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DIRECT ENCOUNTER

THE engagements men undertake with life vary so widely, producing such extraordinary differences in their attitudes, that it seems far more important to understand, or at least to recognize, these differences, than to busy ourselves with some of the other "facts" about human beings. It is even likely that the political philosophies men embrace are determined by these engagements.

Some men spend most of their lives in flight. That is, their principal engagement is in the attempt to establish boundaries within which they will be able to live with a minimum of encounters with the Great Unknown. They want fixed definitions of good and evil and immutable categories of the true and the false. Given such assurances, they can go to work with a will to build fortifications for their security. No one, however, is ever able to complete such fortifications, so that the man in flight never feels really safe. He is always thinking about tomorrow, or next year, when he will put the last brick in place; meanwhile he looks suspiciously at all distractions from the supreme task of finishing the wall. From his feelings and intellectual theories about the nature of the world, this man builds up his religion and his social philosophy. He is of course a man with sympathies and generosities as well as fears and anxieties, so that the virtues have an appropriate role in all doings, but he remains essentially a man in flight.

There are other men—fewer by far than those in flight—who seem born to a state of wonder and to lives of daring. These men leave a track across the territorial divisions marked off by the ones who live in flight. They are the men whose first thought is, "What does this mean?" instead of, "What will this do to me?" But men of daring are by no means all philosophers. Some are imperialists who have the itch for power almost from the cradle. Whatever they see, they scheme to control. The men who seek power are the natural opposite numbers of the men in flight. The men in flight want to be sheltered, and the men who seek power often become professional shelterers. Dostoevsky's Grand Inquisitor is the type of one class of professional shelterers.

Then there are men who are simply acquisitive. They have a weak feeling of identity and need to strengthen it with a circle of possessions. Like the others, these men will make up rules of religion and politics to support their sense of what is important. And they too, being men, will practice their version of the virtues, which will include a regulated sharing of their possessions.

We might stipulate the existence of still another class of men, made up of the great philosophers and religious teachers, but it seems best to attempt no limiting characterization of them. Sufficient to say, perhaps, that these are the men whose engagement with life constitutes a universal fulfillment, and who would presume to define such an engagement, save in unsatisfyingly abstract terms?

This general analysis is one that easily suggests itself after a measure of experience with human beings. Its value is that it is wholly independent of social and economic systems. You meet these types in every sort of environment and circumstance. Of course, the men you meet are only *more or less* persons of this type. Everyone has something of all the types in him (and there are doubtless many more types than we have named), so it is a question of the prevailing tendency which shows itself.

You meet them in business, you meet them in education, you meet them in religion and in philosophical or scientific undertakings. Every clearly defined human situation reproduces in

some sort of scale all the essential elements of total human experience. In business, for example, the man in flight usually gravitates to a big organization in which his duties will be clearly defined. He wants a rule book and he wants the higher-ups to keep things stable so that he knows what to expect. He knows *his* job and he will do it—just watch him! He practices all the little virtues with an expectant eye. He is making a deal with the dreadful and threatening forces of the universe to stay out of his backyard. He mows the lawn every Tuesday, gets to work on time and sometimes he stays after five o'clock. Not everybody gives the universe a bonus like that! It is hard to tell where virtue stops and the purchase of security begins, in such a man.

Once in a while the company goes bankrupt, or it merges with another company; or the general manager tells him he has spent enough time in the office and it is time for him to go on the road to *sell.* This is devastation. The walls come tumbling down. He doesn't want to see the world whole. He just wants to brighten the corner where he is. He bitterly resents the break in his fortifications. Then he will tell you that the forces of evil are all around. Selling is corrupt. Those people you have to call on don't want to live the good life.

The horrible part is that *everybody's* walls come tumbling down, some time or other, and maybe many times.

This brings us to the subject of Institutions. In *The Dark Eye in Africa,* Laurens van der Post has this to say about institutions:

> No human being or society, however self-sufficient and rational it may appear, can live without institutions that deal with those aspects of life which cannot be explained rationally. No community can be left indefinitely outside in the night of the human spirit in the beast-infested jungle which lies beyond the conscious fortifications which civilization raises for as in life. If a community cannot get within the protection of those fortifications by fair means, then it will do so by foul. If civilized reason and conscious strength will not aid it, then animal cunning and brute force will.

We have plenty of "research" material on institutions in relation to society, but very little exploration of the relation of the individual to institutions. This, perhaps, has not seemed important, since all individuals live in societies, and societies *must,* as van der Post says, develop institutions.

