

BEYOND POLITICS

LAST WEEK, the lead article spoke of "the sheer confusion introduced to any discussion by acceptance of the familiar political vocabulary." We now have a letter from a reader which helps to focus this problem. Our correspondent writes out of a background of interest in contemporary politics in India, raising the question of Gandhi's political views:

From reading MANAS back issues since 1954, I gather that you consider Gandhiji to have been a socialist in his economic thinking. For instance, you state in *Frontiers* for April 6 1955: "The moral ideal of socialism, moreover has been sufficient to make Gandhi and Nehru largely socialist in their approach to economic problems. . . ."

While Mr. Nehru is quite definitely a "socialist" (whatever he may mean by it), I would be interested in knowing why you think Gandhiji was a socialist; as my reading has led me to the opinion that he was a free market economist, in his economic views. Gandhiji has said: "Controls give rise to fraud, suppression of truth, intensification of the black market, and to artificial scarcity. Above all, it unmans the people and deprives them of initiative; it undoes the teaching of self-help they have been learning for a generation. It makes them spoon-fed." (Quoted in *Swarajya*, May 20, 1961.)

Colin Clark, in his I.E.A. pamphlet, *Growthmanship*, refers to a conversation he had with Gandhiji, wherein the latter spoke strongly against rationing, preferring prices to rise so that the people might work harder. All this is nothing but free-market economics.

I also note that you make frequent approving references to "socialism." Would you please give me your definition of the term? Here in India, socialism (or, as our ruling party calls it, "the socialistic pattern of society") has come to mean the robbing of the entire community for the benefit of a few individuals—businessmen and corrupt functionaries of the state—via inflation, permits, licenses, contracts, and other controls. It seems that this was the pattern, too, under socialist regimes in Western Europe.

In MANAS for Jan. 25, 1961, you refer to the emergence of nations which are "more or less socialist states, yet committed to the constitutional process."

When 80 per cent of the electorate is illiterate, as in India, it is meaningless to talk of commitment to the constitutional process. The facade of the process—legislature, elections, etc. —may exist, but that is not the same as the process itself. These countries are "socialist" due to the ignorance of the electorate.

When the electorate is enlightened, and hence the constitutional process truly present, there socialism has been summarily rejected—as in Western Europe and Great Britain.

Let us look at the question of Gandhi's political and economic opinions. No one can explore Gandhi's writings without discovering that he is a most unsatisfactory source for firm views on political economy. The fact is that Gandhi cared very little for political economy, as such. He cared about man, and his regard for man turned on profound religio-philosophical convictions about human destiny. He was, you could say, a complete opportunist in relation to all lesser matters. He sought the regeneration of human beings and the laboratory in which his personal destiny placed him to work was India. Gandhi was no ideologist. It is evident that the first question that entered his mind in relation to any sort of proposal was: How will this affect the moral attitudes of men? For him, the criterion of the good life was found in Upanishadic religion and in the teachings of Buddha.

His interest in the reconstruction of the economic life of the Indian village was only incidentally concerned with economic goals. He saw that the extreme poverty of the villagers brought the degradation of human dignity. He was not after a "free market economy," but after the restoration of human dignity. The inactivity of

the villagers was one root of the evil. So he introduced spinning as a therapy for the soul. Gandhi's views of machinery and other aspects of Western civilization are not in the least puzzling or contradictory, once you recognize that what he really cared about was the spiritual welfare of mankind. His clear ideas on human destiny gave him great concentration concerning what to do about the spiritual welfare of mankind. His concentration or one-pointedness gave him power and the gift of inspiring other men.

It is not difficult to see why great teachers such as Jesus and Buddha, and men who successfully represent in their own time what these teachers stood for, are attracted by the moral relationships to property of what we now call socialism. Political socialists rely upon the legal relationships, but this was not Gandhi's interest. In the volume, *To the Students*, first published by Hingorani in 1935, are some of Gandhi's answers to questions about economics:

Q. What is your opinion about the social economics of Bolshevism, and how far do you think they are fit to be copied by our country?

A. I must confess that I have not yet been able fully to understand the meaning of Bolshevism. All that I know is, that it aims at the abolition of the institution of private property. This is only an application of the ethical ideal of non-possession in the realm of economics, and if the people adopted this ideal of their own accord, or could be made to accept it by means of peaceful persuasion, there would be nothing like it. But, from what I know of Bolshevism, it not only does not preclude the use of force, but freely sanctions it for the expropriation of private property and maintaining the collective state ownership of the same. And if that is so I have no hesitation in saying that the Bolshevik regime, in its present form, cannot last for long. For, it is my firm conviction that nothing enduring can be built on violence. But be that as it may, there is no questioning the fact that the Bolshevik ideal has behind it the purest sacrifice of countless men and women who have given up their all for its sake, and an ideal that is sanctified by the sacrifices of such master spirits as Lenin cannot go in vain: the noble example of their renunciation will be emblazoned for ever and quicken and purify the ideal as time passes.

