

THE PSYCHOLOGICAL REVOLUTION

IF you want to try to "think big" concerning the general human situation of the present, there are certain propositions about the current condition of man that seem worth considering. We should warn the reader that what follows is based on a rather vague metaphysic of progress, with the excuse that very nearly anything worth saying about human beings, individually or all together, involves some idea or hope of human progress, which means that there is an implicit or explicit metaphysic involved. We propose the minor virtue of giving our metaphysic a brief identification. The ground, then, of the following considerations is that human progress is progress in self-awareness, although the self-awareness thus postulated also includes an awareness of the external circumstances of human experience, on the theory that any "self," to be understood, or at any rate talked about, must be conceived not as a sedentary unit but as a dynamic center of action operating within a field, this field being a not negligible part of the self.

To come to the point quickly, we think the present human situation is best summed up by saying that the people of this age are in the throes of a psychological revolution, and that this revolution has two major phases which we shall call Phase I and Phase II.

Phase I of the psychological revolution is probably best identified by reference to the complex of ideas about man suggested by the word "psychotherapy." A century hence, we may have a more profound understanding of the elements and causes of the psychological revolution, and be in position to give Phase I more comprehensive definition. Today, that sort of precision is hardly possible. You could speculate and say that the findings of the psychotherapists have been mainly concerned with the listing of symptoms which arise from erroneous ideas of the

self; that these doctors of the mind are like traffic cops who refuse to tell you which way you *ought* to go, but are fairly efficient in putting up no-exit signs along paths leading to self-destruction.

In other words, Phase I of the psychological revolution has been conscientiously empirical. Its protagonists have learned from clinical experience that to tell a man the way he ought to go *does not work*. So they don't tell him. And if you ask a psychologist of this sort what *he* believes, hoping to get in on his private secret, he will probably tell you that he has been too busy working with sick people to stop long enough to figure it out. He is wrapped up in the dynamics of his work and gets so much fulfillment out of it that he keeps putting off the metaphysical rationalizations people are curious about. He knows, too, that metaphysical rationalizations are very easily transformed into religious or religious-like formulas, and these, in turn, have a tendency to become causes of the very ills he is trying to cure. There is small wonder that psychologists with a metaphysical itch they find hard to control are drawn to investigate Zen Buddhism, for here is ready-made diagnosis, at least a thousand years old, for the ills of too much metaphysical rationalizing.

What Phase I of the psychological revolution means, in practical terms, is that many people have come, or are now coming, to the realization that the factor of inner psychological balance is the most important single factor in their lives. It is slowly being recognized that this sort of personal equilibrium cannot be bought, that it cannot be sold, and that it cannot be gained without some kind of strenuous effort. These discoveries—which might be termed preliminary findings concerning the mystery of selfhood—are of course accompanied by all sorts of froth and small-talk, and major and minor excursions into box canyons of egotistical mannerism. Any great

wave of human development would have to be marked by such phenomena, especially when it is concerned with an awakening of self-consciousness, which has its own sort of awkward age, silly season, and exasperating growing pains.

It is possible to say now, however, that a kind of plateau of maturity in personal development has already been reached, in that a kind of *rationale* of the quest for self-consciousness has been arrived at. When literary psychologists like the Overstreets can pack so much of the common sense of maturity into popular books, we can at least claim to know something of what we are about. A useful summary of what might be taken as the contemporary stage of self-knowledge, culturally speaking, is found in a recent paper by Ira Progoff, a New York psychoanalyst. Writing on "Psychology as a Road to a Personal Philosophy," Dr. Progoff says:

. . . let me . . . emphasize that while the great need is for experience of meaning in life, it is not at all a question of intellectual philosophy. It is not something for the mind to settle rationally and consciously. It reaches much deeper than that, to the depths of the human being where the meaning of life is not an idea but a fact of profound experience. Here what is involved is not something clear and rational, not something irrational either—but something more than rational, something transcending the ordinary definitions of human perception and opening a feeling of connection to another dimension of awareness and to another dimension of existence.

This, I have felt, is what Adler had in the back of his mind when he spoke of social feeling (*Gemeinschaftsgefuehl*, also translated as social interest). He meant it not only as the relationship between people in society, but much more profoundly as the subtle psychological linkage that connects man to the cosmos, that provides in the deepest recesses of human nature a connection to life, a feeling of relationship to the universality and ongoingness of all things. Here ultimate meaning is experienced, but it is not a matter for rational decision. It does no good to be in favor of it. The experience of connection to life is rather something that happens to one. It is a fact of existence—not merely an idea, not merely a belief or a philosophy.

When a thoughtful man like Dr. Progoff gets going in this vein, the natural reaction of many sympathetic readers is one of eager response a kind of, well, *go on!* feeling. But he doesn't go on, mainly, you could say, because he has at this point about used up the cultural capital for this kind of thinking. This is about as far as we can go, these days, in affirmative language, unless one resorts to the special vocabulary of some wisdom tradition. We are speaking, not of the possible abstract or "esoteric" truth of such matters, but the communicable truth in our time.

