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PROPHECY AND PROGRESS

[This is the fourth and concluding part of the series on Henry David Thoreau, by Richard Groff. Subsequent announcement will be made when this essay is available in the form of a booklet.—Editors.]

THE prophet traditionally looks askance at the curious optimism of uncritical persons who imagine that the world is somehow getting somewhere while it continues on its present course, that progress is automatic and that spiritual evolution takes place apparently without anyone's moral exertion. This belief in the illusion of progress is of course a distinctively modern heresy, unknown in ancient times or in the Middle Ages, having been fostered by the Industrial Revolution and the triumph of applied science. The obvious advances in scientific knowledge and the efficiency of machines have led some to leap to the conclusion that man moves toward a paradise on earth at a rate commensurate with the speed of his automobile.

With new mechanical improvements, Thoreau, for one, was not impressed. "Our inventions are wont to be pretty toys, which distract our attention from serious things. They are but improved means to an unimproved end, an end which it was already all but too easy to arrive at; as railroads lead to Boston or New York. We are in great haste to construct a magnetic telegraph from Main to Texas; but Maine and Texas, it may be, have nothing important to communicate."[48]

Thoreau's conviction that each man must seek out values for himself led him away from the reform movements of his day: "Men say, practically, Begin where you are and such as you are, without aiming mainly to become of more worth, and with kindness aforethought go about doing good. If I were to preach at all in this strain, I should say rather, set about being good."[49] In this emphasis on inner transformation rather than on outward activity, Thoreau echoes the words of Lao Tse, who taught, "The way to do is to be." Insofar as it is the *kinds of persons we are* which is at the heart of our problems, then obviously we must begin by changing ourselves. This attitude is at sharp variance with that of those reformers and agitators with plans for reorganizing the old institutions of society or instituting new ones in order to improve the condition of man.

Could new external patterns bring about a change of heart in man, or make him happier, or in any important sense better off? Thoreau doubted it. He believed that only a spiritual rebirth in the individual could bring this about. Thus the career of a reformer, even one who "succeeds," seems in a sense incomplete, for his work has limited value. But the life of a prophet, even one who "fails," is a continuing light. The reformer belongs to his age, the prophet to the ages. Reformers play the role of Martha, but the prophets are always Mary, and have the better part. True to the prophetic tradition, Thoreau declares: "The law will never make men free; it is men who have got to make the law free."[50] And: "There are a thousand hacking at the branches of evil to one who is striking at the root."[51]

An essential difference between the social reformer or political agitator and the prophet is that the former, in looking for his first convert, starts off eagerly down the road, while the latter sits down quietly to confront—himself.

In a characteristic passage Thoreau reminds us that "The fate of the country does not depend on how you vote at the polls,—the worst man is as strong as the best at that game; it does not depend on what kind of paper you drop into the ballot-box once a year, but on what kind of man you drop from your chamber into the street every

morning."[52] Like Erasmus, who held that the school of example is the only one in which mankind learns, Thoreau says, "If you would convince a man that he does wrong, do right. But do not care to convince him. Men will believe what they see. Let them see."[53]

In a letter to his sister written from Staten Island in 1843, Thoreau briefly outlines his position with regard to reformers:

> Dear Helen,—
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> . . . My objection to Channing and all that fraternity is that they need and deserve sympathy themselves rather than are able to render it to others. They want faith and mistake their private ail for an infected atmosphere; but let any one of them recover hope for a moment, and right his *particular* grievance, and he will no longer train in that company. To speak or do anything that shall concern mankind, one must speak and act as if well, or from that grain of health which he has left . . .I have the jaundice myself; but I also know what it is to be well"[54]

What a man is inside chiefly determines the quality of his life, and there is little anyone else can do to alter this by acting upon him, Thoreau discovers: ". . . how almost hopeless and incurable are all constitutional vices. I confess, that practically speaking, when I have learned a man's real disposition, I have no hopes of changing it for the better or worse in this state of existence."[55] Nor did he believe that organizational ties could improve anyone's spiritual lot where the basic stuff of character was missing: "If a man has faith, he will co-operate with equal faith everywhere; if he has not faith, he will continue to live like the rest of the world, whatever company he is joined to."[56] He held that there was no cure for a low quality of life but a high quality of life, and that this attribute is not readily transferable from one person to another. Each man could become, even outwardly, only that which he already was: "Every man is the builder of a temple, called his body, to the god he worships, after a style purely his own, nor can he get off by hammering marble instead. We are all sculptors and painters, and our material is our own flesh and blood and bones. Any nobleness begins at once to refine a man's features, any meanness or sensuality to imbrute them."[57]