Conceivably, however, the individual has a private relationship with institutions which needs attention as a separate question. The most important thing about an individual's relationship to institutions is that it may *change;* and, obviously, it varies from one man to another. You could even say that a man's relationship to the institutions is the most significant index of the quality of his life.

There are two major kinds of institutions, the protective institutions and the instrumental institutions. This is plain from what the Grand Inquisitor said to Jesus in the dungeon. Jesus felt that if there had to be a church, it should be an instrument to put men on their own. The Inquisitor held that the church existed in order to keep men from needing or wanting to be on their own.

On the whole, then, churches are protective institutions, whereas, ideally, schools are instrumental institutions. A philosophical society, as distinguished from a religious denomination, is an institution which offers education in being on one's own in the search for meaning. The church relieves men of this burden by stereotyping moral obligations. Government may be thought of as both protective and instrumental. It is protective by means of its army and its police force, instrumental through the balance it achieves, or attempts to achieve, between order and the guarantees of individual freedom it is supposed to provide.

In general, it may be said that protective institutions enjoy some kind of sovereignty, and that instrumental institutions do not.

When a man seeks protection from life in the refuge of an institution, he gives up some of his own sovereignty. When a man uses an instrumental institution to add to his knowledge of the world, he increases his sovereignty, or he may do this all by himself, simply by the study of experience and by reflection.

Sometimes a man in flight stops running and takes a stand on his own. He breaks out of the protective institution and lives without that kind of borrowed security. Or he may establish an instrumental institution for his own use and the use of others, to take the place of the protective institution he has given up. Sometimes men do this in groups, as when the American colonists issued the Declaration of Independence.

Institutions have a tendency to change in character, adapting to the types of men who run them and the men whom they serve. Thus a school may start out by being instrumental and grow into a protective institution with psychological sovereignty. We have this kind of issue before us today in the question of whether or not religion should be taught in the schools. People who are used to and want the protection of sovereign institutions in religion typically resent persons who reject this protection. The rules of institutional protection can afford no exceptions. Such rules are seldom made with the varying needs and engagements of different human beings in mind. How would you go about designing a protective institution that made exceptions—a church which said that some men need to have their souls saved by a Savior, but that others don't? A government which would afford some men the protection of military defense, but not others who said they didn't want it?

Protective institutions tend to become "total" in character. Their charters have no escape clauses.

It now becomes evident why great religious reformers like Buddha and Jesus wrote nothing down. They did not want to be guilty of shaping protective institutions. They knew well enough that half-taught men, men in flight, and men with a hunger for power would do everything they could to change the instrumental ideas of the teacher into the plans for a protective institution. An oral tradition affords less opportunity for making religion over into authoritative dogmas.

Some men are restless so long as they are obliged to live within the confinements of protective institutions. Other men are desperate until they are safely inside those confinements. How are you going to design a Utopia for all men unless you say that they are all of one sort, or the other?

How are you going to draw up a constitution that will accommodate both the Grand Inquisitor and Henry David Thoreau? No matter what rules you provide, Thoreaus will appear, and the Inquisitors will want to put the Thoreaus in jail and keep them there. Wherever you set up your system, you will have such problems. If you are lucky you will get a Gandhi to make problems for you. But whatever else happens, there will be those who want more protection, and those who want less; there will be those in flight and those seeking power; and a bland theory of equality with one vote to each citizen will not erase your problems.

If you believe in evolution, you may think that better arrangements should be possible, now—say, institutions which protect a little, but not too much. But how will you figure out an institution that will protect us enough from Nike, Thor, and Atlas missiles, but not too much. This is not an age for mild little protective institutions. It is an age for total or no protection, which is why these matters must be discussed.

If we suppose that this is the first time such problems have been considered, we shall be wrong. They were the concern of the Buddha, although at an entirely different level. Buddha had

no interest in an ideal social system or political order. These arrangements were to him subservient to and possibly reflexes of the philosophy by which men seek liberation from earthly sorrows. In the Orient, Buddha is the type of the man who has found enlightenment, yet remains on earth to instruct his less fortunate fellows in the secrets he has discovered. The problem of the spiritual teacher, however, as Buddha makes plain, is that the truth about the processes of awakening is itself a relative matter—in the same way, perhaps, as the truth about man's earthly career and its meaning varies with each individual. In his *Philosophies of India* (Meridian), Henrich Zimmer reproduces one of Buddha's instructions to illustrate the difficulty of teaching relative truth without giving the impression that it is absolute:

> First the Buddha describes a man who, like himself or any of his followers, becomes filled with a loathing of the perils and delights of secular existence. That man decides to quit the world and cross the stream of life to the far land of spiritual safety. Collecting wood and reeds, he builds a raft, and by this means succeeds in attaining the other shore. The Buddha confronts his monks, then, with the question:
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> "What would be your opinion of this man," asks the Buddha, "would he be a clever man, if, out of gratitude for the raft that has carried him across the stream to safety, he, having reached the other shore, should cling to it, take it on his back, and walk about with the weight of it?"
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> The monks reply. "No, certainly the man who would do that would not be a clever man."
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> The Buddha goes on. "Would not the clever man be the one who left the raft (of no use to him any longer) to the current of the stream, and walked ahead without turning back to look at it? Is it not simply a tool to be cast away and forsaken once it has served the purpose for which it was made?"
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> The disciples agree that this is the proper attitude to take toward the vehicle, once it has served its purpose.
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> The Buddha then concludes, "In the same way the vehicle of the doctrine is to be cast away and forsaken, once the other shore of Enlightenment (*nirvana*) has been attained."
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> The rules of the doctrine are for beginners and advanced pupils, but become meaningless for the perfect. They can be of no service to the truly enlightened, unless to serve him, in his role of teacher, as a convenient medium by which to communicate some suggestion of the truth to which he has attained. It was by means of the doctrine that the Buddha sought to express what he had realized beneath the tree as inexpressible. He could communicate with the world through his doctrine and thus help his unprepared disciples when they were at the start, or somewhere in the middle, of the way. Talking down to the level of relative or total ignorance, the doctrine can move the still imperfect yet ardent mind; but it can say nothing any more—nothing ultimately real—to the mind that has cast away darkness. Like the raft, it must be left behind, therefore, once the goal has been attained; for it can thenceforth be no more than an inappropriate burden.
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> Moreover not the raft only, but the stream too, becomes void of reality for the one who has attained the other shore.

This parable or allegory sets its meaning as a kind of climactic realization at the end of the journey, or voyage, yet the fact is, as we have no difficulty in seeing, that the "realities" of our lives are subject to constant modification, as our feelings and ideas change. A child may start life out in a mood of flight; then, by some fortunate circumstance or influence, grow into an attitude of wonder at the world about him. He may be drawn to strange places, or beset by a hunger after strange ideas. He may come to inhabit a world of subtle mathematical relationships, such as the theoretical physicist contemplates, or the earth may seem to him so filled with suffering human beings that he resolves upon the career of an Albert Schweitzer. Our world, our real world, is the world we give our hearts to. Men of courage and curiosity want no veil between them and the mysterious abysses of life. For them, institutions raised by other men to protect themselves amount to no more than prickly hedges found along the road. Who will legislate for such men? Who will dare declare them anti-social or heretical?

The men who build the protective institutions of the world are dogmatists without humility. They dare not confess their ignorance. Only a pretended certainty will hide their own weakness and fear. They do not want any relations with the real world, which, for them, is a dark and bottomless pit.

The men who want and need no protective institutions are lovers of the world. They feel within themselves the consanguinity of all life. They are the pantheists, the fearless ones, and, if the world will let them be so, the teachers of the rest.

They and the artists are the teachers of mankind. The artist is one who, through his own sort of communion with life and nature, exhibits his vision of the unity and completion other men have difficulty in realizing. The artist is forever making testaments of meaning.

The artist, like the philosopher, is a student who seeks skill in direct encounter with life. So also the true adventurer, and most of all the educator, whose encounter is with life as human consciousness. The quest, today, is the same as it was in Buddha's time, although the scenery has changed considerably, and the values have other names.

REVIEW
SEARCH FOR AN AMERICAN MYSTIQUE?

THE CHRISTIAN CENTURY for Aug.12 contains a critical review of Daniel J. Boorstin's *The Americans: The Colonial Experience,* the first of three volumes of an intellectual history of the United States.

While one can hardly judge all three volumes of such a work by the first of the series, nor any book on the basis of a critic's appraisal, it nevertheless seems clear enough that Dr. Boorstin believes that the real "mystique" of Americans lies in their inveterate tendency to have none. And on this subject there is considerable to say—largely because one may argue that while we have had no consistent ideology as a nation, we have had a fair share of individual thinkers. And since several of these—such as Emerson and Thoreau—have impressed their thought, at least indirectly, upon the consciousness of almost all Americans, we would say that the best in the American tradition has embodied a "mystique" of individual expression.

