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THE LENS OF REALITY

OUR cultural tradition provides us with various symbols of the encounter of man with Reality, or what at the time seems to him to be Reality. The agony of Jesus Christ in Gethsemane—this is one account; the sufferings of Prometheus on Mount Caucasus is another. Faust at the moment of his redemption is still another. Perhaps, for our time, the tortured wonderings of Ivan Karamazov make a fitting image of modern man, seeking himself through an understanding of the world.

Today, however, men have a natural reluctance to formulate the issues of their lives in such grandiose terms. There is the question: How do we know that this abstract approach has any touch with the actual nature of things? Yet in every age men attempt some universal synthesis. We must admit an ineradicable tendency to this sort of understanding, even though we distrust somewhat the hope that inspires it. And as we now know, the distrust itself implies another, if less imposing, approach—a *pluralistic* study, as we say, of a situation which may not have any description in universal terms.

Nevertheless, we are capable of asking universal questions, even though we have, or will accept, no universal answers. What is man? Where did he come from? How can we explain his hopes, his fears, his genius and his degradation?

We want some scale, some particular background against which we can begin to make answers. Even if we abandon the attempt to answer such big questions, we shall still require a context of enduring reality in which we can attempt to make answers to lesser questions. So there is still the necessity for judgments about the world.

There are several ways to get this necessary background, against which particular questions may be answered. A background, in this case, is an account of the elements of experience which cannot or need not be questioned. We want the background for the reason that, whatever the questions we decide are important to pursue, we cannot bear the feeling of being wholly adrift in a universe of inexplicable happenings. The three sources of background are religion, science, and philosophy. These are the cultural sources. In terms of individuality, they are intuition, observation, and reason, or some such correspondences to the authorities of the cultural tradition. While the cultural sources are not clearly defined and wholly separate from one another, they are sufficiently distinct to be spoken of in this way.

In ancient, hierarchical societies, religion offered the background of belief about the universe which men could accept, or did accept, without questioning. Why didn't they question it? There are probably several explanations of this, but one would be that it was psychologically impossible for them to question it. Individuals felt themselves to be only minor parts of the culture to which they belonged. Their sense of identity was profoundly involved in the explanation of things they obtained from their surroundings. They did not actively think of themselves as separate individuals. They could not *abstract* themselves from the meaning their culture gave them. The assumptions of their culture were not regarded as "assumptions" but as absolute realities which they could question no more than the infant can question the mother's breast.

In time, however, man's awareness of his individual being began to increase. How or why did this happen? His awakening sense of *justice* was perhaps the most immediately obvious cause of his growing self-consciousness. In any event, for Western man, declaration of principles of

justice was the means by which he separated himself from the unquestioned assumptions of the past about the nature of things. While in the Orient, no doubt every sort of question had been asked, and in some measure answered, in the West the questioning moved rapidly to revolutionary social consequences. The new principles of reality announced by the men of the eighteenth century dictated *acts* of political emancipation. The champions of the new self-consciousness said that man should now control his own destiny. They refined the universe around them in such a way that made it not only possible, but morally essential, for human beings to take control of the social order.

What was the practical meaning of this change in outlook? It was a radical change of the background of reality in human experience. Before, the world had been filled with divine or supernatural intentions. Man was conceived as a unit—more or less of a "pawn"—in a great plan. The terms of fulfillment were revealed to him by religion, sometimes with philosophical justification, sometimes with an outburst of dogmatic assertion—but, either way, they were *revealed.* Under this dispensation, the mind's labors were restricted to explaining the correct relation of man's activities to the background of already established universal meaning. At best, serious thought was theological, although in the best sense of the term.

In the light of the history of the past hundred years, it seems reasonable to say that only man's extreme sense of violated justice could have given him the daring to break with the old background of reality. The crimes committed against the theological background had become absolutely intolerable. The insistent need, now, was for an entirely new background—one that would make injustice impossible, or at least make justice possible.

How do you define the background of reality? It is defined in either psychological or material terms. The old background had been defined in psychological terms—that is, in terms of the intentions of Deity. The makers of the new background wanted one that would be immune to the intentions of Deity; in fact, they wanted one that would be immune to intentions of *any* sort—even their own, should they falter in its development. So the new background was defined in *material* terms. God, they said, can have nothing to do with this sort of Reality, which is a combination of Natural Law and insensible matter.

It now becomes fairly obvious that a passion for justice was behind the materialization of the background. But to assure the permanence of this account, every effort was made to separate moral emotions from the new background. The background, it was insisted, is made of *Brute Facts.* Slowly, during the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the background was raised and its pieces fitted together like a great mosaic. It had spheres, like the heavenly spheres of the Ptolemaic cosmology—the physical sciences, the life sciences, the social and psychological sciences. There it is, the new moralists said. Study it, learn its laws, master it, they said, and create your own destiny.

