

## THE CONSTITUTIONAL PROCESS

WHAT is love of country? We know of one man that used to teach social science in a California college, but can no longer work in public education in California because he wouldn't sign the loyalty oath prescribed by the Levering Act, passed by the state legislature in 1950. This man is not out of a job, although he was hurt by being deprived of the employment he wanted and took pleasure in. He now has a job teaching English in a university in another state, and he is probably getting across as much social science as he is English, and enjoying the project enormously. Our question, however, does not relate to this man and his fortunes and misfortunes, but to the sort of people who claim that it was right for him to be fired from the California state college where he worked, because he would not sign the loyalty oath. It relates to them because they are people who say that they love their country and that they wanted the Levering Act passed—and enforced—because they love their country. There are no doubt thousands of similar cases of men and women who have been displaced from jobs in which they were doing useful work. There have been many books and articles written about such people—teachers and others in civil service jobs—who have refused to conform to one or another form of "loyalty" legislation and who as a result were compelled to seek other work. But we know about this one man personally—we've talked to him at length and come to admire him as a man who is a natural force for good in education. We didn't ask him if he loved his country, but we suspect he does, even though he might use other words to describe his feelings.

This article is not, however, going to be about loyalty oaths, nor about the fact that loyalty oaths serve no useful purpose in a program of national security, since they operate, not to uncover "traitors," but to demoralize and

intimidate people who have even a moderate tendency to independent and critical thinking. This article is going to investigate the idea of love of country and what its meaning might or ought to be for the people of the United States.

What, then, is love of country? Love of country is of two kinds. There is the little-boy type of love of country and grown-up love of country. Little-boy love of country is love of country because it is your country. That is natural enough in children. Children are devoted to the familiar. They are loyal to their homes, their parents, their city block, neighborhood or town, their school, and anything they have by habit become attached to. Grown-up love of country arises from an appreciation of what one's country has contributed and promises to contribute to human well-being. Mature Americans honor George Washington because he participated in the vision of a social order founded on the ideals of justice and self-determination. The conceptions of political philosophy which were embodied in the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution by men like Paine, Franklin, Jefferson, Madison, and others represent an impartial respect for the innate qualities and potentialities of all human beings. Mature Americans love their country for its gifts to the human race; that they are themselves the beneficiaries of those gifts is only a personal reason for loyalty. It is the impersonal devotion to great principles which makes the grown-up American's love of country an emotion filled with dignity. Washington put this feeling into words in 1790:

The Citizens of the United States of America have a right to applaud themselves for having given to mankind examples of an enlarged and liberal policy—a policy worthy of imitation. All possess alike liberty of conscience and immunities of citizenship. It is now no more that toleration is spoken of, as if it was by the indulgence of one class

of people that another enjoyed the exercise of their inherent natural rights. For happily the government of the United States, which gives to bigotry no sanction, to persecution no assistance, requires only that they who live under its protection should demean themselves as good citizens in giving it on all occasions their effectual support.

Speaking of the Declaration of Independence, Jefferson wrote in 1826, on its fiftieth anniversary:

May it be to the world what I believe it will be (to some parts sooner, to others later, but finally to all): the signal of arousing men to burst the chains under which monkish ignorance and superstition have persuaded them to bind themselves and assume the blessings and security of self-government. That form which we have substituted, restores the free right of the unbounded exercise of reason and freedom of opinion. All eyes are opened or opening to the rights of man. The general spread of the light of science has already laid open to every view the palpable truth that the mass of mankind has not been born with saddles on their backs, nor a favored few booted and spurred ready to ride them legitimately by the grace of God. These are grounds of hope for others.

But what, precisely, is the government of the United States in essence, to which, according to Washington, good citizens will upon all occasions give their effectual support? The identifying characteristic of the government of the United States is the *constitutional process* of making decisions. This is its genius. Those who respect and foster the constitutional process are good citizens, and those who would circumvent or bypass the constitutional process are not. Jefferson in particular saw the importance of education in relation to the constitutional process. Education and freedom of the press were to him absolutely indispensable to self-government. The following quotations embody some of his thinking along these lines:

Preach, my dear sir, a crusade against ignorance; establish and improve the law for educating the common people. Let our countrymen know, that the people alone can protect us against these evils (of monarchy), and that the tax which will be paid for this purpose, is not more than a thousandth part of what will be paid to kings, priests,

and nobles, who will rise up among us if we keep the people in ignorance. (1776.)

The people cannot be all, and always, well informed. The part which is wrong will be discontented, in proportion to the importance of the facts they misconceive. If they remain quiet under such misconceptions, it is a lethargy, a forerunner of death to the public liberty. (1787.)