That society in general will mistakenly revere the do-gooder instead of the prophet, Thoreau clearly saw: "He who gives himself entirely to his fellow men appears to them useless and selfish; but he who gives himself partially to them is pronounced a benefactor and philanthropist."[58] Even when society belatedly recognizes merit in a great man, it is unfortunately in the way which Schopenhauer has shrewdly observed: ". . . Posterity will say: *This man was in advance of his age,* instead of *in advance of humanity;* because humanity will be glad to lay the burden of its own faults upon a single epoch." Exploring in quiet meditation the depths of his soul, Thoreau learned that his contribution to the good society must lie in being rather than in doing. So penetrating have his perceptions of the world of values proved, however, that today the idealist who is a doer as well as the idealist who is a be-er is inspired by this man's precept and example to "advance confidently in the direction of his dreams."[59]

Despite his deep rooted suspicion of all efforts at social reform, there were two principal occasions when Thoreau was moved to take a public stand on the critical issues of his time. The first, in 1846, was a passive act for which he was briefly imprisoned, his refusal to pay a tax to the state which, he held, was the agent of certain injustices. His immortal essay, "Civil Disobedience," contains a full account of this episode. On the second occasion, in 1859, Thoreau himself was the initiator. John Brown, fanatical and violent in his daring campaigns to free Negro slaves, braved the opposition of public opinion and defied all law enforcement officers. He was too extreme even for the Abolitionists. But Thoreau, who had known Brown personally, came to see him as a genuine hero, the man of principle in dramatic action. Here was a man of integrity fiercely dedicated to a worthy cause, confronting and dealing with a moral issue which

the rest of the nation had not the courage to face so boldly. Whether or not we endorse Brown's high-handed and bloody tactics, it is tangible evidence of Thoreau's superior insight that his was the first voice in the country to be raised in the defense of Brown. What only a handful of thoughtful persons at first could see—the moral significance of Brown's stand—was soon to become apparent to all opponents of slavery, for Brown was destined to be transformed into a popular hero, and his martyrdom became a rallying point for the cause of the North.

When Brown and his men had been captured after his daring raid on the government arsenal at Harper's Ferry and Brown had been judged guilty of treason and sentenced to be hanged, Thoreau announced he would make a public address on the subject, despite its highly controversial nature. That eloquent and impassioned speech, in which he extolls all that is noble in Brown and the moral hero in righteous action, is preserved among his papers as "A Plea For Captain John Brown."

* * *

Surely the towering inward stature of Thoreau entitles him to be ranked high among the minor prophets of mankind; while his genius at restating for modern times the ageless wisdom to which he gave himself lends him special significance for the seeker of values today.

The brilliant humanitarian reformers of the nineteenth century who helped win for our society the abolition of Negro slavery, universal suffrage and education, labor reforms and the rest, made their respective marks upon our social development and now have faded dimly into history. But Thoreau, whose worth went largely unrecognized in his own time, is only now coming into his own. He who laid aside what was transitory to focus upon what is enduring is now no creature of a past moment, but belongs to eternity. His inquiries convinced him that man does not vary greatly from century to century or from nation to nation, and that underlying the problems of one's own time are the problems of all time. His exemplary life testifies to the truth of Emerson's words:

> For he that feeds men serveth few;
> He serves all who dares be true.