This is—or was—*our* background; the one our generation has been living within, or against, for the past fifty years or so. It is a background we are now beginning to be uncertain about. We thought it was firm and fixed. We thought it could not be questioned. Read the Book of Nature, our teachers said. We read it. Make a new scale of human development and relationships, they said. We made it, or thought we made it. Think of the countless books published in the past fifty years—books telling us how to be "scientific" in our approach to human problems!

It is terrifying to have this faith shaken. It is not a question of whether we can be heroic or not. We were heroic in the eighteenth century, and we can be heroic again. It is a question of needing a background, a field projection of Reality, in which

to be heroic. To be heroic, you have to have an End. You have to have obstacles and some indication, if only a little, of the means to overcome them. You have to have, in short, a location on a scene, a place in the theatre of life, to be heroic. What is our scene? Where is our place? We don't know.

In an epoch like the present, it is the Dr. Johnsons—the Dr. Johnson in each one of us—who come to our rescue. It was Dr. Johnson who kicked the cobblestone in a London street to show that, *he*, after all, knew what Reality was, whatever doubts Bishop Berkeley might cast upon the matter. Dr. Johnson's toe hurt, so he knew by the immediate intuition of pain the kind of a world he lived in. We could not draw breath from one moment to the next without our cobblestone theories of reality. Whenever we get dizzy from contemplating the stars, we kick the cobblestone and get on with the practical business of staying alive. (We should not forget, however, that a German metaphysician lurks behind every British empiricist, and when we get tired of one we turn to the other.)

The thing that is becoming evident to us, today, is that our difficulties lie in the psychological constitution of human beings, and not in our effort to master the external environment. The result of this discovery is the slow redefinition of Reality, in the terms of the new background against which we are working. We are really helpless to prevent this change in attitude. Even the cobblestones, these days, are increasingly psychological.

But how shall we erect a background out of the "stuff" of psychology? This is a question for which we have no ready answer. We could argue that the physicists have in some measure prepared us for this dilemma, since for fifty years they have been transforming the visible universe into a complex of equations—"out there" there is no longer any matter, but only congeries of energy in motion, and what we see and call "matter" is only the track left by the patterns of energy. Such concerns, however, exert only an intellectual fascination. Our attention is now directed to other quarters.

The problem is essentially one of contents, order, and scale in the psychological universe. The raw materials to be worked with are amply supplied. For example, the foreground of our general awareness is filled with the psychological puzzles of the Nazi Revolution, the Communist Revolution, the psycho-social disorders of the present, all over the world, to which is added the enormous case-book literature of modern psychotherapy. Why do people do what they do? What should be expected of people? What do we mean, in these terms, by the word "progress"? How shall we equate the new knowledge of human behavior with the rationalist conceptions and ideals of past social revolutions? How do problems of good and evil, of right and wrong, relate to psychological conceptions? What about the big differences in the mental potentialities of people?

There can be no doubt about the fact that the new background of reality, now in formation, is psychological. The evidence is unmistakable. While, a quarter of a century ago, the religious bid for admission of a theological idea of reality borrowed wholesale from the scientific conception of the universe, in order to retain what respect it could, today religion is borrowing as eagerly from psychology and psychotherapy. Modern industry, in another way, reflects the same trend. The essential project of the manufacturer is no longer technological, but psychological. The prestige of the mechanical engineer gives way to that of the engineer of consent. The manipulator of matter does not begin to approach in importance the manipulator of mind. The mind or *psyche*, sick or well, subject or object, individual or *en masse*—this is what we are determined to understand. History, politics, science, religion, economics, medicine—the dominant cast of all these specialized activities is now psychological.

Let us turn to some evidence. There is significance in the fact that it has been years since any social scientist of note has felt it important to renew serious comparisons in political or organizational terms between the communist and the democratic systems. The effective comparisons are rather in psychological terms, and the analyses bring to our attention similarities rather than differences. Take for example the following paragraphs from C. Wright Mills' article in *Contact* No. 3, on the "Decline of the Left":