Comprehension of inner experience to the point of being able to conceptualize it without vague emotionalism is not now very extended. Usually, when the subjective is defined, it is materialized, which is far worse than remaining mystical, or merely poetic. In fact, it is better to be skeptically agnostic than it is to gush too freely about the inner life. The religions of the future, if they are to be any good at all, will owe a great deal of their strength to William James' tough-minded characters who insist upon empirical, or at least experiential, verification of accounts of significant psychological experience. Dr. Progoff has some commonsense counsel along these lines:

. . . repeatedly in the past few years I have had persons come to me and say that they feel they would function better psychologically if they knew the meaning of life, and they ask will I tell them? But I do not tell them, for the first step in their growth is for them to understand the profound reason why the meaning of life is not something that can be told to them intellectually and accepted rationally. It is valid and healing for them only when it comes to them out of the depths of their being with the full impact of an authentic expression that has come in the course of time and out of the fullness of what their whole personal being contains.

Access to this sense of "meaning," called by Freud the "oceanic feeling," is the problem, Dr. Progoff believes, of modern psychology. He continues:

This is the ultimate psychological problem of our time and it must be faced directly if modern psychology is to fulfill its historical reason for being.

This is precisely where we find the special calling of depth psychology. Here we have the unique role that depth psychology, in its larger generic sense which includes Individual Psychology, has the possibility of playing in the life of modern man. For depth psychology is not philosophy. Its role is to give access to a profound and vital meaning of life, but it is not a philosophy. The special calling of depth psychology is that it provides an operational methodology, a body of concepts that are inherently techniques for opening the way by psychological principles to the depths of oneself and to the depths of human existence. The special contribution of psychology for modern man is that it provides him with special operational methods for gaining access to the elemental dimension of reality, the dimension of spiritual reality that is within him. And the reason for which this role is so overridingly important in history seems to me to be precisely in the terms that Adler understood: that only a basic psychological transformation in the underlying quality of modern personality can avoid the historical debacle that seems now to be impending for our civilization.

This brings us to Phase II of the psychological revolution, which is rather aptly outlined by Dr. Proffoff. What we shall need, perhaps, for this second phase, is a better grasp of the meaning of words like "spiritual," which at present stick in the intellectual throat, even if they are intuitively acceptable.

The agony of the twentieth century is the pain of a double miscarriage—the miscarriage of freedom and the miscarriage of social ethics—exacerbated by the conflict between the two great societies in which the failures have blossomed forth. Who can doubt, reading the documents of the birth of the American nation, that a mood of spiritual greatness attended the affairs of man in that hour? And who can review the course of this inspiration, across very nearly two hundred years, without recognizing that the nation has fallen into the hands of the epigoni, who are ourselves? What a revolting mistranslation of the original manifestoes of freedom—the statements, among others, of Thomas Paine and Thomas Jefferson—to say that they are only a licence to the unleashed acquisitive spirit! Surely there is some dreadful failure here, some degradation of ends, some

burning out of the original fire. And then, breaking out in the middle years of the nineteenth century, came another great inspiration, crying out for the liberation of European man, for the solidarity of men and women everywhere. It was intended to be a climax of the high dreams of the Renaissance, a fulfillment of the Humanist spirit and the herald of a social order that would prove in practice the solidarity of mankind. But what came, instead, was a mechanical, enforced levelling and an unparalleled ruthlessness in *organizing* the human spirit, until its voice could be heard only in the thin cries of the victims of concentration camps. It ended with a brotherhood of bodies, not souls, and a system of *things* which now threatens all the world with its Brobdingnagian tyranny. And yet it began with a hunger and a love of man for man—albeit a bitter, famished hunger, with the changeling love becoming an angry passion, filled with the language of revenge.

And now what have we, for our *social* principle of order, as we look upon the ghastly present, with its incredible plans for destruction and its cold-blooded logic of "preemptive" war, its statistical calculation of casualties of more than half the living of the earth, and its complacent reliance upon the One True System of Government, and the One Religion of God? *Loyalty to the State* is the best that we can do. *Survival* by supporting our side is what we cleave to, so that we may wreak a guilty death upon our wicked enemy, unless, like suddenly reformed Judases, they turn into people the same as, not ourselves, but what we imagine ourselves to be.

It is this hardening system of ideas and feelings that Phase II of the psychological revolution must cope with—just how, remains to be seen. But what after all, is the secret of psychological discovery? What have these therapists learned, beyond all doubt, which enables them to be of use to the torn and mutilated psyches of our time? They know, each according to his light, how to put themselves in

the place of another—to think and feel as others feel; to *identify*, but without losing their own perspective and private identity. That is what they know how to do, and that is why they are able to speak to other men in accents of understanding.