No experiment can be more interesting than that we are now trying, and which we trust will end in establishing the fact, that man may be governed by reason and truth. Our first object should therefore be, to leave open to him all the avenues of truth. The most effectual hitherto found is the freedom of the press. It is, therefore, the first shut up by those who fear the investigation of their actions. (1804.)

Subject opinion to coercion: whom will you make your inquisitors? Fallible men; men governed by bad passions, by private as well as public reasons. And why subject it to coercion? To produce uniformity. But is uniformity of opinion desirable? . . . Is uniformity attainable? Millions of innocent men, women, and children, since the introduction of Christianity, have been burnt, tortured, fined, imprisoned; yet we have not advanced an inch towards uniformity. What has been the effect of coercion? To make one half the world fools, and the other half hypocrites. To support roguery and error all over the earth. (*Notes on Virginia.*)

The practical wisdom of the men who shaped the political philosophy and institutions of the United States has hardly been equalled since. On the question of treason, James Madison wrote in the tenth *Federalist* paper:

As treason may be committed against the United States, the authority of the United States ought to be enabled to punish it. But as newfangled and artificial treasons have been the great engines by which violent factions, the natural offspring of free government, have usually wreaked their alternate malignity on each other, the convention have, with great judgment, opposed a barrier to this peculiar danger, by inserting a constitutional definition of the crime, fixing the proof necessary for conviction of it, and restraining the Congress, even in punishing it, from extending beyond the person of its author.

Of the source of despotism, he wrote:

On a candid examination of history, we shall find that turbulence, violence, and abuse of power, by

the majority, have produced factions and commotions which, in republics, have, more frequently than any other cause, produced despotism.

One of the troubles which comes from looking up the writings of the Founding Fathers is that you find it almost impossible to stop quoting from them, since so much of what they say can be turned into a tract for the time—almost any time. Enough, however, has probably been cited here to give some tangible shape to the idea of the constitutional process in relation to the sort of problems which confront us today.

What are those problems? Most of them turn on the question of what is spoken of as "loyalty." Loyalty to what? Obviously, if the words of the makers of the Constitution can be taken seriously, loyalty to the United States is basically loyalty to the constitutional process. If this should be subverted, the whole structure of self-government will collapse, and then the thing to which we have given our devotion—the conception and ideal of a just social order for which our forefathers risked all that they had and were—will have disappeared.

What is the issue in respect to "loyalty"? The fear expressed is that persons in positions of influence—in education or some other form of public service—are either Communists or Communist-sympathizers.

What are Communists, and why should they be regarded as a threat to the constitutional processes of the United States?

At this point we must begin to be very careful in the use of terms. A Communist, as a political individual, is a believer in the historical analysis and politico-economic philosophy of Karl Marx and the revolutionary program of Lenin. This, at any rate, is what the term has come to mean. A communist may also be a partisan of the aims, policies, and claims of the U.S.S.R., which is at present locked in a tense struggle for world power with the United States.

What does this mean, in practical terms? It means that a Communist may be engaged in

espionage against the United States, with the possible objective of contributing to the military downfall of this country. It also means that a Communist may engage in propaganda activities toward the end of causing Americans to accept the Communist analysis of history and to adopt the Communist program for revolution and assumption of power, with a consequent transformation of America into a Communist State. Military espionage is obviously an attack on the constitutional process, since it aims at destruction of the American form of constitutional government by force and violence. It is not so clear that the propaganda activities of Communists aim at the destruction of the constitutional process, but it seems almost certain that at some point this would be a result of the triumph of Communist propaganda, since the Communists admittedly seek power, not through the free play of opinion, but through the *control* of opinion by official or party channels. It is also fairly well established, through the experience of labor unions and other institutions which have felt the pressure of communist influence, that the prime drive of the Communist movement is toward organizational power, by whatever means are available. Communists habitually twist the parliamentary procedures of democratic bodies into instruments for the manipulation of power. They are not interested in the preservation of the impartial *means* of democratic self-government, but in the control of those means. This conclusion concerning Communist political methods is so well established as to need no further argument. The Communists have only contempt for what they call bourgeois traditions of morality and fair play. Their manuals of procedure quite openly advise deceit when deceit will lead to power.

Are there other kinds of Communists besides those of this general persuasion?