What counts for Gandhi, here? Obviously, the detachment of the individual from possessions and the sacrifice of oneself for the benefit of others. Socialism therefore has its high dream of the good and its self-sacrificing heroes. What is the dream of the free market economy and where are its self-sacrificing champions? The question answers itself. The free-market economy is the receivership of all idealistic failures. It represents the law of self-interest and prudence. It is the regulated and rationalized law of the jungle, under which the strong prosper and the weak suffer and endure. It has its "natural" foundations in human selfishness and for this reason it works. It also gives play—or has in the past—to all the sturdy virtues of the individualist enterprise. Voluntary socialism is for transformed men who have no concern for possessions beyond their slight personal needs, and yet, we ought not to dogmatize too much, one way or the other, about what may be possible for the societies of the twentieth century. The best system is the system which suits the needs of the people, and these needs change from age to age.

One thing seems certain: the failure on the part of the wealthy few to take account of the needs of the many invariably leads to social revolution and to socialistic experiment. And then, if the socialists neglect the importance of the individual, adding only social fervor to the materialistic goals of the capitalists, all the troubles of the present socialist states come into prominence.

In the volume, *Selections from Gandhi*, under the heading, "Fundamental Beliefs and Ideas," are extracts which cover the problems and alternatives of this situation. We quote about two pages of this book:

Every human being has a right to live, and therefore to find the wherewithal to feed himself and where necessary, to clothe and house himself.

According to me, the economic constitution of India, and for the matter of that, of the world, should be such that no one under it should suffer from want of food and clothing. In other words, everybody

should be able to get sufficient work to enable him to make the two ends meet. And this ideal can be universally realized only if the means of production of the elementary necessities of life remain in the control of the masses. These should be freely available to all as God's air and water are or ought to be; they should not be made a vehicle of traffic for the exploitation of others. Their monopolization by any country, nation or group of persons would be unjust. The neglect of this simple principle is the cause of the destitution that we witness today, not only in this unhappy land but in other parts of the world too.

Violence is no monopoly of any one party. I know Congressmen who are neither socialists nor communists, but who are frankly devotees of the cult of violence. Contrariwise, I know socialists and communists who will not hurt a fly but who believe in the universal ownership of the instruments of production. I rank myself as one among them.

That economics is untrue which ignores or disregards moral values. The extension of the law of non-violence in the domain of economics means nothing less than the introduction of moral values as a factor to be considered in regulating international commerce.

True economics never militates against the highest ethical standard, just as all true ethics, to be worth its name, must at the same time be also good economics. An economics that inculcates Mammon worship, and enables the strong to amass wealth at the expense of the weak, is a false and dismal science. It spells death. True economics, on the other hand, stands for social justice, it promotes the good of all equally including the weakest, and is indispensable for decent life.

I want to bring about an equalization of status. The working classes have all these centuries been isolated and relegated to a lower status. They have been *shoodras*, and the word has been interpreted to mean an inferior status. I want to allow no differentiation between the son of a weaver, of an agriculturalist and of a schoolmaster.

To me political power is not an end but one of the means of enabling people to better their condition in every department of life. Political power means capacity to regulate national life through national representatives. If national life becomes so perfect as to become self-regulated, no representation becomes necessary. There is then a state of enlightened anarchy. In such a state everyone is his own ruler. He rules himself in such a manner that he is never a

hindrance to his neighbor. In the ideal state therefore, there is no political power because there is no State. But the ideal is never fully realized in life. Hence the classical statement of Thoreau that that government is best which governs the least.

I look upon an increase in the power of the State with the greatest fear, because, although while apparently doing good by minimizing exploitation, it does the greatest harm to mankind by destroying individuality which lies at the root of all progress.

The State represents violence in a concentrated and organized form. The individual has a soul, but as the State is a soulless machine, it can never be weaned from violence to which it owes its very existence.

It is my firm conviction that if the State suppresses capitalism by violence, it will be caught in the coils of violence itself and fail to develop non-violence at any time.

What I would personally prefer, would be, not a centralization of power in the hands of the State but an extension of the sense of trusteeship; as in my opinion, the violence of private ownership is less injurious than the violence of the State. However, if it is unavoidable, I would support a minimum of State-ownership.

What I disapprove of is an organization based on force which a State is. Voluntary organization there must be.