We need now, therefore, exercises in *social* identification with other peoples, other societies, other men. How else are we to learn the meanings behind the obvious good and evil of our time? A short article on the Eichmann trial, by Edmond Beanjon, which appeared in the *Journal de Genève* for April 14 (put into English by MANAS' Roving Correspondent), gives a line on one way to begin:

Is [this] the trial only of a man and a political regime, the Nazi regime, or is it as well the trial of the modern soul in its most dangerous aspect: the fragmentation, abstraction, schizophrenia peculiar to the human being whom we call *normal*, but who lacks a personal center? In other words: Is Eichmann just a very ordinary man to whom circumstances gave the opportunity of carrying to the extreme a psychic fragmentation which can be spotted in a great number of civilized beings, but which usually remains under control?

For the Israeli, Eichmann is certainly not an ordinary man. They use one word for the fifteen counts of indictment for which he has to answer: *The Disaster*, which sums up all the horrors inflicted upon the Jewish people by the Nazis, . . .

The question is whether the man of the Disaster is not just a man lacking good qualities, and whether there is not a degree of insignificance incompatible with the human condition. The style of the great scoundrels of history or legend is quite different from Eichmann's style: Nero and the Atridae—not to mention Nebuchadnezzar—are in no way bureaucrats. The bureaucrat specialized in murder is peculiar to our civilization. No doubt a chief was needed with views broad enough in extermination: Hitler was this chief. But would he have been served so well if he had not been able to rely upon very ordinary men, on orderly and methodical citizens, devoted to their family and their work?

It must be remembered: What gave Eichmann away and made him known after fifteen years of incognito was the bunch of flowers he bought after leaving his office to take home to his wife on the

anniversary of their wedding. . . . To this must be added the important testimonial of one of Eichmann's subordinates, Dieter Wisliceny, who was hanged in 1946 in Bratislava: "He (Eichmann) was a typical civil servant, meticulous, most orderly and always anxious to be backed by his superiors."

This, after all, is an excellent certificate which compels us to admit that Eichmann has the virtues which our society usually extolls: love of work, punctuality, obedience, efficiency. To this, add the love of family life and you have a set of average virtues which need neither outstanding character nor intelligence to manifest themselves; but this shortcoming does not entail any mortal risk as long as the man does not have extensive power at his command. It is the authority given to a man which best reveals his failures. And the main shortcoming here is the lack of personal existence and the partitioning of a mind which has no center of reference.

Why do the virtues of this thorough civil servant lead him to crime? Because they are *confined* virtues, lacking the possibility of entering a wider field of vision which would broaden them and make them communicate with all things.

Within the same individual, the father of a family lives side by side without difficulty with the exterminator of families, since extermination comes under office work. To calculate results, to foresee them, such are the bases of modern bureaucracy. And Eichmann was an excellent accountant: the fact that he was keeping accounts of murders is of no importance since he was in *reality* not taking into consideration the matter he was dealing with, *i.e.*, human life. One can only be a good accountant in the abstract. Max Weber writes: "The specific nature of bureaucracy develops all the more perfectly as bureaucracy becomes dehumanized, succeeds in eliminating love and hatred completely from the official action, and all that is purely personal, irrational and emotional escapes accounting."

The bureaucrat therefore is a *heteronomous* being par excellence; he has been deprived of autonomy since his childhood, and submission to the group is the criterion of moral value. (The importance of groups in the Nazi Regime is well known.) As to deference to figures, this is easier to inculcate in a child than a religious dogma, and arithmetic pervades the child's mind several hours per week in every country. One must not forget that the final solution to the Jewish problem is a matter of figures and accounting.

To rationalize, to depersonalize, to calculate: these are three operations which it seems cannot be avoided by someone who plans production. But they entail a mortal risk of which the Nazi chiefs have given us full proof. Shall we be able to understand?

This is the new intelligence which haunts the world. It is, in fresh words, what Albert Camus said when he pointed out that we live in an age when crime has become *legitimate*; when a Parisian can walk by the building in which twelve years before the Nazis tortured Frenchmen, and now hear the screams of Algerians tortured by Frenchmen. It is essentially what Bruno Bettelheim is saying in *The Informed Heart* when he remarks: "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 technical competence it is still with us. . . . 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." It is what Theodore Roszak is saying (in the *Nation*) when he describes an employment ad by the prime contractor for the Titan missile, which pictures a relaxed "research scientist," lounging at his desk, pipe in hand, saying he has "Freedom—Freedom to do work I like"—while another appeal speaks of the "campus-like setting" and the "university atmosphere."

These are the raw materials, the reactionary "enemy" to be overcome by Phase II of the psychological revolution. The enemy is not men, but ideas—dehumanized ideas, ideas which make horrors plausible and wars conventional, which substitute abstractions for human beings, and calculations for the admonitions of the heart.