To answer this question, it is necessary to distinguish between Communism as an ethical faith concerning property, Communism as a political philosophy, and Communism as the name

of the prevailing body of Soviet doctrine and the practice of the representatives of the Soviet Union. Some of the early Christians were Communists. There have since been dozens of Christian communities organized on a communist (common ownership) basis, some of them fascinating studies of human idealism and striving. There are in existence today various brotherhoods, some in the United States, some abroad, which endeavor to apply the New Testament counsel of having "all things common." In France several groups are pursuing a "communist" way of life under the name of "communities of work." (See Claire Hutchet Bishop's book, *All Things Common* [Harper, 1950].) These societies have either a religious or an ethical dynamic, and are in no way "political" in the sense of seeking or wanting power over others who do not freely choose this way of life.

But what becomes evident from a study of movements of this sort is that the social and ethical idea behind Communism is deeply rooted in Western history, and that it would be highly irresponsible to categorize all Communists and all communist thought by easy reference to the methods and behavior of partisans of the Soviet Union. It is even foolish to refuse to examine impartially what has happened in Russia during the some forty years since the Communists came to power. (The question of *why* the Communists abandoned the traditional moral ideas of Western civilization will have to have a rational explanation before there can be much hope of finding a common ground for negotiating with them a peace which rests upon a more solid foundation than the "balance of terror.")

The basic motivation behind the revolutionary movement of European history has always been the human longing for justice. The writings of socialist thinkers contain some of the noblest expressions to be found in the entire literature of Western civilization, and only fools and bigots will ignore them. If, today, the enthusiasm of thoughtful men for socialism has been justly

damped by the frightening events of recent history, it would be an immeasurable folly to overlook the fact that the revolutionary movement has been the direct and indirect cause of many of the changes and reforms in social conditions which practically all men regard as among the fundamental achievements of modern civilization. Socialism is a generic term (invented by Robert Owen) which names a great body of thought devoted to the search for a balanced relationship between power and property, in the service of justice. It includes the Marxist brand of Socialism, known as Communism, but comprehends a much wider scope of socio-political thinking. In general, socialists, as distinguished from Communists, have come to be known as believing that the socialist society ought to come into being by means of, instead of by overthrowing, the constitutional process. The great French socialist, Jean Jaurès, wrote in 1902: "There is only one sovereign method for the achievement of Socialism—the winning of a legal majority." To such socialists, the people of the United States cannot help but give a fair hearing, unless they are indeed to turn traitor to the very principle of their political being—the constitutional process. Many respected Americans are socialists, and several of the new nations which have come into being during the past twenty years are more or less socialist States, yet are thoroughly committed to the constitutional process.

The fact we are trying to emphasize here is that the fundamental loyalty of Americans is not to any particular theory of socio-economic structure, but to the constitutional process. Whatever way the country goes—and it must go in *some* direction, since no political organization, in this epoch of extraordinarily hastened change, can stand still—the method of its going will be the test of fidelity to the American spirit and the American political tradition, not the hypothetical character of some highly advertised goal.

There have always been those in the United States who have distrusted the constitutional process, fearing to admit that open discussion of plans or proposals they dislike is the best way for Americans to decide upon their merits. Not, however, until the period of extreme tension with the Soviet Union, following the second world war, did the resistance to the forum method of decision unite with insecurity of the sort aroused by Communist methods of political infiltration and manipulation, to produce an almost psychopathic suspicion of everyone who has a rational instead of an emotional reaction to communist doctrines. Liberals, intellectuals, rationalists, atheists, socialists, progressive educators, and practically all who attempt to evaluate in rational terms are now gathered up and classified in the single blurred image of an "enemy within." The great historical movement for revolution and reform is identified as a kind of political Satanism and the distinction between humanitarian socialist theory and communist strategy and tactics in the struggle for political power is entirely overlooked. A blindly determined identification of nineteenth-century *laissez faire* economics with the "spiritual" values of the American political tradition creates a spurious definition of "loyalty" and even the mildest interest in social welfare legislation is taken to be symptomatic of one of the stages of communist "infection."

From these confused emotions has arisen a program of defamation and character assassination which is a direct attack on the constitutional process. Any refusal to participate in this program (as in the refusal of teachers to sign vague, catch-all loyalty oaths, or in the unwillingness of persons subpoenaed by un-American affairs investigating committees to expose friends and acquaintances to slanderous attacks) is taken as *prima facie* evidence of guilt.