The first obvious conclusion you can come to about Gandhi's ideas is that he gives no comfort to any partisan of economic theory. At root, he is apolitical—an anarchist. His ideal is the self-governed sage of the second discourse of the *Bhagavad-Gita*. But like Krishna, who incarnates from age to age, for the preservation of the just and the establishment of righteousness, Gandhi entered the tumultuous arena of human affairs from love of justice and his fellow men. He wanted to lift the whole body of the people to a higher level, but he knew, invincibly and unforgettably, that ultimately they would have to lift themselves. So his campaigning moves around from immediate practical need to immediate practical need. He was willing to try any expedient which would not involve injustice or violence. At one time he shook up some of his

American pacifist and anarchist admirers considerably by proposing the *conscriptio*n of teachers to educate the Indian masses. For the Western liberal, conscription is a vicious practice. But at the time, in India, it must have seemed to him that a sharing of learning with the great masses by the comparatively few who had opportunity to go to school would be a fair distribution of their own good fortune. Politics always involves some kind of compromise, but Gandhi's compromises were always in the service of the weak, never the strong. Of politics itself, he wrote:

If I seem to take part in politics, it is only because politics encircle us today like the coil of a snake from which one cannot get out, no matter how much one tries. I wish therefore to wrestle with the snake.

My work of social reform was in no way less or subordinate to political work. The fact is, that when I saw that to a certain extent my social work would be impossible without the help of political work, I took to the latter and only to the extent that it helped the former. I must therefore confess that work of social reform or self-purification is a hundred times dearer to me than what is called purely political work.

Gandhi was the advocate, not of any particular system, but of an attitude of man toward man. Every social movement, every political program that has come into being since the eighteenth century has arisen from the groping efforts of idealists to find a formula for justice and freedom. Gandhi lived in an age when the instruments of power—naked physical power—had been brought to a climax of effectiveness and were now being turned against human beings themselves, almost indiscriminately. It was now time, therefore, to introduce a new conception of the establishment of justice and freedom—a conception which went back to the original attitude of love of man for man. This conception, Gandhi believed, was non-violence. He wanted to permeate every level of society with the spirit of non-violence, so that the reforms which were necessary would come, however gradually, through voluntary effort. The absolute failure of

violence left no other means, as he saw it. He was the opponent, not of the socialist ideal, but of violent and coercive means to reach it. He said:

Real socialism has been handed down to us by our ancestors who taught: "All land belongs to Gopal, where then is the boundary line? Man is the maker of that line and he can therefore unmake it." Gopal literally means shepherd; it also means God. In modern language it means the State, i.e., the People. That the land today does not belong to the people is too true. But the fault is not in the teaching. It is in us who have not lived up to it.

I have no doubt that we can make as good an approach to it as is possible for any nation, not excluding Russia, and that without violence. . . .

I am not ashamed to own that many capitalists are friendly towards me and do not fear me. They know that I desire to end capitalism almost, if not quite, as much as the most advanced socialist or even communist. But our methods differ, our languages differ. My theory of trusteeship is no makeshift, certainly no camouflage. I am confident that it will survive all other theories. It has the sanction of philosophy and religion behind it. That possessors of wealth have not acted up to the theory does not prove its falsity; it proves the weakness of the wealthy. No other theory is compatible with nonviolence. In the non-violent method the wrong-doer compasses his own end, if he does not undo the wrong. For either through non-violent non-co-operation he is made to see his error, or he finds himself completely isolated.

Looking at the issues in ethical terms, Gandhi saw no important difference between "trustees" who would use their wealth for the common good and a decentralized socialist order in which administrators use the common wealth for the common good. The legal arrangements, it seems plain, were for him a detail. What counted were the motives and the goal. He recoiled from the tyranny of state power. Yet he knew that the state would inevitably take over needed functions which powerful individuals refused to fulfill. He had a completely flexible attitude toward means, so long as they were non-violent. He knew that voluntarism was the key to all constructive change and so he pressed this aspect of his program above all others.

Gandhi's speech was always a statement of these principles. His life was an extraordinary attempt at the application of these principles. It is to these principles that we must refer, if we are to know what he thought, and how he would think concerning changed circumstances. We doubt, for example, that any wealthy man could in good conscience make politics out of Gandhi's theory of trusteeship, using it as personal justification for extensive private holdings of property. Mere possession is not sufficient evidence that the owner also has the wisdom, to say nothing of the willingness, to use the property for the common good. He *might* have the wisdom, but would such a man then make politics out of his capacity? If he was a true follower of Gandhi, he would be much more likely to read over to himself, daily, Gandhi's counsel:

I suggest that we are thieves in a way. If I take anything that I do not need for my own immediate use, and keep it, I thief it from somebody else. I venture to suggest that it is the fundamental law of Nature, without exception, that Nature produces enough for our wants from day-to-day, and if only everybody took enough for himself and nothing more, there would be no pauperism in this world, there would be no man dying of starvation in this world. But so long as we have got this inequality so long we are thieving. I am no Socialist and I do not want to dispossess those who have got possessions; but I do say that, personally, those of us who want to see light out of darkness have to follow this rule. I do not want to dispossess anybody. I should then be departing from the rule of Ahimsa. If somebody else possesses more than I do, let him. But so far as my own life has to be regulated, I do say that I dare not possess anything I do not want.