In any case, here is Martin E. Marty's summary of the Boorstin thesis for the *Christian Century:*

> The American experience as this author describes its colonial version has been what the cliches of European historiography claimed: the result of a pragmatic, empirical and often thoughtless people in encounter with their environment. Their activity had little ideological base, but was extremely adaptive and inventive. Utopias usually gave place to successful earthly paradises. Abstract theorizing was disparaged. The Revolution was conservative and early parties were nonpartisan. The Enlightenment in its formal sense did less to shape America than did the earthly good sense of gadgeteers and gazetteers, constitutional lawyers and country gentlemen. Conflicts were subtle, tensions were apparent in shades of gray rather than in stereotypes of black and white. The textures of colonial regions were woven somehow into the pattern of the whole American experience. The fruit of this experience was so obviously worth while that little justification for its character was necessary. In the midst of these successes the crusader, the philosopher, the saint, and the ideologue seemed unnecessary. The American symphony was pastel program music played largely by ear.

With typical Christian politeness, Mr. Marty comments that these "implications are disturbing." Boorstin, he continues, "seems to suggest that the strengths of the American experience reside in the empirical and adaptive character of the people; theology and ideology have little place or can be obtrusive. We have been muddling through without big ideas; our ideas have been not about ideas but about things and people, the here and now." Finally, Marty asks: "Are we to believe that a somewhat cloudy and blurry colonial religious experience and expression are to be the pattern for our day, when we are in danger of being dissolved into meaninglessness, when ultimates are regarded lightly, when everything in religion is true and thus nothing is true?"

Now one of the reasons which caused us to examine Dr. Boorstin's argument was that we recently chanced upon a letter written by Thomas A. Edison, in which the inventor confessed the profound influence upon his life of an inveterate idealogue and philosopher—one Thomas Paine. Edison has certainly contributed his share to the world of gadgets, but in his own estimation the ordering of his consciousness—or one might even say the full harnessing of his creative energy—was largely served by the inner stimulus he received from such men as Paine. Edison once wrote:

> I have always regarded Paine as one of the greatest of all Americans. Never have we had a sounder intelligence in this republic. . . . It was my good fortune to encounter Thomas Paine's works in my boyhood. . . . It was, indeed, a revelation to me to read that great thinker's views on political and theological subjects. . . . I remember very vividly the flash of enlightenment that shone from Paine's writings, and I recall thinking at that time "What a pity these works are not today the schoolbooks for all children!" My interest in Paine and his writings was not satisfied by my first reading of his works. I went back to them time and again, just as I have done since my boyhood days.

The point, here, is that one may take off from Boorstin's argument in an entirely different direction. The American Mystique, if there be one, is clearly not organized by a State religion nor is it represented by any single dominant pattern of theological thinking. Of all the Western nations, America is unique in the fact that its most original thinkers have stood *outside* both political and religious orthodoxy—and we think this illumines the character of the American mystique.

Or, to put it another way, we might say that there is an American mystique, but that only the few have been its custodians. The Concord Transcendentalists left their stamp on every sort of thinking. One fulfillment of the Emersonian point of view came with the recent decision on the part of the Unitarians to delete the word "Christian" from the masthead of their magazine, formerly called *The Christian Register*. The Unitarians are heirs of Emerson, Thoreau, and Alcott, and the "religion" of these three was essentially philosophical and manifestly free of the limitation of traditional occidental religion. Emerson and Thoreau were among the first to procure copies of an English translation of the Hindu *Bhagavad-Gita*. Then, nearly one hundred years later, Gandhi was inspired by Thoreau's writings, sensing in them a deep conviction of the dignity of the individual man; Thoreau helped Gandhi to conceive of a program of civil disobedience, in the face of tyranny, on a non-violent basis.

The quotation from Edison's letter reveals the spirit of another transmission of "mystique" from one unusual man to another. But this mystique cannot be "organized," it cannot be protected by force of arms, nor augmented by wealth. It cannot be made into a religion, nor does it fall within the domain of science. It exists and survives, we think, only as a conviction that the soul of man is owned by himself, and not by either God or country.

COMMENTARY
WHAT IS THE ISSUE?

WE don't ordinarily try to review a book before we have finished reading it. In the case of *The Wall Between* by Anne Braden (Marzani & Munsell, paperback, 100 W. 23rd St., New York 11, $1.85), we are not even half finished, but the important thing about this book seems already clearly established.

The Wall Between is Anne Braden's account of how she and her husband, Carl, a Louisville newspaperman, got into trouble with Southern segregationists, and what eventually happened. Briefly, Mr. and Mrs. Braden had for friends a young Negro electrician, Andrew Wade, and his family. Wade wanted to buy a house in a "white" neighborhood, but could find nobody to sell him one. He asked Braden to buy it for him, and Braden did. He took title from a builder and then deeded the house to Wade.

They expected trouble, of course, but not as much as they got—such as shooting and a dynamited home for the Wades, and loss of his job and criminal prosecution as a "seditionist" for Carl Braden. (Braden was found guilty, but his conviction was set aside by the Supreme Court.)