Practically no one is immune to the hysterical accusations which come from these self-appointed preservers of America's "freedom." The myth of infection is so completely divorced from any

supporting facts that such charges, being suspended in mid-air, are impossible to disprove. If you set out to explain why the resort to the Fifth Amendment is not necessarily proof of personal involvement in subversive undertakings, and happen to refer to Erwin Griswold's excellent pamphlet on the subject, you will be told that of course Harvard University, where Dr. Griswold teaches, is a hotbed of Communism. If you speak of the Civil Liberties Union or the Fund for the Republic, you may be instructed that these organizations are practically Communist front groups. President Roosevelt was of course tainted with "socialistic" tendencies and even President Eisenhower has been charged with a certain "softness" that bodes ill for the nation. Not long ago a PTA meeting in a Western state was favored with the showing of a film reproducing scenes of the student demonstrations last year in San Francisco, in opposition to the hearings held in that city by the House Committee on Un-American Activities. The purpose of this film, titled, *Operation Abolition*, is to convince the audience that the student demonstrations were Communist planned and staged. When a parent rose at the PTA meeting to argue that the film gave a grossly distorted account of the hearings in San Francisco, he was shouted down and prevented from having his say. He was confronted by impudent implications to the effect that only a communist sympathizer would question the authority of the film.

This is the sort of thing that is going on in the United States, in the name of "love of country."

How do you go about defending the United States from this sort of attack on the constitutional process? How do you defend the method of rational discussion, when even the first tentative motions toward its defense are publicly attacked as evidence of anti-American intentions?

Do we need a dozen or so Zolas to hold literary trials of these attempts at total destruction of the very essence of the political genius of the United States? Is it time for those who have

actually read what the Founding Fathers said, and believe in it, to establish some dramatic form of public tribunal, in the public prints, and conduct their own "hearings," not of persons, but of acts?

Should committees be formed of leading educators who will go to the large corporations which are financing distribution of such films as this *Operation Abolition* and explain to them what Madison meant when he spoke of the "newfangled and artificial treasons" by which "violent factions, the natural offspring of free government, have usually wreaked their alternate malignity on each other," pointing out to them that while the Constitution affords legal protection against such abuses, their policies are assisting ignorant groups to nullify time-honored constitutional protections by throttling open discussion at the grass roots level, before the issues ever reach the halls of the legislature, in much the same way that Hitler's Storm Troopers first intimidated and then trampled upon the free expression of ideas in pre-war Germany?

It is time that we have a new assessment of loyalty and love of country in the United States.

## *REVIEW*

### TOWARD RACIAL JUSTICE

THE mid-November attempts of another Louisiana governor to make political capital of opposition to desegregation seemed not only rear-guard action, but extremely feeble rear-guard action. The battle for desegregation has already been won, as it ought to have been, by law and judicial decision. Recognizing the emotional obstacles, however, the Supreme Court has been patient, following up the moderation of its rulings requiring desegregation in Southern schools by careful checks on whether or not this "leniency" was being abused. Finally, prejudiced Southerners have been led to face a stark reality—their schools will either be integrated or they will be closed. And even segregationist Southerners know that schools are somewhat necessary.

An excellent summary of the five-year transition in the South is provided in the *Saturday Review* for Dec. 17, in an article by G. W. Foster, Jr., professor of law at the University of Wisconsin. The plans adopted by states, offering varying degrees of resistance to the Supreme Court ruling of 1954, have gradually come to resemble one another—either in actual enlightenment or by way of enlightened self-interest. Prof. Foster indicates the basis for "further refinement of existing approaches and the development of new ideas":

1. The plan must apply uniformly to all schools in the system.
2. Initial pupil placement should be by uniform standards applied to all.
3. Grade-a-year (stair-step) plans should start from the bottom up, not the top-down, provide for raising achievement levels in classes left segregated; permit transfer by qualified pupils from classes left segregated.
4. Interschool transfer should be permitted after initial placement.
5. Where needed, injunctions should be directed to persons who threaten to withhold state funds, close schools, or otherwise interfere.

6. The decree should clearly announce the continuation of court jurisdiction and the opportunity for modification as the transition progresses.

Prof. Foster concludes:

Help of incalculable value in reducing racial discrimination has come from the private actions of individuals and groups at work on community and state levels. Their arms can be strengthened by vigorous support from the national government.

What it seems to me Congress should do is tackle—with a massive infusion of federal funds—the problem of upgrading the primary and secondary education in schools where achievement levels fall far below national norms. Help should go to a school not because it has been racially segregated, but because its academic performance is beneath any acceptable standards. This avoids using racial criteria in operating the program and it faces a problem that is not peculiar to segregated Negro schools nor is confined to the South.