Manifestly, you cannot make a political or economic system out of Gandhi's views. But men can make themselves better men out of Gandhi's views, and better men would be better able to improvise the sort of political and economic arrangements which the people need—the Indian people or any people.

As for India's internal problems under the present system of government, it would be foolish for us to comment. We have no knowledge of

these things, nor competence to discuss them. We suspect, however, that one who studies Gandhi carefully would be able to put his finger on the trouble. And the trouble would not be something that either a "free market economy" or a powerful Socialist State could correct.

Letter from **MOSCOW**

Moscow.—This is my third trip to Moscow in three years, and I find Russia and the Russians, their beliefs, their manners, their social forms and the things they put up with, as fascinating and as unexpected as ever. Since my business on these trips relates to cultural exchange, a matter demanding an effort for more than ordinary mutual understanding, the relationship, while improving, is still somewhat less than perfect.

One day, in the course of a long conversation in a public place, through an interpreter, a leading Soviet literary figure said to us: "To send a man into space is easy; it is more difficult to reconstruct the Russian soul." It is a matter of infinite regret that the conversation continued along other lines and this exceptional opening was not followed up.

One evening we were invited to "An Evening of Friendship" at Friendship House, located in the fancifully designed former dwelling of a merchant prince of the old days. The House is the activity center of the Union of Soviet Societies for Friendship and Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries, an organization engaged in diverse local programs and in relationships with its thirty-five overseas arms, such for instance as the Great Britain-U.S.S.R. Friendship Society in London. (This is an entirely respectable organization, with sound British leadership. There is no American organization of analogous status, though one with a similar name exists in the U.S.)

The evening began with a meeting, complete with film and still cameras, great batteries of lights, and the inevitable "Presidium," composed in this case of those who were to bring friendly greetings from elsewhere. First speakers were respectively the Chairman of the Academy of Sciences of Afghanistan, and a number of the delegation sent by the labor unions of that nation to the May Day festivities. About twenty people spoke. Friendship, if not exactly thriving on the diet they provided, did not in fact show serious signs of decay even when the froggy-voiced Ceylonese labor leader

emphasized his concept of friendship with clenched fist and hoarse ranting. The *coup de grâce* did come, however, with the final act: the slow, brilliantly-lighted march down from the back of the room of a dignified Cuban gentleman, who proceeded to shred the gossamer tissue of friendship, thread by thread, to the frenzied applause of his audience. But this was almost predictable, and therefore merits no special attention, except to say that our particular hostess from the Union staff had the grace to be flustered and obviously a bit worried as to what might be our reaction to these events.

Since the guests were a series of groups of visitors to Moscow, each with its interpreter, there was no ready way to mix. The remainder of the evening consisted of refreshments, by groups, and documentary films of (a) Gagarin, and (b) Central Asia. We left, after three hours, the spirit of friendship long since fled, and having spoken to only two other persons: Indian labor delegation men who sought us out, obviously homesick for an English voice. Friendly, I mean.

Is this important? I think it may be; or at any rate it would be if we knew why the evening was so organized. Was this intended to be a propaganda show? Or was it the product of an over-organized society, frantically active in search of ends not known to us, but manifestly employing ill-chosen means? There may have been a little of both. But the frenetic pursuit of "friendship" by these means is in sharp contrast with the barriers to normal friendly intercourse which are so obtrusive an element to foreigners seeking normal relationships with Russians, either at home or in the U.S.S.R.

ROVING CORRESPONDENT

REVIEW

"THE INFORMED HEART"

THIS latest work of Bruno Bettelheim's is certain to be welcomed by those who were impressed by Dr. Bettelheim's *Love Is not Enough* and his *Truants from Life*. Both these works—classics of their field from the time they were written—center around the amazing work of child rehabilitation at the Sonia Shankman Orthogenic School, University of Chicago. Previously, Dr. Bettelheim had come to sudden prominence, following World War II, through publication of his long paper, "Individual and Mass Behavior in Extreme Situations" in the *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology* in 1943. Now, the relationship between rehabilitation in damaged child personalities and this earlier work by Dr. Bettelheim is made clear in *The Informed Heart*.