It seems a strong likelihood that we shall not be able to find a proper vocabulary to complete Phase I of the psychological revolution until we have won at least a few victories in Phase II. What can we know of "spiritual things," when our hopes and fears for self must move about within the narrow margins left to us by the dominant bureaucracy?

REVIEW

"A LONG UNCERTAIN KNIFE"

ONE thing that can be said about the present is that it is a time of the decline of old certainties. When you hear people talk about the weaknesses of modern education and the confusion of leaders in education, and think about these problems, you realize that they are not so much the fault of the teachers as of the times. The teachers don't really know what to teach. And the people who *claim* to know what to teach are least of all equipped to do it.

Of course, you can fall back on the formula that the business of teachers is to help students to learn *how* to think, not what to think, but this, like any other formula, becomes a flabby program unless it is put to work with a sense of high purpose. The talk about learning how to think is in the same class with talk about civil liberties. *Of course* it is important to know or try to know how to think. *Of course* it is important to preserve the freedoms of thought and speech and press. But unless people care enough about the ends of thought, and unless they have important objectives which require the full measure of freedom to be pursued, the formulas remain formulas, and even the best of men are unable to make them into something more.

If you went to school in the twenties or thirties, you experienced something that is more difficult to experience, today. In those days it was still possible for intelligent men to believe in the upward-and-onward-with-science philosophy of progress. In the nineteenth century, this forward movement was begun by a body of strongly humanitarian spirits—men like T. H. Huxley—who were called by Bertrand Russell the "Earnest Atheists." In the 1930's, you could say, the work of these pioneers was continued by the Eager Pragmatists. You never met such decent, honest men. They knew Dewey's *Human Nature and Conduct* by heart. Robert Lynd's *Knowledge for What?* has an ardor typical of their feelings.

Harold Rugg made social applications of the spirit. The New Horizons gave promise of finding out *all* about human society and understanding, some day, the dynamics of mass behavior.

The biologists were busy documenting the Mechanist case and being patient with the Vitalists, who were regarded as amiable but backward souls infected with theological measles. The social thinkers in education were reading the *Social Frontier* and wondering how they would be able to raise the level of general intelligence to a point where all the new principles of scientific sociology could be put into effect; of course, it wasn't so much that they *knew*, as that they knew how to go about trying to find out. The spirit of open-minded inquiry was what they understood, and they felt so strongly about it that they communicated it to others.

So, if you went to school in those days, you were likely to contract your share of idealism and sense of social responsibility. These men knew what they wanted, you felt, and you wanted to join them and be a part of the great march of human progress.

It is different, now. People are not sure any more. The physicists, as Robert Oppenheimer has said, have discovered sin. The argument about evolution, the case for Mechanism and Behaviorism, the formulas of the statistical sociologists—you don't hear about these things any more. The world has been shaken by so many terrible events—the long emotional strain of the second world war, the horror of the death camps, the shock of the atomic destruction of Hiroshima, the frightening power of first Russian and then Chinese Communism, the alienation of the young, the rise of addiction, the stress of mental illness, the curtain coming down on the old ideas of security, "normalcy," and on any sort of progress ordinary people can understand—that the only people left with enthusiasm for what they believe are sectarians of one sort or another. This is the age of the disenchanting stoics, the Existentialists,

and of the neurotic children's crusade of the Beatniks.

The serious indoctrinators of a generation ago are all gone. We may not miss their indoctrination, but we miss their ardor. You can't get *anywhere* without ardor. So most people are standing still, these days; standing still, and worrying. There's plenty to worry about.

Fortunately or unfortunately, when the official philosophers of an age go into decline, the unofficial philosophers step in to fill the void. It is fortunate, for example, that the novelists are prominent among the unofficial philosophers of the present. The novelist is essentially an artist, and one of the basic qualities of an artist is his honesty. In an age of uncertainty, the voices of authority grow strident, the people who *can't stand* uncertainty form John Birch societies—after all, they have to do *something*—but the artists begin telling the truth about the uncertainty they feel in themselves and in others.

The novelist, of course not being a pure philosopher or a metaphysician—dresses up his presentation of uncertainty in some familiar setting. The thing to do is to forget the setting and take his meaning. In this case we have in mind a passage of dialogue in *The Coffer of Saturno*, a Berkeley paperback by Robert Severance. The scene is a town in wartime Italy, the characters are a strange, tuberculosis-ridden priest and a half-Italian American who has won the devotion of the villagers by his daring leadership of the Italian partisans who are fighting the occupying German forces. At the time of this conversation, the priest, Fra Anselmo, is hiding the American, who is known as Ruffulo, in the crypt of Saint Autolycus—a man who, when on earth, had inscribed on his church the motto, *Nihil humani nihi alienum est*, "Nothing human is foreign to me." The American, who tells the story, fears that the Germans will discover him in the crypt. Fra Anselmo reassures him:

"Do not concern yourself with it. You will not be caught here."