> In both United States and U.S.S.R., education becomes a part of the economic and military machines. Men and women who are trained to fulfill technical functions in bureaucracies have little to do with the ends and meanings.
>
> In underdeveloped countries, of course, we witness a movement from mass illiteracy to formal education, in the overdeveloped nations the movement is from mass education to educated illiteracy.
>
> Although cryptic, does not this formula indicate in one sentence, "the natural history of mass education"?
>
> Everywhere, the image of the self-cultivating man as the goal of the human being has declined. It is the *specialist* who is ascendant in both Russia and America. The man whose field is most specialized is considered most advanced. Many cultural workmen, especially Social Investigators, try to imitate the supposed form of Physical Science. As a result they abdicate the intellectual and political autonomy of the classic traditions of their disciplines. Much Social Science nowadays is pretentious triviality; it is a set of bureaucratic techniques that inhibits social inquiry by methodological pretensions; that congests the work at hand by the obscurity of grand theory; and trivializes itself by concern with minor problems that have no connection with issues of public relevance or troubles of individuals.
>
> In both the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. the specialist's ascendancy is underlaid, of course, by the ascendancy of Physical Science in the form of military and economic facts. In America, today, man's very relation to nature is being taken over by science machines, which are, at once, part of the privately incorporated economy and military ascendancy. Now, "Science" is regularly identified with its more lethal or its more commercially-relevant products; it is less a part of the broad cultural traditions than of a closed-up and secret set of internationalist enterprises; less a realm in which the creative individual is free to innovate than a bureaucracy in which its cultural legacy is exploited by crash-techniques. The secrets of nature are made secrets of state, as science itself becomes a managed part of the machinery of World War Three, and in the United States a part, also, of the wasteful absurdities of capitalism.
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> There is no set of free intellectuals in either country—in or out of the universities—that carries on the big discourse of the Western world. There are no truly independent minds that are directly relevant to powerful decisions.
>
> I do not wish to minimize the important differences between the establishment of culture in the Soviet Union and in the United States. I wish neither to excuse the brutal facts of Soviet cultural tyranny, nor to celebrate the formal freedom of cultural workmen in the West. Surely there is enough such celebration of self and denunciation of a supposed enemy.
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> The formal freedom of the West rests upon cultural traditions of great force; this freedom is very real; it has been, and *is*, immensely valuable. But, now, we must ask to what extent the continuation of this freedom is due to the fact that it is *not* being exercised. Certainly, in America today, there is much more celebration and defense of civil liberties than insurgent and effective use of them. Are not the cultural workmen of the West, by their intellectual and moral defaults, throwing away the legacy of their freedom?

What is "psychological" about all this? The *values* of Mr. Mills' analysis are psychological, since they depend almost entirely upon what individuals are able to do, and are doing, with their *minds.* His ideal is "the image of the self-cultivating man," that is, the independent thinker. Meanwhile, the subjection of independent thought in the U.S.S.R. and its increasing abdication in the United States, to which he refers, has a close relation to the cultural dominance of "science machines," which he mentions in passing. The "science machine" is no more than an instance of the larger "world machine" established as the background of Reality by the architects of modern

thought. It has no place for *man* as thinking and effectively choosing, as a *free* being.

While he might not like the term, Mr. Mills is plainly a moralist in the great tradition of revolutionary thought. He locates the decisive element of value in human life in the *individual*, for freedom belongs inalienably and uniquely to individuals, and the subjective reality which exercises freedom is a psychological reality. He might be regarded as a representative of social science in transition, pressing on to change by reason of the threat to human good in collectivist social organization (see his *Power Elite* and *The Causes of World War III*), yet obliged by his training as an "objective" scientist to question even the values which drive him forward. There is for example this paragraph:

> We should bear in mind, however, that the ideals we Westerners associate with the classic, liberal, bourgeois period of modern culture may well be rooted in this one historical stage of this one type of society. Such ideals as personal freedom and cultural autonomy may not be inherent, necessary features of cultural life as such; our general belief that they will arise everywhere as insurgent ideals whenever occasion permits may be merely a provincial generalization of one historically specific place and epoch. The conditions of freedom that were characteristic of much of the eighteenth and nineteenth century West, are as well known as the fact that these same conditions have never prevailed in most of the world and, now, do not *flourish* in the West.

This is doubtless a legitimate caution on the part of a sociologist, although it could hardly be excused in a philosopher, for it is difficult to assign any meaning at all to words like "reason" and "science" except in connection with the values of "personal freedom" and "cultural autonomy." But Mr. Mills is certainly right in pointing out the precarious situation of these values, today.

Running concurrently with the tide of opinion arising from the provocations of international disaster and from the progressive failure of contemporary political systems to serve the cause of freedom and justice, is another stream of developments within the psychological sciences themselves. The special field of parapsychology keeps throwing up evidence for a kind of "reality" that was totally ignored in the old "scientific" background. In an article in the September *Journal of Parapsychology*, "Parapsychology and Human Nature," Dr. H. H. Price, professor of logic at Oxford University, has this to say:

> My conclusion so far is that the facts of paranormal cognition could only be reconciled with the materialistic conception of human personality by postulating new kinds of matter, both inside the human organism and outside it, and new kinds of physical and physiological processes—entities and processes which are certainly not a part of the publicly observable world.
>
> The facts which have been established by parapsychologists (telepathy, clairvoyance, and the like) do seem to me to suggest strongly that there is something wrong with the materialistic conception of human personality and that this conception of human nature can only be saved (if at all) by abandoning the principle which is one of the main reasons for holding it; that is, by giving up the principle that the publicly observable world is the only reality there is, or at least the only reality in which causally relevant events occur.

