientific research corps. But the people aren't like that. When they go off to war, they do not march as a body of earnest scientists determined to "get the facts." Facts are the last thing anybody wants, in mounting an offensive defense, or a defensive offense. (Just get in the word *defense* and you're all right.)

John Swomley gives chapter and verse on the step-by-step assumption of posts of influence and mandates of power by men of military background and status, during a long period of American history. For example, men who do this kind of work know that people don't like war and have to be pushed, cajoled, and scared into it. After World War II, men wise in the ways of populations saw that it was then time to plan for future wars. As Swomley relates:

> When the war ended, the military took advantage of the unsettled condition of the world to consolidate its power. Charles E. Wilson, president of General Electric, had pointed the way by suggesting both an alliance of big business and the military, and "a permanent war economy." In an address to the Army Ordnance Association in January, 1944, he warned that "the revulsion against war not too long hence will be an almost insuperable obstacle for us to overcome in establishing a preparedness program and for that reason I am convinced that we must now begin to set the machinery in motion."

Mr. Wilson got his wish. He wanted close collaboration between industry and the military, with Congress having no further responsibility

than to vote the "needed funds." Industry, he said, "must not be hampered by political witchhunts, or thrown to the fanatical isolationist fringe tagged with a 'merchants of death' label." Industry is certainly free of any such tag. The most respected men in industry are making the most deadly weapons. The Army has men everywhere in industry, and has also infiltrated the civilian branches of government. Mr. Swomley recites so many facts of this sort they make you dizzy. Then there is the enormous appropriation of federal money (9.5 million dollars in 1950 and 12 million in 1951) to pay for publicity that would "build a climate friendly to the military and also sell the current military program to the people." An interesting bit is the fact that the Army owns the largest motion picture studio in the east. The colleges and universities are getting their share, in the form of enormous expenditures for military research. Further, the R.O.T.C. enrollment for 1959, now compulsory during the first two years of college, was expected to be 312,852 students. According to Walter Millis, the armed forces want "uniformity throughout the whole R.O.T.C. system. They believe that the purpose of the R.O.T.C. teaching should be to indoctrinate and inspire rather than to inculcate that capacity for critical understanding which is the presumed object of a civilian educational system."

These are only a few fragments of the facts reported by Mr. Swomley. He concludes:

> It is hardly necessary to point out that the vast expansion of the American military machine cannot be stopped or the trend reversed without a major revolution in our foreign policy as well as in our whole culture. But this is not impossible if we begin to think for ourselves and organize for the democratic replacement of military domination by civilian authority. Democracy can flourish only if it is practiced. No people can turn the important decisions of life over to its army without eventually becoming controlled by that army.

You can get reprints of the entire *Progressive* article by John Swomley from the National Council Against Conscription, 104 C St., N.E., Washington, D.C.—15 for $1. The Vagts book is in many libraries, and the Mills volume can now be had as a paperback for $1.25 from Prometheus Books, 100 West 23rd Street, New York 11.

For a sample of what may be expected from Mr. Mills, we quote part of a discussion of the kind of men who make up the "power elite"—the men who are guiding our nation in its course toward ultimate militarization. The author is making answer to critics who ask:

> "To talk of a power elite—isn't this to characterize men by their origins and associations? Isn't such characterization both unfair and untrue? Don't men modify themselves, especially Americans such as these, as they rise in stature to meet the demands of their jobs? Don't they arrive at a view and a line of policy that represents, so far as they in their human weaknesses can know, the interests of the nation as a whole? Aren't they merely men who are doing their duty?"
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> What are we to reply to these objections?
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> I. We are sure that they are honorable men. But what is honor? Honor can only mean living up to a code that one believes to be honorable. There is no one code upon which we are all agreed. That is why, if we are civilized men, we do not kill off all of those with whom we disagree. The question is not: are these honorable men? The question is: what are their codes of honor? The answer to that question is that they are the codes of their circles, of those to whose opinions they defer. How could it be otherwise? That is one meaning of the important truism that all men are human and that all men are social creatures. As for sincerity, it can only be disproved, never proved. . . .
>
> It would be an insult to the effective training of the military and to their indoctrination as well, to suppose that military officials shed their military character and outlook upon changing from uniform to mufti. . . .
>
> III. To the question of their patriotism, of their desire to serve the nation as a whole, we must answer first that, like codes of honor, feelings of patriotism and views of what is to the whole nation's good, are not ultimate facts but matters upon which there exists a great variety of opinion. Furthermore, patriotic opinions too are rooted in and are sustained by what a man has become by virtue of how and with whom he has lived. . . .

> IV. The elite cannot be truly thought of as men who are merely doing their duty. They are the ones who determine their duty, as well as the duties of those beneath them. They are not merely following orders: they give the orders. They are not merely "bureaucrats": they command bureaucracies. They may try to disguise these facts from others and from themselves by appeals to traditions of which they imagine themselves the instruments, but there are many traditions, and they must choose which ones they will serve. They face decisions for which there simply are no traditions. . . .

There is more that we should like to quote, in which the author sums up on the moral and practical aspects of the behavior of the power elite. The foregoing, however, is sufficient to indicate that this book should not be ignored.