Some may say that both men were "asking" for it. The fact, however, is that Wade couldn't find proper housing for his family anywhere else. He was financially able to buy a house in the neighborhood he selected, and houses available in Negro neighborhoods would not accommodate his needs. The fact is that Braden was not looking for a "test" case, nor did he want to make a big issue of segregation in housing, in the spring of 1954. Wade had asked three other white men to buy him a house, but they all refused. Braden didn't. It didn't even occur to him to refuse.

The interesting part of this situation, so far as we are concerned, is not the question of whether or not Braden showed "good judgment," but the question of how people react to the situation Braden helped develop. Obviously, both the Wade and the Braden families were people of courage. They acted within their rights. Braden didn't practice deceit, but he allowed the builder from whom he bought the house to remain ignorant of the fact that he planned to sell to a Negro. Wade had been in the Navy, where he discovered that Negroes could act like free human beings in companionship with whites. He wanted the kind of a house Braden bought for him. He got it.

The first reaction of most people to a situation like this one—it was our reaction, for example—is to wonder what *they* would do in similar circumstances. Would *they* have bought the house and then resold it to a Negro?

It is natural to ask this question. It is natural, too, to find some difficulty in answering it. We are not sure what we would have done. Maybe we wouldn't have bought the house for the Wades. Maybe we're timid. Maybe we think that is not the best way to wear away race prejudice.

But we could be wrong. And what *we* would have done in that no-man's-land of "good judgment" is not at issue. What is at issue in the United States is the right of human beings to enjoy absolutely equal legal rights. So the Wades and the Bradens deserve all the support they can be given, even from the people who think they made a mistake. What would be dreadfully wrong would be to let one's personal disinclination to do what they did interfere with the support of their constitutional rights.

People with that kind of courage are extremely rare. The Wades and the Bradens stood almost alone, for a while, as the storm of hate and prejudice raged about them. They showed neither anger nor violence. Wade did not become bitter. Speaking of this quality, Mrs. Braden wrote:

> I have wondered sometimes where the Negro people get it: this maturity and this patience and this faith. How can they—some of them, for not all of them do but even some of them—have this forgiving and outgoing attitude toward white people when people with white skin have abused them all of their

> lives? How many white people could do it if our positions were reversed? How many of us who are white and who are lucky enough to have glimpsed the vision of the world without walls owe our vision and our new-found freedom to the fact that some Negro person somewhere in the past was patient enough to put up with us until we could find our way! It should make us humble and appreciative; it should disabuse us forever of whatever remnants we may have of the feeling that our white skin has made us "superior."

How odd it is that there are those who insist that it is the Negroes who must be "patient," while the white folks can take their own time in getting over their delusions of grandeur! What "proprietary" airs we assume, in allowing that "we" are going to get around to allowing the Negroes "justice," some day.

America belongs to the Negroes as much as it does to the whites. The common assumption by whites that they have discretionary power to decide *when* Negroes should be permitted to enjoy their rights is itself a racist delusion.

So, what we would have done, or what we think is judicious, is not the point.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves
CHALLENGE FROM RUSSIA?

THE bimonthly periodical, *Children*, published by the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, exhibits a remarkable freedom from political considerations in the discussion of educational issues. In the July-August number, for instance, a review gives what seems an unbiased account of child care in the USSR:

> In the Soviet Union great emphasis is put on the care of children, says Leona Baumgartner, M.D., in the *American Journal of Public Health* for May 1959. ("What About Soviet Medicine and Public Health?") The Government operates many nurseries for children from shortly after their birth to 3 years of age, the author notes, adding however that there are not enough nurseries to keep up with the demand. The children may stay at the nursery while the mother is at work, or all the time; mothers are given time off to go to the nursery and breast-feed their babies. A pediatrician is in charge of each nursery and supervises the children's diet, inoculations, rest, and play, and when a child is sick the pediatrician cares for him either in the nursery or at home.
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> The author notes that in the nurseries she visited there was a high ratio of staff to babies and little turnover in staff—so that the babies got continuing attention from the same person. The children in the nurseries seemed to her to be less spontaneous in their behavior than American children of the same age, but they looked so healthy and happy that she questions whether the evidence against caring for babies and small children in day nurseries should not be re-examined.