Elsewhere Dr. Price continues:

> The phenomena of telepathy seem to me to show that a human mind is not an insulated mental substance. On the contrary, they suggest that at the unconscious level, there is no clearcut boundary between one mind and another. And the phenomena of psychopathology seem to me to show that the human mind is not an indivisible entity either. We must not ignore the strange and rather disconcerting facts of dissociated and alternating personality; and it seems likely that there is some degree of dissociation in every one of us, however sane and normal he may appear.
>
> So if we wish to accept the hypothesis of two-sided mind-body interaction, our theory of mind must be something much less neat and tidy than the theory of Descartes [of invisible and uncombinable mental substances]. It must not be a mental substance theory, but something more like the theory of Hume or the Buddhists, in which the unity of a mind is regarded as a matter of degree, and not a matter of all or none and a mind, such as your mind or mine, is

> regarded as a very complex series of interlinked mental events, some of which are conscious experiences and others subconscious or unconscious. This suggestion would be compatible with the tripartite division of human nature into Body, Mind and Spirit which some religious thinkers, both eastern and western, have advocated. On this tripartite theory, the remarks in the text would apply to mind, but not to spirit.
>
> . . . I am inclined to think that the unconscious influence which the invisible-mental-substance theory still has upon our thinking is at present the greatest single obstacle to the progress of parapsychology on its theoretical side. It has an inhibiting influence on our inventive powers and prevents us from constructing new and no doubt very strange explanatory ideas which we need for making sense of the new and strange facts which parapsychology has discovered.

Behind the scenes of widespread public concern, men like Dr. Price are busily engaged in formulating the new background of mind-reality. Somehow, we are going to have to learn how to incorporate these elements of discovery into our sense of the kind of a world or universe we live in. Others, directly concerned with other problems presented by human behavior, are working on questions such as what causes the creative activity of human beings—if, indeed, such activities ought to be spoken of as being "caused," in the old mechanistic sense, at all. Perhaps, within the next ten years or so, some master in the art of synthesis of research will begin to display before us the first general outline of the background of psychological Reality and indicate the major masses and differentiations of mind-stuff, as we experience and embody them.

REVIEW
THE DYNAMICS OF EDUCATION

WE have frequently noted, and with diminishing surprise, that the best critics of modern education come from the ranks of liberal arts teachers. For example, the man or woman trained as an educational administrator, when confronted by issues of philosophical or religious belief, is apt to minimize differences of opinion in order to maintain easy interpersonal relationships within student groups. Perhaps this is a reason why the liberal arts teacher is apt to take a contrasting view, growing from the traditional liberal arts emphasis on the criteria of excellence. To say this is not to criticize the educational administrator nor to imply that, particularly in the younger divisions of elementary school training, a feeling of ease in "the group" is unimportant. But the fact remains that "the group" attains new levels of insight only when adventurous minds within it seize upon contradictions and paradoxes, welcome the controversial issues, and press forward to some new orientation.

The guest editorial in Sept. 12 *Saturday Review* provides a good illustration of "liberal arts" insight. Discussing "Dynamic Education," Dr. Lou LaBrant, past president of the National Council of Teachers of English, and visiting professor of English at Dillard University, New Orleans, observes:

> We have entered the space age and even kindergartners prattle about trips to the moon, and men from faraway planets. Man can no longer think of himself as central to the purpose of the universe. Raised to a religion which gives man the key role in the cosmos, accustomed to rituals developed when earth held the focus, our children will have to think hard and well if they are not to lose their bearings, faith in life, and moral urgencies. The science out of which questionings come is taught in school; but discussion of its philosophical implications is taboo, "controversial," and restricted to generalities acceptable to the most primitive sects. . . .
>
> Taboo on religious discussion is related to a larger prohibition; the all but universal avoidance of controversial issues. To discuss these in school is often to invite a charge of partisanship or even of disloyalty. We boast of freedom to think. Nevertheless in the criticism of our public school teaching of history and government there appear almost no suggestions that the basis of this freedom cannot occur in public school practice. It seems doubtful that young persons, nourished for twelve years on courses where controversial topics are eliminated, will become independent thinkers unless they do so at the price of rejecting their education.

It is not difficult to identify the basic paradox of "democratic" education: Children are to be provided ever-increasing educational opportunity, but the purpose of this extension of opportunity is to enlarge the resources of creative or critical thinking. Since teachers are obliged to deal with students in astronomical numbers, from the kindergarten to the university, they tend to rely upon various forms of mechanical tests—true-false, multiple choice, etc., and often use machine-scored ratings. Meanwhile, the increase of specialization, as has so often been observed, becomes a barrier to communication among teachers who have devoted most of their time to a single field. But, as Dr. LaBrant says, "we may live in a machine age, but machines will not invent the imperative human relations, the necessary weighing of values, the concessions, or the daring proposals we shall need; neither will machine-scored tests discover inventors and innovators."