"I've come close to it," I said. "They have searched the place twice before while I've been in it and they are likely to this time."

"Let them. They will not find you as long as you stay in the crypt."

"Why not? They have looked everywhere else but here. It's only a question of time till they do. This might be the time."

"No, they will not. Not this or any time."

"But why not?"

"It is useless to try to explain it to you, Ruffulo, because you have no belief, no faith."

"I don't know," I said. "Maybe I do, when I understand."

"All right," the monk said, "they will not find you because you are here as a special charge of the saint. They will not find you because of his intercession."

I looked at him.

"I am a special charge of St. Autolycus? Why?"

Fra Anselmo looked back at me for a long time before he said anything.

"Because he is the patron saint of the lost."

"I am one of the lost?"

"Yes, Ruffulo."

"Why do you say that? Why do you say that I am one of the lost?"

"Because you do not know where you are going. Do you?"

"Do you?"

"Yes."

"Tell me how it is that you know where you are going and I do not, Fra Anselmo?"

"Because I have belief and faith and you do not. You have no belief or faith in anything. Is it not true?"

"Yes," I said, "I suppose it is."

"That is why you are lost, Ruffulo. You do not know where you are going because you have no faith in anything. Life is many things, Ruffulo, but most of it is a search for something significant in it. To find this a man must have faith. When he finds no significance in it he is lost."

"What is significant in it, Fra Anselmo? What is significant in life?"

"Every life has its own significance. Every life has a different significance depending upon who lives it. When a man understands what the significance of his life is, he lives it accordingly. Until then he is only wandering. He is lost."

"Then most of the world is lost."

"Yes. If it were not, men would not be killing each other and you would not be here hiding. . . ."

"What does a man do when he does not discover the significance of his own life, Fra Anselmo? What happens to him?"

"He waits for death. And sometimes he searches for it."

"What will it be for me?"

"For you, Ruffulo? You will search a long time."

"And then?"

"Let us say that you will find the significance of life and possibly the end of it here in Saturno. Saturno I think will be the place."

"I haven't yet," I said. "When will that be?"

"Listen," he said, "do not ask that. You really do not wish to hear it. I am not sure that I could tell you, but I am sure that it is not good for you to know. That is good only for certain ones—not you."

"You know," I said. "Tell me as a priest. Tell me as a friend."

The wide eyes put themselves on mine and held there.

"Ruffulo, listen to me and believe what I tell you. You really do not wish to know. And in this you are right. We have talked enough of these things. To tell a man without faith in his future is like putting a long uncertain knife into the hands of a child. Be brave in all other things but not in this, good friend Ruffulo. Let it rest. . . ."

Here, the priest is not really a priest, but a symbol of natural wisdom. He knows that the communication of meaning is not verbal. He is disclosing what Tolstoy learned to his sorrow—that while he loved the simple devotion of the peasants, he could not copy or adopt it. Tolstoy had to forge his own sense of meaning,

appropriate to the forces and perceptions in his life. He is revealing what cultural anthropologists have put into academic terms: that the idyl of the harmonious tribal society cannot be played out by individualistic Western peoples, who have to find corresponding values at their own level of thought and feeling.

But Ruffulo and Fra Anselmo are right. Men who do not know the meaning of their lives are somehow lost. Or they would not now be hiding in crypts, waiting for death or planning death. What a hollow sound have the voices of the men who dare instruct us in the meaning of our lives! What do they know? Not enough even to be silent.

The best philosophers are men like Socrates. The best judges never pretend to understand justice. The best leaders are men who despise the prominence of public office.

What is the long uncertain knife in the hands of a child? It is dogma about the meaning of life. When a man has only a dogma to maintain his faith, he fears to lose it; by fear he finds enemies, and with enemies he seeks death. Peace, it is slowly becoming plain, is life without fear and without pretense. But the truth of the matter is that there can be no life without fear and pretense unless there is first a deep conviction of meaning. This is the profound paradox of man's existence, that we have somehow to know without knowing, and believe without believing. For some such reason, perhaps, the high and great religions of antiquity were often called Mystery Religions.

COMMENTARY

DON'T THINK, COMPUTE

WHILE listening, recently, to a discussion of automation, and what those omniscient computing machines have in store for us fallible human beings, we got to thinking about Adolf Eichmann and what Edmond Beaujon said about him in his *Journal de Genève* article. The point is that, in this group, the man who seemed to know the most about computers kept on saying that the machines are better at a lot of things than human beings. Better, even, at some "intellectual" activities. What we decided, after some reflection, was that you could probably say the machines are better than Eichmann at the things he was good at doing—at dehumanized bureaucratic functions. You could say of the machines, as Beaujon said of Eichmann: "To rationalize, to depersonalize, to calculate: these are three operations which it seems cannot be avoided by someone who plans production." Of course, computers don't have wedding anniversaries or get caught bringing flowers to their spouses; they tend strictly to the program and *always* do what they are told. So, the machines are better than Eichmann; they show an absolutely pure development of what Beaujon calls the *confined* virtues—the virtues allowed to Eichmann.