It is doubtful that many readers of MANAS would be attracted to this sort of program for their own children, but one has to admit that both Russian children and their teachers, as well as their parents, seem to be happy with these arrangements. The report in *Children* also notes that the Russians really practice equality when it comes to infants and their relationships with adults. "Maternity leave with full pay is given to mothers—56 days before and 56 days after the baby's birth, and more if medically needed, according to the author. Most mothers are delivered by midwives under the supervision of physicians. All maternity care is provided by the Government, and the mother of a child born out of wedlock receives the same medical care as any other mother. The author was told that when an unmarried mother names the putative father of her child 25 per cent of his pay is automatically withheld for the child's support." With such a beginning, it seems likely that Russian children will receive, as they grow up, educational opportunities directly proportionate to their abilities. On this subject, our own record will not bear close inspection. According to T. J. Ross, writing under the title of "Education for an Elite," for the July 13 *New Republic*, "capitalist values" inevitably work against the best interests of the educational system.

> The ratio between products of $10,000-a-year income families and $4,000-a-year income families in the Ivy League is totally incommensurate to the potential intellect available at either level. A check of admissions records at any Ivy League school will show that the chances of admission of a $4,000 a year intellect are, and always have been, about a thousand to one. Only if the Ivy League school has a Teachers College adjunct, as Harvard and Columbia do, will you find any number of either students or teachers from lower income groups. It is the Teachers Colleges, the State Universities, the Community and Junior Colleges, the Secretarial Schools, the Business and Fashion Institutes, the denominational schools and the small, provincial colleges "in the process of expanding and growing," as their officials say, which house our lower-class, lower-case intellect. They always have. And as the state universities and provincial colleges draw more and more of the Ivy League rejects, lower-class intellect is crowded more and more into the worst of the lower level institutions. If there is any pining to be done it is for the enormous waste of potential intellect which goes down in defeat in our educational outhouses.

In the *Saturday Review* for Aug. 15, William Benton writes on Soviet education. Since Mr. Benton has served his country as an Assistant Secretary of State, and was also a senator, and is now chairman of the board of the Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc., we may read with a measure of

confidence his account of some of the results of Soviet egalitarian education:

> Anyone watching the Soviet school boy in his military-looking uniform, staggering home late of an afternoon with a load of books, knows that Soviet teachers exact hard work. Moreover, they also hold up enticing temptations to the ambitious scholar. Soviet professors, scientists, and academicians have status and privileges comparable to those accorded corporation presidents in the United States. And Soviet university students typically receive living stipends with incentives for good marks. . . .
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> There is far more adult education in the USSR than here. Ballet, opera, museums, and bookshops are crowded. Libraries and evening courses are jammed. When I visited the Leningrad library at 11:30 one morning, every seat in the vast science room was filled. When I asked the librarian whether the readers were students, he replied, "Oh, no, the University has its own library; these are workers from the night shifts; we keep the library open all night for the day workers."

We have deliberately selected these passages complimentary to Russian education as a means of pointing up one of our own blind spots. Also to be considered is the fact that the Russian educational system does not pretend devotion to a "liberal arts" policy. The Russian student knows that he is being supplied training so that he will become, in time, a specialist with expert capacity for serving his country. If the Russian student pursues the "liberal arts," he must do it on his own, and only so far as the fluctuating censorship of his government will allow. In America, however, we talk a great deal about liberal arts programs, yet much of the time succeed only in instilling in students the erroneous belief that they know something about great literature, art, poetry, etc.

The editor of the *Texas Quarterly* (Summer, 1959), Harry Ransom, points out that we are not doing well in an area which actually should be our "specialty"—maintaining an educational system that will "allow for late bloomers" and "put up with nonconformists and rebels." Our interest in education, nationally, has been unnaturally stimulated by the news of superior Russian technical accomplishments. Yet the plain fact is that American students see very little reason for staying in school any longer than they have to, and this may be, on the one hand, because they are given less assistance on an egalitarian basis than their Soviet counterparts in scientific fields, while, on the other hand, they are offered truly stimulating liberal arts courses in only a few universities. Mr. Ransom writes:

> National defense, like national honor, may well color an educational plan. Yet surely the academic pantheon can provide the United States with some deity besides Mars to preside over the fortunes of able—and educable—students. We must have some motive besides anxious imitation: our common sense must be our own, and our purpose something distinct from Russian purposes in cultivating the young intellect.
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> At the risk of abandoning high measures for discussion, let us put aside parliamentary considerations (including perplexed issues of Federal Aid), journalistic exhortations about getting there first with the most brains, and the whole nationwide pother about translating national strategy into national averages on college entrance tests. Let us lift our blinking eyes from the vast library of pedagogical "literature" on this subject. These pages uncover deep earnestness; they have been worded by a variety of educated minds and reflect a great variety of educational research. However high the chaff gets stacked, there will be seeds of educational reform and revolution in these tons of printed leaves. But those seeds must spring later.
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> Meanwhile, in searching our immediate problems, let us look closer at hand. Let us begin by watching more sympathetically—but with continued alarm—the departure of thousands of superior students who drop out of the educational world at high school graduation.