There is no doubt that the immediate attention received by "Behavior in Extreme Situations" derived in large part from the fact that Bettelheim had himself survived two terms in two German concentration camps—Buchenwald and Dachau. Here was a trained psychologist-sociologist, daily facing the prospect of death, a witness to murder, suicide and insanity, who not only managed to preserve his own sanity, but also to explain a great deal about human beings in terms of the distortions of personality which were bound to be caused by the pressures of the camps. And, as was the case with Dr. Viktor Frankl, another psychologist who escaped death in the Nazi camps, Dr. Bettelheim discovered that there were certain factors in human personality which were incomprehensible from an orthodox psychoanalytic standpoint. Some men disintegrated under constant threat, even though upon first introduction to the camp they appeared to be the most "integrated." Others discovered hidden resources of selfhood. Why? And why, in the haven of an ideal environment for already disturbed children at the Shankman School, did some children deteriorate still further, even with

the best help that the psychoanalytic method had to offer?

These puzzles not only concerned Dr. Bettelheim, but fairly obsessed him. And to understand the relationship of his conclusions to the field of philosophy and religion, as well as that of psychology, necessitates a reading of this latest work—which carries the suggestive subtitle, *Autonomy in a Mass Age*.

Since so little of the provocative material in this book can be noticed in a brief review, we shall focus for the moment upon some highly significant correlations between Bettelheim's reflections on the death camps and the present work of Jerome D. Frank. Dr. Frank, also a psychiatrist, argues that when groups of men possessed of armed might attempt to *reason* about offense or defense, they become neurotic or psychotic. Dr. Bettelheim illustrates how the same destructive processes operate in the camps:

Both Jews and SS behaved as if psychological mechanisms comparable to paranoid delusions were at work in them. Both believed that members of the other group were sadistic, uninhibited, unintelligent, of an inferior race, and addicted to sexual perversions. Both groups accused each other of caring only for material goods and of having no respect for ideals or for moral and intellectual values. In each group there may have been individual justification for some of these beliefs. But the strange similarity indicates that both groups were availing themselves of analogous mechanisms of defense.

Prisoners seemed to derive some security and emotional relief from their preconceived, more or less elaborate, fixed plans. But these plans were based on the assumption that one SS reacted like another. Any attitude throwing their stereotyped picture of the SS into question aroused fears that their plans might not succeed. Without plans they would have had to face a dangerous situation without armor, with only miserable anxiety about the unknown. They were neither willing nor able to suffer such anxiety, so they assured themselves they could predict the SS man's reaction and hence plan accordingly. My insistence on approaching the SS as an individual threatened their delusional security, and their violent anger against me becomes understandable as the reaction to the threat.

Those who are guilty of what Dwight Macdonald used to call "political animism," then, found the one sure way to continually multiply their own fears—and eventually, their own risks. Dr. Bettelheim continues:

By projecting into the SS everything they considered evil, the SS became still more powerful and threatening. But the process of projection kept them from using to advantage any chance of viewing the SS man as a real person; it forced them to see him only as an *alter ego* of pure evil.

Therefore the SS was always more cruel, bloodthirsty, and dangerous than any one person can possibly be. Many of them were quite dangerous, some were cruel, but only a small minority were actually perverted, stupid, bloodthirsty, or homicidal. True, they were willing to kill and injure when so ordered, or when they thought their superiors expected it of them. But the fictitious SS was always, and under all circumstances, a bloodthirsty killer.

There resulted from this attitude a fear of the SS which on many occasions was actually unjustified and unnecessary. Most prisoners avoided contact with them at any price and, by doing so, often ran greater risks.

In selecting for notice matters of particular importance today, the following cannot be overlooked. Dr. Bettelheim is here discussing the world's reaction to the concentration camps when their nature became fully evident after liberation:

At first, after the "discovery" of the camps, a wave of extreme outrage swept the Allied nations. It was soon followed by a general repression of the discovery. It may be that this reaction of the general public was due to something more than the shock dealt their narcissism by the fact that cruelty is still rampant among men. It may also be that memory of the tortures was repressed out of some dim realization that the modern state now has available the means for changing personality. To have to accept that one's personality may be changed against one's will is the greatest threat to one's self respect. It must therefore be dealt with by action, or by repression.