The irreversibility of the present trend is due to the fact that educational opportunities for the Negro *are* increasing and will continue to increase. This means that the more aware of the issues Negroes become, the less fearful they are in seeking their own rights or the rights of their children. Speaking of a recent Book-of-the-Month Club selection, an interracial novel, Clifton Fadiman remarks that we now "all know that the Negro is on the move"; in a sense, race has ceased to be a basically Southern problem, since the differences between Southern and Northern Negroes' opportunities have been lessened.

This sort of transition is illustrated in a less-heralded novel (Random House, 1959), *Brown Girls; Brownstones*, by Mrs. Paule Marshall, who apparently writes with some autobiographical perspective. A northern Negro girl, Selina, being "put in her place" by the mother of one of her white classmates, reacts silently:

Held down by her hand, drowning in the deluge of her voice, Selina felt a coldness ring her heart. She tried to signal the woman that she had had enough, but her hand failed her. Why couldn't the woman *see*, she wondered—even as she drowned—that she was simply a girl of twenty with a slender body and slight body and slight breasts and no power

with words, who loved spring and then the sere leaves falling and dim, old houses, who tried, foolishly perhaps, to reach beyond herself? But when she looked up and saw her reflection in those pale eyes, she knew that the woman saw one thing above all else. Those eyes were a well-lighted mirror in which, for the first time, Selina truly saw—with a sharp and shattering clarity—the full meaning of her black skin. And knowing was like dying. . . .

Exhausted, she fell against the glass, her feverish face striking the cold one there, crying suddenly because their idea of her was only an illusion, yet so powerful that it would stalk her down the years, confront her in each mirror and from the safe circle of their eyes, surprise her even in the gleaming surface of a table. It would intrude in every corner of her life, tainting her small triumphs—as it had tonight—and exulting at her defeats. She cried because, like her kinsmen, she must somehow prevent it from destroying her inside and find a way for her real face to emerge. Rubbing her face against the ravaged image in the glass, she cried in outrage: that along with the fierce struggle of her humanity she must also battle illusions!

Later Selina discusses the situation with her lover. This time, she has the courage to assert her own humanity:

"What am I supposed to—curl up and die because I'm colored? Do nothing, try nothing because of it? . . . I don't want to do that, Clive."

"No," he said gently, "you can't do that because then you admit what some white people would have you admit and what some Negroes do admit—that you are only Negro, some flat, one-dimensional, bas-relief figure which is supposed to explain everything about you. You commit an injustice against yourself by admitting that, because, first, you rule out your humanity, and second, your complexity as a human being. Oh, hell, I'm not saying that being black in this goddam white world isn't crucial. No one but us knows how corrosive it is, how it maims us through to the larger ring which encompasses us all—our humanity. To understand that much about us can be simply explained by the fact that we're men, caught with all men within the common ring." . . .

"The feeling you get," Selina said, "is that they don't really see you. It's very eerie and infuriating. For a moment there until everybody suddenly got friendly I felt like I didn't exist but was only the projection of someone or something else in their

mind's eye. Oh, maybe I was just being oversensitive, I dunno. . . ."

"I don't either, dear Selina. . . . Maybe our dark faces remind them of all that is dark and unknown and terrifying within themselves and, as Jimmy Baldwin says, they're seeking absolution through poor us, either in their beneficence or in their cruelty. I don't know. . . . But I'm afraid we have to disappoint them by confronting them always with the full and awesome weight of our humanity, until they begin to see us and not some unreal image they've super-imposed."

Such moving and articulate passages in contemporary literature reveal some of the forces which have helped to make the Supreme Court's action one of the most important in its history.



## COMMENTARY

### WHY COULDN'T HE "DO OTHERWISE"?

THE questions raised by a reader and discussed in this week's *Frontiers* make us wonder if it wouldn't be a good idea for someone to get out a "primer" on the inevitable role of metaphysics in human life. Is metaphysics, after all, something you can take or leave alone? It seems impossible to avoid the view that every deliberated moral decision of human beings results from consciously or unconsciously held metaphysical ideas.

All judgments of value represent conclusions of some sort concerning what human beings are and what is good for them. Every man who labors for a cause which can promise him no personal reward exhibits a metaphysical faith in the proposition that devotion to principle is a better expression of human capacity than action according to self-interest. We speak of "nobility" and revere its occasional presence among us, but seldom inquire into the dynamics of noble action. Why should a man so behave? What *reason* has he?