Dr. LaBrant is, of course, emphasizing considerations which inspired the University of Chicago's Great Books program. The "great books" were meant to lead to great discussion—and there is no possibility for significant discussion unless contrasting points of view are involved, to be fused in new synthesis by each participant for himself.

The extension division of the University of California at Los Angeles is currently promoting a similar educational approach. A recent brochure explains:

> The discussion and lecture-discussion programs of the Department of Liberal Arts have been developed to stimulate by bringing the cultural

resources of the University to southern California in various informal settings conducive to stimulating and unregimented study.

Because so many intelligent people have indicated their enthusiastic approval, both types of programs have been scheduled in your neighborhood. They will cover aspects of the humanities and the social sciences—painting, the drama, philosophy, anthropology, literature, and political science. You do not need a college background to participate in these groups; all you need is an inquiring mind and a desire to learn. There are no prerequisites except where noted below.

To provide necessary background for informed and intelligent discussion for each of these programs, you will be given a complete set of specially prepared readings. Individual study and reflection upon a short selection each week will prepare you for the cooperative inquiry and the challenge of ideas which is the essence of good discussion.

Under the heading of Great Issues in Education, another course formulates certain basic philosophical questions. Here is the invitation to educational discussion:

Never before in our history has education been confronted with such a barrage of criticism and panaceas—and too often the issues are not clear.

This new program, prepared by the Great Books Foundation, is designed to provide participants with a clearer insight into the principles behind the education of their children, their fellow-citizens, and themselves.

Such issues as the following are examined and discussed: To what end do we educate? By what means? What should we emphasize? Who should be educated and how much? What is the role of the public schools in our society?

These and other questions are considered in the series of readings (a three-volume set included in the program fee) containing works by Bertrand Russell, John Dewey, Alfred North Whitehead, Mortimer Adler, Plato, Plutarch, Aristotle, and many others.

All such efforts, in our opinion, contribute to the genuine rebirth of "the search for wholeness," which was characteristic of the flowering of ancient Greek culture. The implications for a modern democracy are obvious: only the man who feels himself capable of exercising individual judgment on matters of opinion can develop the capacities on which democratic government depends.

COMMENTARY
RADIO NEWS

FOLLOWING is a letter which went out recently on the letterhead of The Call Association, Inc., over the signature of Erich Fromm:

> Recently I had the pleasure of being interviewed by Norman Thomas while a young man recorded our conversation. That tape recording is part of an exciting new radio project, designed to meet one of the most basic problems facing American radicals today, the problem of finding ways to reach the general public. I want to tell you about it, in the confidence that you will share my enthusiasm.
>
> Every radio station in the country is required by law to give a "reasonable" amount of time for free public-service broadcasts. Generally they dispense "noncontroversial" pap of a kind we are all too familiar with; when they do broadcast social commentary it is usually of the right-wing variety, mostly because that's what's available to them. Many stations feel starved for good left-of-center programming.
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> And that's what the Call Association is now making available. It is preparing a series of thirteen tapes, in each of which Norman Thomas interviews some outstanding nonconformist; and it is offering them free to any station that will agree to use them. Besides the interview with me, so far Norman Thomas has recorded talks with A. Philip Randolph, Asoka Mehta, Patrick Murphy Malin, Martin Luther King, the Rev. Donald Harrington, Jose Figueres, and James Warburg.

The project promises to fulfill our highest expectations. . . .

Some of these interviews have already been broadcast. A list of the stations which have agreed to use this material is available from the Call Association, 303 Fourth Ave., New York 10, N.Y. In the Los Angeles area, KPFK, sister station of Berkeley's well-known KPFA, is broadcasting many of the interviews, as is KPFA.

KPFK and KPFA, both operated by the Pacifica Foundation, are listener-sponsored stations, which means that they are supported, not by advertising, but by the voluntary subscriptions ($12 a year) of their listeners. KPFK (90.7 megacycles) has been on the air for about three months, offering programs of a general cultural and educational character. (One outstanding program, for example, which probably would not be heard at all, were it not for these stations, was a broadcast on Oct. 10 of a talk on "The Therapeutic Community" by Dr. Maxwell Jones, a British psychiatrist, who told of group therapy provided for criminal psychopaths in the Social Rehabilitation Unit at the Belmont Hospital, Surrey, England.)

There is a natural association of program material of the sort prepared by Norman Thomas with such stations as KPFA and KPFK (both FM)—not because of its "socialist" content, but because these stations were founded to give a platform to minority expressions of every sort, and to broaden the base and assure the continuance of free speech in the United States.