A final word of warning by indirection is supplied in a chapter titled "The Fluctuating Price of Life." Dr. Bettelheim discusses one SS physician at Auschwitz who, on one occasion, "took all correct medical precautions during

childbirth, rigorously observing all aseptic principles, cutting umbilical cord with greatest care, etc. But only half an hour later he sent mother and infant to be burned in the crematorium." How could he do this? Because he thought of himself as a specialist, and identified only with the use of skills which had once been a legitimate means of acquiring reputation and standing. Dr. Bettelheim continues, and for once we will allow ourselves to end on this gruesome note, since the warning afforded seems to need repetition:

One personal document on the subject has come to my attention, that of Dr. Nyiszli, a prisoner serving as "research physician" at Auschwitz. How Dr. Nyiszli fooled himself can be seen, for example, in his repeatedly referring to himself as a doctor, though he worked as the assistant of a criminal. He speaks of the Institute for Race, Biological, and Anthropological Investigation as "one of the most qualified medical centers of the Third Reich" though it was devoted to proving falsehoods. That Nyiszli was a doctor didn't at all change the fact that he, like any of the prisoner officials who served the SS better than some SS were willing to serve it, was a participant, an accessory to the crimes of the SS. How then could he do it and survive?

The answer was: by taking pride in his professional skills, irrespective of what purpose they were used for. Again and again this pride in his professional skill permeates his story of his own and other prisoners' sufferings. The important issue here is that Dr. Nyiszli, Dr. Mengele, and hundreds of other far more prominent physicians, men trained long before the advent of Hitler to power, were participants in these human experiments and in the pseudo-scientific investigations that went with them. It is this pride in professional skill and knowledge, irrespective of moral implications, that is so dangerous. As a feature of modern society oriented toward technological competence it is still with us, though the concentration camps and the crematoria are no longer here. Auschwitz is gone, but as long as this attitude remains with us we shall not be safe from the indifference to life at its core.

COMMENTARY

TRUSTEESHIP

To complete the outline of Gandhi's economic views in relation to socialism, something should be said concerning his doctrine of Trusteeship. The closing section of a pamphlet with this title, issued last year by the Navajivan Publishing House (Ahmedabad 14, India), is devoted to Gandhi's "Practical Trusteeship Formula." It was drawn up by three of Gandhi's associates in 1942, shortly after they (with Gandhi) had completed a prison term at Poona. The final draft, which was approved by Gandhi, is as follows:

1. Trusteeship provides a means of transforming the present capitalist order of society into an egalitarian one. It gives no quarter to capitalism, but gives the present owning class a chance of reforming itself. It is based on the faith that human nature is never beyond redemption.

2. It does not recognize any right of private ownership of property except so far as it may be permitted by society for its own welfare.

3. It does not exclude legislative regulation of ownership and use of wealth.

4. Thus, under State-regulated trusteeship, an individual will not be free to hold or use his wealth for selfish satisfaction or in disregard of the interests of society.

5. Just as it is proposed to fix a decent minimum living wage, even so a limit should be fixed for the maximum income that would be allowed to any person in society. The difference between such minimum and maximum incomes should be reasonable and equitable and variable from time to time, so much so that the tendency would be towards obliteration of the difference.

6. Under the Gandhian economic order the character of production will be determined by social necessity, and not by personal whim or greed.

This brief statement does not, of course, answer "objections." What must be recognized is that Trusteeship is a revolutionary conception involving the use of non-violence and moral discipline and growth. To the argument of the

Socialists that non-violence does not enable the people to "seize power," Gandhi replied:

"In a way they are right. By its very nature, non-violence cannot 'seize' power, nor can that be its goal. *But non-violence can do more; it can effectively control and guide power* without capturing the machinery of government. That is its beauty."

Gandhi's close associate, Pyarelal, comments on the above:

It reminded me of what Gandhiji had once told Mirabehn: "Non-violence does not seize power. It does not even seek power; power accrues to it."

Continuing his argument, Gandhiji said: "Moreover, I do not agree that government cannot be carried on except by the use of violence."

This pamphlet, *Trusteeship*, should be read as a whole for a more comprehensive picture of Gandhi's conceptions. It may be obtained from the Navajivan Publishing House. Fifty cents should cover the price and the cost of mailing, but send a dollar more to receive it airmail.

CHILDREN

. . . and Ourselves

PRIMITIVE MORALITIES—AND NONE

PAUL GOODMAN in *Growing Up Absurd* lights up an apprehension dimly felt by a number of American parents: there is very little in the tightly organized and closely managed social structure of our age to offer a challenge for adolescents. The attainment of a fairly comfortable livelihood, for example, is nothing that needs to be striven for, since it is already available, and the goals which transcend security are shadowy indeed. One neighborhood we know of (our own) furnishes a good case in point for nearly all the children who live there. This is a "privileged community" from the standpoint of income level and pleasant public school and other environments. None of the children *have* to strive for anything, and so far as we can see, none of them do.