Actions which evoke universal admiration are no doubt much more than coldly rational undertakings, but they have at least a rational aspect. That is, some explanation of heroism can be attempted. When Martin Luther declared, "Here I stand, I cannot do otherwise," he was saying in effect that he was compelled to brave the wrath of the ecclesiastical authorities by an idea with which he felt so identified that he could not bear separation from it. He wanted to live in the service of that idea, but he was prepared, if necessary, to die for it. Many men have felt such loyalties and shown such devotion. *Why?*

These are metaphysical questions, and they have been almost totally neglected. You find practically nothing on them in the manuals of science. It is as though the great heroes and martyrs and champions of high causes had never existed and needed no explanation. Our science has on the whole been content to lose the

identifying characteristics of human greatness by compiling statistics of "average" behavior, forgetting that there is an unborn hero in every man, and that the motives of nobility which flower in the few have their undeveloped germs in all the multitude.

Can it be that recognition of these qualities as optional forces in human life would compel us to adopt an unwonted humility? That thought about them would create individual obligations which the collectivist image of man leaves to some external authority?

We have not, it is true, a vocabulary that enables us to speak of these things naturally and unpretentiously. But we can begin to ask the questions which might help to shape the vocabulary we need.

## CHILDREN

### . . . and Ourselves

#### FOLLOW-UP ON EMERSON COLLEGE

[MANAS for Oct. 19 described an independent experiment at the higher learning level, called Emerson College, located at Pacific Grove, California. The Emerson *Bulletin* for 1961 contains an account of Emerson's beginnings, by Alvin Duskin. We print here a condensed version of this story.]

I CAME to the Monterey Peninsula to create a college of the liberal arts. Mark Goldes was here. He was a year younger than I, twenty-eight, elusively brilliant. I had been talking about starting a college for years but had never before met a man with such a barrage of good ideas, who knew Reed, Sarah Lawrence, Bard, Bennington, Goddard. He had visited Oxford. He had heard enchanting echoes of Black Mountain. He said he was going to start a college, and it seemed to be the college that I had started a hundred times in the cafeteria at San Francisco State College. . . .

Could he do it? In his cabin in the Carmel Highlands he hatched beguiling schemes. He had caught up seven students and more were coming. Together they were going to build Walden West, a campus designed for student construction by an architecture class at the California State Polytechnic Institute. Walden West would be the home of something that did not exist but which he was incorporating under the name Emerson College.

He and the students were soon going to start clearing manzanita and digging the first foundation. With luck they would have a building up before the first quarter began on the fourth of April, 1960. Then they would lay down their hammers and saws and pick up their books until summer. Other students would come, . . .

I was doubtful, hesitant, but hopelessly attracted. I had a wife, two children, and a brown shingled house in Los Altos, a hundred miles away. After a year of half-hearted teaching at

State College, I had a solid start in the Philosophy department at Stanford and had a doctorate in sight. But Mark Goldes knew exactly what I meant when I said that I wanted, someday, to create a school where I could talk to men and women who would listen and talk back.

Mark and I began to raise money. We sent out a Bulletin telling where Walden West was going to be and how it would look. We mapped out a fund-raising campaign with a public relations firm. We talked to a man who said he might give us a hundred acres of land overlooking Point Lobos. I started doing research on educational foundations; Mark went on a picnic with a countess. But we weren't teaching and after two months it began to be clear that we were going to do everything but teach for the next five years.

And the more our days were filled with the building of Walden West the more we felt that we had lost. We stayed up nights going over the central question: How could we teach in our own school, free of the harassments of too many students, too rigid a curriculum, too cautious an administration? The answer, when it came, was quite simple. We didn't have to be fund-raisers or carpenters if we gave up the dream of Walden West. We rented a large house in Pacific Grove and called it Emerson College.

But why call it a College? It was big, Victorian, with a gabled roof and long stone steps leading up from Central Avenue. It was a run-down mansion that had been divided into apartments. We put classrooms, student lounges and an office on the first floor, students in the apartments on the second floor, and put the library in the most airy and spacious room in the house, the attic. Our students—now eleven, mostly fleeing from other schools, willing to experiment with us, discontented, intelligent—called it a college perhaps in the hope that it would become one.

We had a historian with us now, and he set up our library. We had a young, apologetic physicist, a tough-minded, devastatingly practical

psychologist. We could teach, we said, literary criticism, the philosophy of science, political philosophy, experimental psychology, communication theory, the methodology of historical research, classical anthropology, and international relations.

The community of the Monterey Peninsula was puzzled as to what the house on Central Avenue had become. If it was a college why did it have only eleven students? Why didn't it have an endowment? If it was a college why did some of the students protest against state executions and the House Un-American Activities Committee? Why did a teacher speak out in public in defense of the students?