Then we began to think about what another man said: That he thought the plans for Bacterial Warfare ought to be recognized as a Conspiracy of the Computers, since lethal germs will destroy only biological life, leaving all the beautiful machines standing there unharmed. Then, when all the creatures subject to the rule of emotion, dreamy idealism, and irrational caprice are dead, the computer will take over. It figures.

Who are the men who love the machines and are propagating them? The planners. The planners of those enterprises which it is foolish to undertake unless you can prove that they will succeed. The Grand Inquisitor was a planner. He knew what would *work*. He had made a study.

He had a team that had been doing motivational research and one hell of a lot of field work. Lots of interviews, too, by *professionals*. He could say what the people would respond to. He knew how to make them "happy." He had a program with a thousand years of real experience behind it.

The computer is the herald of the Grand Inquisitor's Millennium. It has the secret of success for the planners. It doesn't make the mistakes human beings make. It takes people the way they are. It is a truly scientific machine, and it deals only with facts. Facts are the realities of the past. So the computer puts the repetition of the past on a scientific basis. It is the new Father Image.

CHILDREN ... and Ourselves

THE FANFARE OF CONFORMITY

A SOMEWHAT amusing and somewhat frightening aside on the youthful "conformist" is provided by Alistair Cooke in the May 18 *Manchester Guardian*. Mr. Cooke is reporting an effort by American psychiatrists and sociologists to discover "the normal man." A twelve-year study of 1,953 school boys brought forth these results:

They were all subjected to Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory, and they all survived; 1,880 passed the test with flying colours, showing the usual abnormal characteristics of ambition, irritability, flirtatiousness, humor, procrastination, and the entire set of symptoms of Homo Sapiens. But 73 boys were suspect. They were neither brilliant nor abysmally stupid. They never played hookey. They loved their mothers. They were clean and upright and turned in their homework on time. Down the years, with the Sputniks, the Eisenhower Era, Rock 'n' Roll, and one thing and another, so of these 73 became sensibly maladjusted to the times. This leaves 23, all of whom have been re-examined in the full, dull flower of their manhood. They are still "free of any symptoms of pathology. They have all made stable, successful adjustments," to stable wives and humdrum children. "This group," the findings conclude, "represent as nearly as possible the well-adjusted, average American male."

The controversial storm is brewing in Chicago around the equating of the adjectives "normal" and "average." Twenty-three Normal Men in 1,953, remarked one learned statistician, "is one heck of an average." However, in the present glow of the discovery, this quibble disturbs only a few abnormal semanticists. The 23 men themselves are being kept in hiding, or at least incognito. They have no desire for an astronaut's welcome. In fact, they have no desire.

Mr. Cooke quotes some revealing phrases:

The Normal Man "lives a stable, well-adjusted life." He has achieved contentment and compatibility with his spouse. He likes his job. He stays home. He has "limited social activities." He has "no high aspirations" either for himself or his children. He has

few interests and no habits except those of the drone and the zombie. That is to say, he gets to work comfortably on time, he works well enough, he heads unerringly for home when day is done. He is steadily and crashingly dull. Jealous onlookers tend to call him "vegetable." He responds to this, whenever he responds at all, with some such remark as "I like it that way" or "Thanks very much."

We have a suspicion that it is this type of normality—and its accompanying vacuum—which accounts for the much-publicized activities of the "Young Americans for Freedom." Taking their cue from Barry Goldwater, the YAF promises a restitution of the "true American dream." The *New Guard*, organ of the YAF, sounds its clarion call with such statements as the following:

The tide of conservatism is rising all over the United States, and we will rise with it, leaving behind those unfortunates still chained to the rotting posts of "liberalism," "collectivism," and statism. If they wish to sacrifice themselves for a lost cause, let them do so. Nevertheless, we offer them the pincers of liberty, individualism, and initiative to free themselves of chains as rusty as the shibboleths which undoubtedly our opponents will attempt to wrap around us.

The YAF claims to represent the only organized vitality which can be observed on American campuses. Certainly there is no comparable competing organization, but, as Murray Kempton intimates in the May *Progressive*, the youths who are thinking for themselves are doing it outside of conventional political organizations. Mr. Kempton writes:

Young Americans for Freedom could well be without strenuous competition on the campus precisely because the creative minority of students is anti-political and anti-institutional. For example, almost no young man of spirit would think of going to work for a union any longer; it is a caretaking job. The same apathy afflicts government. The main response of the young to the Kennedy Administration is to its Peace Corps—whose horizons are as far as a young man can go from the center of the illusion of power. The President is unlikely to attract hordes of his juniors pressing to work in the paymaster's office of the soil conservation program.