The pattern of sophistication appears early under such conditions, but no genuine self-confidence develops, since there are few challenges presented; and, if any word characterizes the psychic atmosphere which most of these adolescents share, that word is "aimlessness." In contrast to this, Mr. Goodman shows how it happens that among the dispossessed young people of the tenement districts, the kids of the gangs, there is at least a better chance for the awakening of the spirit of loyalty, occasional self-sacrifice, and an *active* sense of participation in rebellion. And Mr. Goodman is not the only one to come forward with such observations. In an article in the *Christian Century* for May 10, William Stringfellow writes about his endeavor to provide legal aid for the ignorant and dispossessed of Harlem. Of the morality of the gangs, he has this to say:

Consider, for one example, the morality of gang society, among east Harlem's adolescents. There are, I know very well many, many other things to be said about gang life: I will leave it to Mayor Wagner to do

that. The only thing that I will say is that gang society nurtures a morality which induces its members actually to risk their lives for each other, and for their society, and for causes which outsiders would think unworthy—like jurisdiction over a street that is filled with garbage or over a girl who probably is not a virgin. They risk their lives for evidently unworthy purposes. That is practically the opposite of the morality of the rest of American society, in which few would think of actually giving up their own life for another, much less for that which seems unworthy. But these kids somehow apprehend a different way: they have the freedom to offer their lives for another in spite of the undeservingness of the one for whom the offer is made. That is strangely reminiscent of the gospel, in which One offers his life for all, even though none are worthy of his life.

We are reminded here of a short passage from *Endurance*, Alfred Lansing's saga of the privations suffered by Sir Ernest Shackleton's expedition into the Antarctic. After months of comparative comfort aboard their ice-bound ship, that haven was finally crushed by ice floes. Deposited on sea ice in below-zero weather, the twenty-seven members of Shackleton's expedition actually became more cheerful. At last, they had *something to do*. In Lansing's words:

. . . there was a remarkable absence of discouragement. All the men were in a state of dazed fatigue, and nobody paused to reflect on the terrible consequences of losing their ship. Nor were they upset by the fact that they were now cramped on a piece of ice perhaps 6 feet thick. . . . There was even a trace of mild exhilaration in their attitude. At least, they had a clear-cut task ahead of them. The nine months of indecision, of speculation about what might happen, of aimless drifting with the pack were over. Now they simply had to get themselves out, however appallingly difficult that might be.

It would be a gross misinterpretation to suggest that either Mr. Goodman or Mr. Stringfellow feel that gangland young people are both happy and collectively the salt of the earth. The apathy of the under-privileged often becomes an apathy which can lead to destruction, as the following paragraphs from Mr. Stringfellow's account also make clear:

There is a boy in the neighborhood, for instance, who is addicted to narcotics and whom I have defended in some of his troubles with the law. He stops in often on Saturday mornings and shaves and washes up, after having spent most of the week on the streets. He has been addicted for a long time. His father threw him out about three years ago, when he first was arrested. He has contrived so many stories to induce clergy and social workers to give him money to support his habit that he is no longer believed when he asks for help. His addiction is heavy enough and has been prolonged enough so that he begins to show symptoms of other trouble—his health is broken by years of undernourishment and insufficient sleep. He is dirty, ignorant, arrogant, dishonest, unemployable broken, unreliable, ugly, rejected, alone. And he knows it. He knows at last that he has nothing to commend himself to another human being. He has nothing to offer. There is nothing about him which permits the love of another person for him. He is unlovable.

Mr. Stringfellow then goes on to remark: "It is exactly in his own confession that he does not deserve the love of another that he represents all the rest of us. For none of us is different from him in this regard. We are *all* unlovable."

Well, we should hate to put it in quite this way, even though we know what Mr. Stringfellow means. Fortunately, there are at least as many "lovable" persons as "unlovable." But we are here concerned with pointing out that among the privileged adolescents there is often a common complaint. *They* feel themselves to be unlovable because they have not managed to accomplish anything which earns respect. When they are not able to earn respect—and, in their own terms of psychological reaction, love—they are forced to settle for whatever passes the time. They may not turn to narcotics, and in our neighborhood probably only one in three generations will, but they are certainly ripe for accepting inadequate substitutes for love which means that they are in a dangerous psychological situation.

We seldom work up enthusiasm for any of the big-name, big-time "solutions" for problems which are basically psychological. But Mr. Kennedy's Peace Corps, we think, should be praised and

supported. It is, at very least, a focus for challenging activity. Doubtless many of the young people involved will become discouraged or disillusioned in the midst of their efforts, for this is the way of most "good works" in the world. But they will also have acquired some measure of understanding that the problems of the world, unlike the problems of our over-privileged communities, are real.