An attempt was made to close the College. But we had friends: not the local paper but the woman who lived next door; not the most powerful men in the community but a few enlightened lawyers; not most of the people of the Monterey Peninsula but at least those who had an inclination for evidence—and the officials of the City of Pacific Grove were, fortunately, in the last group.

The College got through its first quarter with four teachers offering five courses to eleven students. My own classes, in the beginning, had all the direction and power I had hoped for. But by the ninth week of the quarter all the courses were tapering off, limping to a halt, almost collapsing. The students started missing classes, talked about moving down to Big Sur, to Oregon, New York, Mexico, Israel. What had gone wrong?

The fault, I think, was that we had cheated the students. They had come to work with their teachers laying foundations, erecting walls, nailing shingles on roofs. We were going to build Walden West together, stone by stone, live there together, die there together. It was the old dream of community and the students would not let go. The students left for the summer. Some of them wrote us letters. They would love us forever, they had learned more in one quarter at Emerson than

in two years anywhere else, they would visit us soon, they would write novels about us, they would send their children to us, they would help us, fight for us, tell the world about us. One girl came back in the fall.

I drove up to San Francisco State College a month after the fall term began. I looked into my old office in the Language Arts building. I envied the man who was sitting behind my desk. I envied him for his hundred students; I now had seven. I envied him for the enormous library he could send his students to, for the janitors who would sweep the floor of his classroom, for the administrators who would write his Bulletin, for the State of California that would put an IBM key-punched paycheck in his box every month. I wondered if he would envy me.

He might. I knew my seven students. One had been at Emerson in the spring. The other six had somehow caught the warmth and excitement of that first quarter. But they hadn't come to build a campus.

And in the first weeks of the fall term we began to see that the College made sense. In a time when steel and stone could be vaporized, it refused to burden itself with buildings. In a time of increasingly rigid bureaucratic control it was prospering without an administration. In a time when the authority of tradition and reason were in question it offered teachers instead of a reputation, men who were totally involved in what they were saying instead of a complete curriculum. The man in my chair might envy me because I had been at Emerson College when we had broken through the tangled problems of higher education and their would-be solutions. The breakthrough had been powered by a fantasy but what the school was doing now was simple and completely right.

In the middle of November our physicist deserted his class. We were sorry that he had chosen Lockheed over Emerson. But we now had a teacher of philosophy who thought that some of the ideas of the Renaissance and Enlightenment

would be of more than academic interest to our students. We had a language teacher whose students were speaking German. Another teacher was coming in the spring to talk about art. An existentialist minister wanted to read the Old Testament with students and a Hebraist would add to the discussion. An exiled revolutionary wanted to talk about Castro. We would have ten teachers in the spring who would teach seven students if need be but who hoped that our program to let students at other colleges know what was happening at Emerson would bring more students to the school.

Will Emerson College ever be an institution? I'm going to try to keep it from becoming one. If it becomes more structured I'm not sure it could continue to provide a direct and uncomplicated meeting of teachers and students. If it became an institution I'm not sure I would always say exactly what I mean. . . .

But I believe that it is a college because its work can be understood only in the context of higher learning. It was created as a reaction to existing colleges and universities and is a counter-movement to the increasing rigidity and lack of human contact of most undergraduate schools. Our minor problems seem to be over. Bills are being paid, the library is open twenty-four hours a day, the antique steamheating system is finally resurrected. We lost our cook but one of the girls took over and the meals are still good. The courses did not start with the impact of last term's but they are expanding in meaning rather than tapering off. What happens now, I think, depends mainly on who comes here.

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## *FRONTIERS* Out of the Underground

Editors, MANAS: The *Frontiers* review of *Science Ponders Religion* (MANAS, Dec. 21, 1960) confused me a little. Your deference to metaphysicians wasn't very clear. If you were saying that metaphysicians should be admired and emulated (by scientists, also) *because* they ponder "ultimate questions," fine! But if their theories should be given *special* handling and deference because they are about "ultimate questions," then I heartily disagree with you.

*Truth* (whatever that is) should be pursued by all means—the scientific method, intuition, etc., but we must then realize that all truths are hypotheses (Hans Reichenbach used another word, "posits," I think) and therefore we should demand that our hypotheses (religious or theological as well as physical or scientific) be as close to reality as possible. Methods are quite important and I agree that the metaphysician may have a laboratory, but if it is only his own mind and language (truth by definition), he can make no claims for his "truths" as being universal or generally applicable and acceptable, and he deserves no deference.