The Call Association is a non-profit foundation "dedicated to the creation of a cooperative commonwealth." It is headed by Norman Thomas and sponsored by a distinguished group of socialists, including such men as John Haynes Holmes, Sidney Hook, Milton Mayer, Paul Blanshard, Edmund Wilson, Vincent Sheean, Donald Harrington, Dr. Fromm, and a number of others. In the conclusion of his letter, Dr. Fromm indicates that numerous stations (close to fifty) intend to use all or some of the interviews. The Call Association asks for financial support to help with the costs of preparing these programs.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves

Editor, "Children . . . and Ourselves": The enclosed description of a correction camp in a forest preserve at North Pharsalia, N.Y. (from the Sept. 7 New York *Times)* reminds me more of those back-to-nature stories so prevalent a few years ago than it does of the ordinary "youth camp." Here the inmates are confined, not by bars or fences or walls, but by eight miles of unfamiliar terrain—a real hazard for city-bred youths. Thus, though the confinement is real, the ever-present *sense* of confinement is lacking. This in itself must be a tremendous psychological relief to young men who had previously been confined in cells for three months or more before arriving, handcuffed, at the camp.

Although the boys work hard at the North Pharsalia camp the conditions are favorable for developing that self-respect which comes from doing productive and *necessary* labor; for this forest preserve is badly in need of the work these young men (from sixteen to twenty-one years of age) are able to do: prune trees, clear underbrush, build dams that form lakes which are later stocked with fish, etc. The keen appetites whipped up by their labor are satisfied, according to the account, by good food and plenty of it.

It seems to me that being sent to North Pharsalia is a definite "break" for these young men who were convicted of "assault, burglary, and all sorts of hooliganism," and whose sentences range from three to five years.

The *Times* report referred to gives something of the history of the camp since its opening on Oct. 2, 1956. Although there is no attempt to keep the wards enclosed, and a mere eight miles separates them from the opportunity to travel the highways, only one young prisoner has tried to escape during these three years. Further, among the two hundred boys who have been paroled after serving at North Pharsalia, there have been only half as many parole violations as among parolees from other state institutions.

The superintendent of the camp, Mr. Harry Fritz, is quoted directly on the Pharsalia philosophy of operation:

When these boys come to us, although they may talk rough and tough, they're bewildered. They usually lack self-confidence. We may not teach them a trade that they can use on the outside, but we do teach them that they can work productively with their own hands.

You have to be firm, but fair. You have to be on your toes and sniff out trouble before it starts. The staff here knows that our job here is not to punish, but to salvage resources—human and natural.

Mr. Fritz remarks that because they are able to feel a certain integrity concerning the work they do, the boys respond to the trust accorded them by producing better work than the CCC boys did in the depression era, and work "every bit as good" as any standard labor previously hired. According to Fritz, the boys know they are not being "coddled" at Pharsalia, but they also know that they will be respected for doing an honest day's work.

This word "coddled" is an interesting one to explore in relation to delinquents in general. We have all read bombastic newspaper editorials charging psychologists and social workers with indulgent, sentimental pandering to the moods and desires of youths who have never been disciplined. It may sound as if this criticism has a point, but it really doesn't have, not in this context. For "coddling" means excessive attention, and if there is one characteristic of youths who run wild it is that they have received practically no serious attention from anyone in the adult world, including their parents.

On this point we note a remark by Dr. Kenneth B. Clark, Associate Professor of Psychology at City College, New York, and a member of the State Youth Commission. Dr. Clark believes that any "get tough" program, such as that once recommended by J. Edgar Hoover, simply serves to intensify and focus the violence of potential delinquents. As reported in the New York *Times*, Sept. 9: "Dr. Clark warns that the youngsters' warped feelings of revenge and reprisal are being reinforced by adults' calls for a crackdown. Psychologists who have discussed

the subject, he reports, can see no difference between the moral precept of the gang and those who cry that force be met with force." Finally, Dr. Clark insists that "we are not looking at the problem when we say these kids are coddled. Nobody has ever coddled these kids."