The current radical affirmation is anti-government. It shows itself in demonstrations against

the Un-American Activities Committee or in marches for a nuclear ban or in sit-downs against Southern segregation laws. The road of the radical minority is not to power but to jail. Young Americans for Freedom ascends on the campus because campus politics are no longer important.

Some passages from Bruno Bettelheim's *The Informed Heart* are applicable here. In a chapter titled, "The Consciousness of Freedom," Dr. Bettelheim endeavors to show why a "sense of identity" is so difficult to achieve in our "society of plenty" and why it must begin with an *attitude* rather than with any combination of group affiliations:

The continuous balancing and resolving of opposing tendencies within oneself, and between self and society—the ability to do this in keeping with personal values, an enlightened self-interest, and the interests of the society one lives in—all these lead to an increasing consciousness of freedom and form the basis for man's deepening sense of identity, self-respect and inner freedom, in short his autonomy. . . .

A society of plenty is a problem only to the person who has neither a strong stomach nor the inner strength to control his desires, but who also loves rich food and too much drink.

The man who can afford rich food and drink, who enjoys it and hence consumes it, may need a much better stomach than the fellow who has to get along on simpler fare. By the same token the citizen enjoying an economy of plenty and great freedom in arranging his life, needs a much better integrated personality in order to choose well and restrict himself wisely, than the citizen who needs no inner strength to restrain himself because there is very little around to enjoy or abstain from. True, in any society there will be some who simply do not enjoy rich food or drink and hence need no strong personality or even a strong stomach for their continued well being. But such men are no problem to society in this sense, nor does a society of plenty tempt them beyond what they can handle.

Without the consciousness of alternatives among the values by which one lives, it is impossible to perceive the meaning of true freedom, initiative or responsibility. It is that consciousness, Dr. Bettelheim feels, which is missing in so many young people—because the

conception of alternative choices arises in the context of decisions as to what "group" to join. Such choices are not truly individual choices, and as a result the "richness" of opportunity provided in material and educational ways by our society cannot be properly appreciated. Dr. Bettelheim continues:

If man stops developing his consciousness of freedom it tends to weaken for lack of exercise. And here I do not mean busy activity, but decisions about attitudes.

One's sense of identity, the conviction of being a unique individual, with lasting and deeply meaningful relations to a few others; with a particular life history that one has shaped and been shaped by; a respect for one's work and a pleasure in one's competence at it; with memories peculiar to one's personal experience, preferred tasks, tastes and pleasures—all these are at the heart of man's autonomous existence. Instead of merely allowing him to conform to the reasonable demands of society without losing his identity, they make it a rewarding experience, quite often a creative one.

FRONTIERS

Some Awkward Moments

A WHILE back, we used to have a lot of sympathy for Mr. Eisenhower. Now we have a lot of sympathy for Mr. Kennedy. The presidency of the United States is an impossible job. The man who holds that office has to go off in six directions at once, and exhibit alertness, sagacity, determination, power, decisiveness, human kindness, and respect for the free decisions of free people, all at once, too. He can't do it. Nobody can. He is supposed to drive the Car of State according to the constitutional rules of the road, but the street signs don't really mean what they say, any more, and, with all the changes in technology, recently, you might as well recognize that somebody working nights jacked up the steering wheel and put an entirely new chassis under it, plus complicated drives that nobody really understands. Meanwhile, the old controls don't work as they used to, and the new ones give every indication of being undemocratic.

Take the problem of Cuba. The President is supposed to keep the Communist Menace at a minimum, and especially at a minimum in the Western hemisphere. But the President is also supposed by all that is Americanly holy to keep our fingers out of the domestic affairs of other nations. Cuba, whether or not it is generally recognized, is another nation, and not an American colony. The United States doesn't *have* colonies. When as President you must do something which at the same time you mustn't do, it is handy to have available a nonexistent organization which exists, like the CIA. Although the (erstwhile) CIA chief holds press conferences and runs an organization which has more employees than the State Department, it doesn't really exist, democratically speaking, because its budget is secret and its activities are unregulated by the democratic process. It can mount an invasion of Cuba from Guatemala, using American money and American masterminds to plan the whole thing, and Statesmen can say, for a while,

that it didn't happen, or, if this sounds silly, they can say, before it happens, that it isn't going to happen, and then, when it does, they can say, "Oh well, you know, the CIA. . . ." It is something like the U-2 incident, which didn't happen, or wasn't supposed to happen, but did. These things must be hard on a man who has to give talks about the National Purpose.