FRONTIERS
Miscellany

THE June 1 issue of *Presbyterian Life* (circulation, 200,000) has a brief article on the plight of Spanish Protestants, of whom there are about 30,000. Within the past seven months, Franco's police have closed five Protestant churches, while the establishment of new congregations is not permitted. Spain's only evangelical seminary was shut down three years ago, so that candidates for ministers must be trained by pastors. Protestant churches in Spain can have no signs to say what they are and no literature can be issued or announcements published by the congregations. These and other restrictions have become so repressive that John A. Mackay, president of Princeton Seminary, wrote recently: "More than at any other time in Spain's history since the days of Philip II in the sixteenth century, that terrible concept of Spanish unity is being expressed which equates Spanish nationality with adhesion to the Roman Catholic Church, and makes the state the tool of the Church." No mention, however, was made in this story of the recent finding of another distinguished Presbyterian, John Foster Dulles, that General Franco is a genuine representative of the Free World!

Presbyterian Life for June 15 printed an appreciative article on the late Mr. Dulles, in which the following quotation from him appeared:

> . . . in 1937, I attended the great Oxford Conference on Church and State. That conference led me to conclude that there was no solution of the great international problems which perplex the world except by bringing to bear upon those problems the force of Christianity. . . . Since I came to that conclusion a little over ten years ago, I have never had any occasion to doubt its validity . . . everything that has happened since then confirms the soundness of that conclusion.

Confusing, isn't it?

The story about the Spanish Protestants in the June I issue of *PL* is illustrated with photographs, one of which shows a Spanish cemetery which has high double masonry walls to separate Protestant from Catholic remains. The caption doesn't tell why the Spanish authorities insist upon this segregation after death. Perhaps it is to advertise the unpleasant fate which awaits all heretics on Resurrection Day. Or perhaps, on the other hand, it is to prevent a recurrence of a practice common in the south of France during the days of the Albigensians, the Protestants of the twelfth century. The Albigensians lived such saintly lives that orthodox Catholics sometimes sought to have themselves interred in Albigensian burial grounds, in the hope that in such company they would have a better chance to be taken up to Paradise, even if by mistake.

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The following is a portion of a letter which first appeared in a paper called *The Western Producer* for April 23, 1959:

> Sir—Amid all the bickerings, pros and cons regarding fluoridation of our water supply, reason and common sense tend to be lost sight of. To this writer there are at least three factors that have been largely overlooked in the controversy.
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> 1. Granted that fluoridation is effective in preventing decay of teeth in children, the taking of fluoridated water will not touch or correct the causes of such prevalency to decay. . . . As a Missouri dentist of over forty years' practice has pointed out:
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> "Our millers and sugar manufacturers, by their refining of flour and sugar, and the tremendous consumption of these products daily (each American uses about 100 pounds of white sugar a year) are directly responsible in large measure for the present deplorable condition of dental diseases. Next are the manufacturers of tooth brushes, tooth pastes and mouth washes with their deceiving propaganda luring the public away from the real cause of tooth decay—improper nutrition.
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> "Dental colleges are also guilty of neglecting to teach the findings of Dr. Weston Price (see his book, *Nutrition and Physical Degeneration),* and to educate the public nutritionally. Instead they are boosting the fluoridation of water supplies with dangerous sodium fluoride.

"The manufacture and sale of highly refined grain products (white flour) and white sugar—candy, ice cream, soda pop, etc., must be prohibited if we want to prevent our children from developing into a toothless race. Big business is not interested in human welfare. Dentistry is, or should be if it is to survive as a scientific profession and hold the esteem of the public." (N.S. Hanoka, D.D.S.)

2. Tooth decay is oral evidence of a general process of deterioration at work in the whole physical body. Fluoridationists, not primarily seeking to correct the causes of tooth decay, literally, if not blindly, ask for perfect teeth in a degenerating body. If they were concerned with the whole health of the body (and mind), better teeth, even better sight, hearing, and general health and efficiency could result, . . .

3. The major premise of the fluoridationists is a fallacy, *i.e.,* that we can poison and drug our way to health without removing the causes of disease and changing our living habits to accord with natural and physical law. . . .—Willard A. Stewart, Toronto, Canada.

Usually, we leave the argument of such issues to the experts, but this letter presents such manifest common sense that you hardly need expert opinion to confirm what is said.