THE difficulty with questions formulated in this way is that they seem to suggest that physics and metaphysics are rival disciplines. They are not. Physics, you could say, is concerned with happenings, Metaphysics with meanings. Since happenings, for all the complexity of the physical world, are capable of fairly precise description, physics has an air of certainty about it. A physicist doesn't care very much whether you "believe" what he says or not; belief is not the currency in which he deals. If you deny his statements, he will patiently shrug and tell you to "go find out for yourself"—which is the best possible answer to those who have doubts concerning matters about which no doubt is necessary.

A physicist who wanted to be believed would be a very bad physicist or no physicist at all, since this wanting would be a negation of the foundations of his science.

Prior to the scientific revolution brought by Copernicus, Kepler, Galileo and Newton, there was little distinction between knowing and believing. Physics, or what passed for physics, was a kind of trailer hitched to the rear of the caravan of religious belief. Wherever belief went, physical explanation was obliged to follow.

By the eighteenth century, men of intelligence had no difficulty in seeing how ridiculous it was to make the study of happenings subordinate to theological doctrines of meaning. The more enthusiastic of the champions of science thought to settle this nonsense once and for all by declaring that, since all reality is "physical," all knowledge must also be physical, or what we call scientific knowledge, and that no other kind of knowledge is possible. This was a wonderful simplification of human experience, eagerly seized upon by the makers of "popular philosophy," and also by the makers of revolutions, who found it fairly easy to twist scientific discoveries into a mandate for whatever revolutionary change they had decided was called for. Obviously, it was not a careful study of "scientific facts" which made these revolutionary doctrines acceptable, but the moral emotions of mankind.

Similarly, it has not been exhaustive philosophical analysis which has changed the polarity of modern opinion in respect to the utopian promises of the scientific theory of knowledge, but again, the moral emotions of mankind. Human beings are really after meanings. They will eventually desert any account of their lives, or of nature and the world, which does not give them meanings. Physical investigation, as such, as the modern Positivists have abundantly shown, does not supply meanings. But the popular intuition discovered this and lost interest in science, except as technology, years before the Positivists offered their learned conclusions.

What must be noted, however, is that the metaphysical side of human thought, while outlawed by the explicit contentions of the scientific philosophers, nevertheless continued a

lively career underground. E. A. Burtt's *Metaphysical Foundations of Modern Physical Science* is the classical investigation of the clandestine metaphysics of modern science. It provides ample evidence for the almost poetic judgment of Alfred North Whitehead in *Adventures of Ideas*:

In each period there is a general form of the forms of thought; and, like the air we breathe, such a form is so translucent, and so pervading, and so seemingly necessary, that only by extreme effort can we become aware of it.

That "general form" of thought is constituted of unstated metaphysical assumptions.

During the first half of the twentieth century, sophisticated scientific thinkers spent most of their time extricating the "general form" of scientific philosophy from the facts of science and exposing its metaphysical character. Accordingly, we have been told that science can say nothing about "progress," nothing about good and evil, nothing about "evolution" in the upward and onward sense, and nothing about Purpose. All these notions, we have been obliged to recognize, were smuggled into the sciences by well-meaning human beings. They are of course metaphysical notions, and we cannot live without them. And if the logical analysis of the philosophy of science will no longer permit us to pretend that they have a scientific origin, we shall have to look for them elsewhere.

This is more or less the situation at the moment. It is a situation embodying considerable intellectual discomfort, since very few men trained in the sciences are prepared to grant metaphysics an autonomy of its own. After all, an autonomous discipline must have a laboratory, or at least some unequivocal rules to go by. They remember the good old days when a scientist could display a fine humanitarian ardor and evolutionary optimism without having to explain where he got the assumptions on which these sentiments were based. But now it is different. Now, if a scientist wants to imply a metaphysical proposition, he is

supposed to mark it for identification and this can be extremely embarrassing. He is likely to be condemned by his colleagues for "scientistic" excesses. His only escape is into positivistic negation—a course which, while safe enough, is frustrating to the human-being part of the scientist. Like the rest of us, he would like to be a "whole man."

There is really no occasion for a sidelines argument about whether or not the metaphysician deserves a special deference because of the important matters he is trying to investigate. This is not a sidelines issue, but one which cuts right down the center of the lives of us all. It is a question of where we are to get our feelings of meaning; or rather, since we already have them, how we shall test them for their validity and try to improve their content and develop their implications. The next twenty-five or fifty years are likely to see a great deal of attention devoted to these questions. If such investigation proceeds in the spirit of impartiality characteristic of all true science, the world of the future may be able to recover the essential truths of ancient religion, while leaving behind the junk heap of theological imposture. The question is: What shall be the criterion?