Then there is the problem of the press, which everybody admits, except for the *New York Times*, isn't very good. Mr. Kennedy has been a little embarrassed by the press, especially the *New York Times*, because the *Times* ran a few stories about the CIA and what it did and didn't do. Mr. Kennedy has been wanting some reputable journalist to serve as a clearing house on "sticky stories." This expert would be in a position to tell reporters what to use and what to let alone, in the interests of national security. The reporters wouldn't *have* to do what he said, of course, as that would be censorship, but it would be a nice system to get going. Who knows but that maybe, after a while, it would become, as the *New Republic* suggested, "more official and less voluntary." Then the President could manage better the publicity breaks affecting the welfare of the Nation. For some reason or other, the papers, including the *New York Times*, didn't go along. A *Times* man said: "Our primary obligation is to our readers. I wouldn't know how to interpret our obligation to the government." It is a problem, since nowadays government and the success of government policy is considered to represent the actual *survival* of the people; and if you serve the government, then you serve the people. But if, on the other hand, the people are supposed to control the government, and it isn't a democratic government any more unless the people *do* control it; and if, furthermore, the people can't be expected to control the government unless they know what the government is up to . . . well, you see how mixed up the situation can get.

It is said that Teddy Roosevelt "recognized" the new nation of Panama 24 hours too early;

communications weren't so good in those days, either, but with more excuse, and the President anticipated the completion of the revolution by a day. Arranging other peoples' revolutions is now a bit more hazardous, with fewer comic opera aspects. The report of the Cuban fiasco, however, came a day late instead of a day early. As Louis M. Lyons says in the *New Republic* for June 5: "The New York *Times* waited till the day after the collapse of the invasion before publishing the full inside story, which it held till the venture failed." Mr. Lyons, who is Curator of the Nieman Foundation for Journalism at Harvard University, continues:

The early news came from Guatemala and was hard to distinguish from the kind of rumors that had been rife around the Carribean from the start of the Castro regime. It was not initiated by the press, which was weeks and months behind in picking it up from an obscure academic publication.

Later on, the boastful babel from rival exile groups in Florida inevitably leaked a mixture of rumor and unconfirmable information that presented editors with headaches and such readers as ever saw it with confusion. It did not save the nation from the shock of surprise on April 17, or from the officially-inspired misinformation of ensuing days until the 21st, when, the story over, it began to be told. The New York *Times* described the official misinformation put out during the Cuban affair in an editorial protest of the public's "right not to be lied to.

Maybe the President could have managed things better, but if the duties of his office include arranging other peoples' revolutions, or putting them down, then it seems to us that you are bound to get into serious messes of one sort or another. You could almost say that, if this is a national purpose, then getting into messes is a part of our chosen way of life and we had better get used to it.

Another problem the President must cope with is the psychology of the Cold War. If the Balance of Terror is to be maintained—and the chief intellectual authorities on national survival insist that it must be—then the Russians must be convinced that Americans will make nuclear war if

they have to. If we don't really intend to use nuclear weapons, no matter what, then all our preparations are a big fake and won't "deter" anybody from anything. So, we have at least to *pretend* that we think we can survive a nuclear war. This means that we have to plan for civil defense against nuclear attack, even if we think it won't really work.

But what is the President of a Free and Freedom-loving People going to do if too many of the citizens refuse to take civil defense seriously? You have, for example, the governor of a great state declaring publicly:

We ought to be forging links with other peoples instead of forging iron doors with deep cellars. Our ties to other peoples—the good will we can earn, the support we can justify for world leadership—these will contribute far more to our safety and peace of mind than holes we can jump into when it is too late.

...

And the planning director of a California city testifying in open hearing on bomb shelters:

"I have no use for them. If society has reached that stage I would rather take my chances in the next world. We crawled out of caves only a few thousand years ago and I have no intention of crawling back in again."

These are doubtless the best arguments against the civil defense program—or that part of it concerned with hiding in holes in the ground—since these arguments are founded on human dignity. But what will doubtless be the most persuasive argument is that civil defense is silly because it won't work. Alfred Hassler, editor of *Fellowship*, has put together a pamphlet which presents a wide range of available fact and expert opinion on the question of civil defense. Titled *Neither Run Nor Hide*, this pamphlet sets out to show—and, we think, does show—that "the plans for Civil Defense are entirely unrealistic when measured against the nature of thermonuclear war"; and that "the psychological effects of a massive Civil Defense effort would be more likely to heighten the tension and so increase the danger of war than the reverse." (Copies of this pamphlet

may be purchased at fifteen cents each from *Fellowship*, Box 271, Nyack, N.Y.)

It is extremely awkward for the President of a great country like ours to have to try to persuade a lot of intelligent people to pretend to believe in Civil Defense so that the Russians will be convinced that we mean to survive nuclear attack, even if it is impossible. It is something like having to tell the people to act like idiots in order to prove that they are free and intelligent. Well, we are resourceful, too, and maybe, in time, we'll reach some practical solution, like having the President call on the John Birch Society people for help. Surely *they* could find a way to make people conform to the requirements of Civil Defense. You just need to be liberty-loving and have enough blind determination.