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This month was the time when the House Un-American Activities Committee was to hold hearings in California, originally scheduled for last June, but suddenly postponed for three months. Now they have been put off again, until October. These hearings are aimed at California teachers, with forty Northern California teachers and seventy in Southern California under subpoena. Explaining the first postponement, Rep. Francis E. Walter, chairman of the Committee, said that "the ramifications of the Communist operation in California are so extensive and malignant that additional investigative work must be done before the actual hearings can be held." (Last-minute information is that the job of investigation has now been delegated to the local school boards.)

The San Francisco *Chronicle* (June 12) pointed out that the California legislature has its own Un-American Activities Committee which recently completed a report costing $50,000 in which was disclosed—

nothing more alarming than an opinion that the U.S. Supreme Court has handed down some ragged decisions, that Chief Justice Earl Warren is not a Red, that writers who plead the Fifth Amendment are now eligible for Oscars, and that the problem of infiltration in the Los Angeles County Medical Association is comparatively slight.

This is kind of slim pickings for the taxpayers from $50,000—a sum, moreover, Californians spend in this way every two years, just to be assured that the Red menace is not so menacing just now. Mr. Walter of course has a much bigger operation, better equipped to persecute teachers and other suspicious characters. In the interest of economy, however, we suggest that both committees turn the whole affair over to Mort Sahl, who would at least make it funny, and would cost considerably less.

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Concerning the MANAS article, "What Is Good for Man?", a reader offers the following comment:

In entertaining the thought "What is good for man" (MANAS, June 10), would it be helpful to make a pointed distinction between man as he is in apparent fact and man as he is perfectly conceived? You have suggested looking at individual man in an attempt to understand the qualities which all men have in common and, although you have not pointedly stated it, I feel that when you here speak of individual man you would mean perfect or undistorted man rather than man as we chance to find him in fact. Since you seem quite dissatisfied with man as he is, unless the dissatisfaction is merely reactionary, you must have some other standard for man—and what is your authority for this dissatisfaction if it is not a pure conception of man?

Having seen a lot of men, it is possible to make an *abstraction* about what man is. But abstract vision is singularly uncreative since it is *less* than fact, being derived from fact. To start from the fact as one's standard relegates us to uncreative action. But the creative mind, which is a continent mind, and with which I feel you are concerned, perceives what is

> before the fact and what produces the fact. The creative mind perceives what brings the fact into being, and is thus in a position to master the fact. With this mind, though one acknowledge fact, we do not start from or become a satellite of fact.
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> The reality before the fact is a reality of possibilities not yet established. To be consciously present in this reality is to know a certain freedom—and this requires an act of continence lest we mechanically foreclose to one or another of the possibilities before us which we have not intended—thus producing unintended facts—even not knowing where they come from.
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> If we ask "What is good?" before we act, in the vision before the fact, and do not compromise the vision of good thus invoked, then perhaps our resulting actions and the facts thus produced will embody that goodness and redeem us from being caught in what has chanced, in moral absentia, to be.

This as we see it, is essential thinking, but at the same time proposes about the most difficult problem confronting modern man: How shall we conceive our human objectives?

It is easy enough to be critical at the level of the gross effects of our present-day patterns of action. The journals of opinion are filled with brilliant commentary on the moral and intellectual confusion of the times. We know what is immoral and repellent about our culture, but when it comes to formulating the terms of the good life in anything but vague generalizations, our weakness is at once manifest.

Where do you get, in the words of this reader, "a pure conception of man"? Science? The objection to the scientific account of man is suggested above—it presents a portrait of man as-he-is, not man as he might become.

What other approaches are there? One would be to describe the behavior of the ideal man. Some effort in this direction has been made by the occasional writers who have endeavored to provide a description of "maturity"—A. H. Maslow, for one, has offered a theory of the dynamics of maturity. Another way would be to look closely at the simple idea of man as a being who has the capacity to alter the direction of his life.

Actually, classical humanist philosophy is founded upon this latter idea. In his Oration on the Dignity of Man, Pico della Mirandola proposes that what distinguishes the human being from other forms of living intelligence is man's capacity to set his sights either high or low. It is the *freedom* of which man is capable in choosing his ideal, according to Pico, that gives the ultimate definition of his being. If this is the case, then we can see how easily we might go astray in formulating any rigid conception of the "ideal" man, for in Pico's view the ideal man is not any particular type of being, but a being who understands his freedom and uses it with maximum effectiveness in all situations. This sort of ideal must be initially formulated in ethical and metaphysical terms, to avoid limitations which would violate the very nature of the ideal. And since metaphysical thought is an almost unknown activity in our culture, the question of what is good for man has had, in our time, almost no answers which can be taken seriously.