For those who are reluctant to believe that most past penological practice has proved inadequate, we recall *The Offenders,* by Giles Playfair and Derrick Sington. This account of the Swedish penal system—which MANAS for March I9, 1958, called "an almost unbelievable reversal of both the psychology and practice of other "civilized' nations"—provides evidence that even murderers may become valuable members of society, if the approach to their condition is therapeutic rather than penal:

> In Sweden, murderers are not executed; nor, unless they are adjudged incurably insane, are they kept in confinement for the rest of their natural lives. Ten years is the very maximum sentence they are likely to serve, and upon their release they are considered to have paid their debt to society in full. Regardless of how brutal and shocking their crime may have been, they carry with them the faith of the Swedish Authorities in their capacity to lead fruitful and peaceful lives in the free world: a faith which statistics show is almost invariably justified.
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> But the Swedish Penal Authorities recognize that a released murderer's chances of rehabilitation, and of personal happiness, would be greatly reduced if he were obliged to live in a society that might still be hostile or antagonistic towards him; that might, at the very least, be distrustful of him. For this reason, they usually advise him to change his name and to make his home in a different town, or part of the country, from the one in which his crime was committed. They regard it as part of their responsibility to find him a job and, if necessary living accommodation. It is likely that the man for whom he eventually works will be the only member of the community aware of his true identity, and this man will be sworn to secrecy. In short, it is a cardinal principle of Swedish penal policy to protect the anonymity of released offenders, particularly of released murderers, and to make as certain as possible that their privacy will not be invaded by such as newspaper reporters.

It is slowly becoming plain that the most effective way to help an offender, young or old, is to believe in his potential integrity. Beyond that, the next greatest need is for the creation of situations in which integrity can be proved. The Swedish authorities are ingenious in devising means to that end, for individual cases under their jurisdiction, while in such camps as North Pharsalia, the healing efficacy of "group-therapy" can be observed in action.

FRONTIERS
Social Vistas

IN the first issue of MANAS in the current volume (Jan. 7, 1959), the lead article was made from the report of a talk given by Jayaprakash Narayan, in Cheltenham, England, on the origins of Vinoba Bhave's land-gift movement. Jayaprakash Narayan is one of the few political thinkers of the present who dares to express openly his doubts about the function of parliamentary democracy. The mechanisms of party organization, he feels, plus the high cost of political campaigns and the gross oversimplification of issues, make political representation *non*-representative for the great majority of individuals. Now, in the Independence Day Supplement of the Nagpur *Times* for Aug. 15 of this year, he explores the possibility of combining ancient and modern socio-economic forms to create self-government for India.

India, as most readers are aware, is a nation largely made up of small villages. Sociologists interested in the role of the small community in developing, conserving, and transmitting the qualities of civilization have always found India a fascinating region for primary research. Arthur E. Morgan's *The Small Community,* which gives some attention to India, is a work entirely devoted to emphasizing the importance of small community relationships for the transmission of moral ideas from generation to generation. It is this measure of the importance of the primary social unit, the village, which makes Jayaprakash Narayan's proposals of general interest. He begins with a survey of recent Indian history from a sociological point of view:

> The present political and administrative institutions of India are foreign transplantations. In planting these institutions (or their precursors) on Indian soil, the British paid no regard whatever to India's own political patterns, ancient or contemporary. After the end of British rule, the fathers of the Indian Constitution, including the politicians and the experts, again paid no heed to India's traditions and the deep-flowing springs of Indian life.
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> The present Indian democracy is the product of the conflict between the politically and economically conscious elements in Indian society and British imperialism.
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> The Indian people, particularly the masses, did not struggle to establish the existing institutions of democracy, though they did take part in the movement for national independence. Adult franchise, for instance, is not the result of the struggle of the masses for the precious right to vote. Vast numbers of them do not appreciate the value of that right nor understand how to use it. This makes democracy, based on adult franchise, unreal and insubstantial.

This sort of criticism requires considerable courage. In the first place, Western political thinking makes universal suffrage its first principle and highest value. Any sort of questioning of this principle immediately suggests a great power vacuum that is likely to be filled by irresponsible manipulators. A lot of original thinking will be required to conceive of a society which remains free without universal suffrage in connection with national elections. Narayan's point, however, is that the power vacuum exists *now,* for the reason that the people are not able to use the franchise effectively. He has further criticisms:

> The concept of State that we have adopted in our country is what Salvador de Madariaga, the Spanish political philosopher, has variously described as arithmetical, mineral, or inorganic. The State is conceived of as an "arithmetical sum of individuals"; every adult citizen has his individual vote and the arithmetic of these votes, sometimes very complicated by electoral laws and party systems, governs the functioning of the State. This is contrary to the nature of human society and the social nature of man.

What Narayan's thinking implies is a revival of the "organic" theory of human society, a conception which is virtually anathema to Western political thinkers. The last great advocate of the Organic State was Hegel, who by now is probably the most unpopular systematic thinker of the European tradition. Hegel is held responsible, directly or indirectly, for many of the evils of

modern totalitarian politics—first, because of his practical deification of the State, second, because of his subordination of the individual to the total being of the State. But what may be easily overlooked in the comparison of Western "organic" political thinking with that of Narayan is the enormous emphasis on *power* in Western conceptions, as contrasted with Narayan's emphasis on function. Narayan is a Gandhian and a pacifist. He is interested rather in the elimination of the factor of power, insofar as possible, and he finds the misuse of power to be an obvious result of the malfunction of parliamentary democracy. He believes that Gandhi gave clear direction for a constructive political future for India. After calling attention to the defects of the present form of Indian democracy, Narayan asks:

> Was, or is there, an alternative? I am sure there is. And the extraordinary thing is that Gandhiji, the architect of our freedom, the Father of our Nation, had taken special pains to point out that alternative. But just as Indian history was neglected, so was Gandhi's clarion voice.