FRONTIERS

Reducing Death's Sting

So long as human beings are haunted by insecurities and made afraid by questions they cannot answer, they will devise impressive institutions to stand between themselves and the unknown and establish conventions which relate the great majority of people to the protective institutions. At root, therefore, the problem of the free society is the problem of creating a social atmosphere of fearlessness. The familiar way of trying to solve this problem is by some form of political action.

There are fears, however, which politics cannot touch. A person's attitude toward death has little or nothing to do with his politics. The view one holds of death comes from his personal philosophy and is very largely the result of the thinking he has done about the meaning of life. If he has accepted his ideas about the meaning of life in the form of the prevailing cultural stereotypes, he will be a loyal observer of the conventions which absorb some of the impact of the experience of death.

This brings us to the subject of funerals. In this decade, a total of somewhere between a million and a half and two million people die every year in the United States. An article in the San Francisco *News-Call Bulletin* reports that the average cost of a funeral, plus burial or cremation, is about \$1,000 so that, as the deaths increase along with the population, the annual bill for death in America will soon reach two billion dollars.

It may seem inappropriate to discuss the mystery of death in terms of its cost to the living, but the American sense of disproportion is so closely geared to dollars and cents that it is here, at the level of costs, that public criticism begins. The mortuary does perform certain necessary physical services, but fundamentally the mortuary is in the symbol business. It purveys evidence of "respect for the dead." The more money spent for a funeral and for interment, the more "respect."

This is a logical consequence of the standards of an acquisitive society, and there is no reason to hold up the morticians to particular scorn for their submission to this scale of values. The signs of status during life are for sale; likewise the signs of status in death.

"I could use a truck, if the people wanted it," a funeral director told the *News-Call Bulletin* reporter, "and a plain pine box without any lining, . . . but people don't want that." "That is what they want," he said, pointing to a hearse coming in the driveway. The long, gleaming vehicle was returning to the funeral home after a burial which had cost the survivors of the deceased a total of \$13,000.

But there are people—a lot of them—who prefer another kind of mortuary service, and are determined to get it. These people don't equate respect for the dead with the amount of money they spend on funerals. They think respect is an attitude of mind. In recent years there has been a rapid growth in cooperative memorial associations in the United States. The members of these groups remove the responsibility for respect for the dead from the hands of commercial institutions and arrange for funerals according to their own taste and sense of fitness. There are five such associations in the State of California, and fifty or more throughout the United States. The cost of funerals arranged through these groups usually amounts to something over \$100 and almost never exceeds \$200, despite widely varying tastes and types of service. Cremation is a common preference among the members of the funeral societies.

Sparked, perhaps, by the San Francisco *News-Call Bulletin* series of articles, which appeared in January of this year, a cycle of constructive publicity has begun in behalf of the memorial societies. Last March the *Progressive* printed an informative discussion, "The High Cost of Dying," by Ruth Mulvey Harmer, in which the major facts and figures of funerals in the United States are reported and the origins of some of the

most rapidly growing memorial groups are described. Often, the co-op type of organization is established, with people experienced in co-op work taking the lead. According to the *Progressive* story, the oldest and most successful of the memorial societies is the People's Memorial Association of Seattle, Washington, which was begun by a Church of the People minister and several members of his congregation. These pioneers were soon joined by people from a neighboring Unitarian Church and the group now has a membership of more than three thousand families in Seattle and in seventy-eight nearby communities.

The Bay Area Funeral Society, with headquarters at 1414 University Ave., Berkeley 2, is another fast-growing association of people who want to arrange their own funerals at what seems to them a reasonable cost. This group grew out of the Berkeley Consumer Cooperative Society, which appointed a funeral research committee in 1954. Today the Bay Area Society has two thousand members, and more are joining at the rate of several families a week. This group advertises in the San Francisco *Chronicle* as a public service to those who are unaware of the opportunity to have low-cost funerals suited to simple taste. A Los Angeles group, the Southern California Memorial Association, has an office at 831 North Harvard Boulevard.

As a rule, participation in the services of a memorial association costs only a small enrollment charge. At present a federation of California memorial associations is in process of being formed, in order to exchange information and to enlarge the scope of the services rendered. Most of the local groups have available a list of memorial associations in the United States and Canada, and are glad to supply this information to inquirers. The dramatic story of the efforts of San Francisco and Berkeley people to maintain the service of low-cost funerals, and to publicize the shocking difference in cost between a conventional funeral at a mortuary or funeral

home, and a funeral arranged for through a memorial association, is told in the *Saturday Evening Post* for June 17 ("*Can You Afford to Die?*" by Roul Tunley). Morticians cooperating with memorial associations are sometimes expelled from state funeral directors' associations, but with the sudden rise of interest in memorial associations, these morticians find themselves used by more and more people who are determined to make up their own minds about the kind of a funeral they want and what it should cost.