Now comes Narayan's description of the historic role of the village in the shaping of Indian civilization:

> Everyone has heard of the ancient village communities of India. True, there is not much known about them, but historians have collected enough information for us to realize how they constituted the most stable foundations of Indian society that withstood all upheavals.
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> Dynasties rose and fell, wars were lost and won, invaders came and went away, but through every political turmoil the village stood like a rock, carrying on its life and running its affairs in its appointed manner. Much that has remained in India of lasting value is attributed by historians to this stability of Indian society provided by the ancient organisation.
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> The self-governing village communities were the foundation stones of ancient Indian polity. Their strength came from within and not from without. Their authority rested not upon rights and powers granted by a central Government, but on the willing consent of the families that constituted them. The powers they wielded and the functions they performed were far wider than those of the village panchayats of today, which are mere empty shells as compared with their ancient predecessors.
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> When we look at the atomised, backward, listless villages of today, it seems incredible that there should have existed at one time such powerful village communities. This ancient tradition of democracy should have provided us with a far surer basis than anything we could borrow elsewhere. Even what we borrowed could be fitted properly into the body politic of the country only if it was built around the ancient tradition.

Here, of course, the reader feels the need to be "filled in" on the social mechanisms of these ancient communities. We have no reference-works on village life in India to suggest, although Fielding Hall's account of Burmese villages in his *Soul of a People* probably contains relevant material. However, it seems important to note that the typical Western concern with quantitative values will remain unsatisfied by such studies. Western political ideas lay great emphasis upon abstract relationships expressed in numerical terms. Organic life does not easily submit to statistical analysis. Its values are qualitative, its processes subtle rather than measurable. The Western democrat will be wondering how the villages got along without referendum and recall, and what they substituted for impeachment proceedings. These are indeed questions which must be answered, but it may be necessary to gain a full appreciation of the non-statistical values of village life before raising these obvious dilemmas. Following is Narayan's general setting of the problem:

> It is true that our Constitution emphasizes the programme of establishing village panchayats, as the lowest units of self-government. It is also true that in recent years, State Governments with the support and guidance of the Center have taken active steps to speed up its program. But, as I have said just now, these newly formed panchayats are like empty shells. Whatever authority they have, has come to them from above, so that they represent more the intrusion of centralised power into the village than the flowering of Gandhi's *gram rajya*.

> How the atomised village of today that has no collective will of its own and is completely at the mercy of exploitative interests can be integrated into a real self-governing community and made into a stable foundation of Indian polity is to my mind the most important question of national reconstruction.
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> To fulfill this task a revolution is needed in our thinking both about the village and the nature of human society.

Briefly, the reform Jayaprakash Narayan proposes, in objective terms, is the restoration of the village as the primary political unit of Indian society, each village to have full authority to deal with local problems. The villages would become "agro-industrial communities" in which both agricultural and industrial functions are balanced and complementary. The villages would be natural regional divisions, and so on, of larger units of government.

The revivification of the productive and moral life of the small community is necessary, Narayan thinks, to the regeneration of Indian social life:

> There is no doubt that if the village remains as it is today, the trend of urbanization cannot be checked. But if it be accepted that human society must be constructed on the basis of small primary communities, the village of today can be converted into places, attractive enough from every point of view, for no one normally to wish to desert it. When Gandhiji said that if the Indian villages died, India would die, he made it emphatically clear that he was not thinking for a moment of united according to in an ascending scale preserving the villages as they are at present. They have indeed to be changed radically, but yet they will retain the characteristics of the small community that I have tried to describe. . . .

As for political questions, he says:

> It would be wrong to think that this view of the democratic structure merely replaces the present system of direct elections with indirect elections. It is not a question of a system of elections. It is rather a question of the conception of human life and human society.
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> It is only this conception that explains why we must build up the village, why the village itself should undergo a radical transformation if it has to be made the foundation of our democracy, and why not individual voters, but living communities and their upward integration should constitute the State. I am convinced that if the present structure is maintained, not only would the village wither away and become even more shadowy, but our democracy too would remain suspended in the air, without roots in the soil and in the life of the people.

These conceptions will be somewhat difficult for Western readers to absorb, since they are radically different from traditional European and American political ideas. Yet a new sort of social order is unquestionably a need of the future, and qualitative measures of human good will surely play a part in the coming reform.