Collective social action, though the problems it deals with must be solved, contributes but little to the real improvement of the human lot. For where man's ignorance and greed in all their Protean disguises appear to be conquered in one encounter, they always reappear somehow in an unsuspected quarter, fully as vicious as before. This must continue while unregenerate man remains unregenerate. As Thoreau puts it, "Undoubtedly if we were to reform this outward life truly and thoroughly, we should find no duty of the inner omitted. It would be employment for our whole nature; . . . But a moral reform must take place first, and then the necessity of the other will be superseded, and we shall sail and plow by its force alone."[60]

The prophets point in the direction we must travel, individually if not yet collectively, if we would escape this fearful, unending bondage to our lesser selves. Thoreau is one such prophet. The clarity of his insight, the nobleness of his principles, the harmony of his life with them, and the eloquence and purity of the writing in which he immortalized all of these will endure to inspire all who value quality of life and the promise of man's unfulfilled possibilities.

Let Thoreau have the last word. "I know of no more encouraging fact than the unquestionable ability of man to elevate his life by a conscious endeavor. . . . Every man is tasked to make his life, even in its details, worthy of the contemplation of his most elevated and critical hour."[61]

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NOTES

The complete *Writings of Henry David Thoreau*, 20 vols., Boston: Houghton Mifflin and Co., 1906, have long been out of print, but numerous selections of his representative writings are available. For a full length biography see H. S. Canby's *Thoreau*, Boston: Houghton Mifflin and Co., 1939, recently re-issued as a Beacon Press Paperback (BP 65). An excellent critical biography is J. W. Krutch's *Henry David Thoreau*, New York: William Sloane Associates, 1948.

48. *Walden*, Ch. I
49. *Walden*, Ch. I.
50. "Slavery in Massachusetts."
51. *Walden*, Ch. I.
52. "Slavery in Massachusetts."
53. Letter to Harrison Blake, March 27, 1848.
54. Letter to Helen Thoreau, October 18, 1843.
55. *Walden*, Ch. IV.
56. *Walden*, Ch. I.
57. *Walden*, Ch. Xl.
58. "Civil Disobedience."
59. *Walden*, Ch. XVIII.
60. "Paradise (to be) Regained."
61. *Walden*, Ch. II.

Letter from **INDIA**

SARVA SEVA SANGH, RAJGHAT KASHI, U.P.—The Shanti Vidyalaya (Shanti—Peace, Vidyalaya—School) was started by the Sarva Seva Sangh, which has organized the Bhoodan movement in India. The Shanti Sena (Sena—Army) movement is an offshoot of the Bhoodan movement. Gandhi had thought of Shanti Sena just a few days before he died. But he died before he could put the idea into practice. His own example was of course that of an ideal Shanti Sainik (Sainik—Volunteer). Vinoba Bhave gave expression to the idea of Shanti Sena towards the end of 1956 and he began enlisting volunteers in 1957. There are more than 1500 peace volunteers in the nation now. Most of them are Bhoodan workers. The volunteers have signed a pledge to be prepared to die for peace. Ever since the Shanti Sena was formed, there was a felt need of giving these volunteers some sort of preparatory education. A suitable institution for giving training could not however be started, owing chiefly to dearth of staff. Even now we do not have anybody else besides me on the staff. But as I have decided to devote my whole time to it, the Sarva Seva Sangh has decided not to wait any longer. I am very much aware of all my limitations, but I ventured to take this responsibility only in a spirit of duty and in all humility.

The Shanti Vidyalaya was opened on the 30th of January this year. Eighteen volunteers from various parts of the country have come for the first term. Unfortunately, no volunteer from the South has come for the first term. Every other part of the country is represented. Most of the volunteers are full-time Bhoodan workers, with experience in village work. They do not have much experience, however, in the organisation of Sarvodaya work in the cities.

The syllabus was prepared by a committee of the Sarva Seva Sangh. It is a tentative syllabus. We are likely to change it in the next term, after we have had some experience of actual training. The syllabus can be divided into three sub-headings: (i) the training of attitudes of the Shanti Sainiks, (ii) the experience of field work in the town and (iii) the theoretical discussions.

We hope to create the proper attitudes amongst the Shanti Sainiks from our community life. The community life includes one hour of manual labour, an hour of helping in the various functions of the community besides community prayers. There are no rules or regulations for the trainees either in the training institute or in the hostel. They have to teach themselves self-discipline. Self-discipline is also essential for a training of leadership. It is essential to create the attitude of being a world citizen. But we have to begin with creating an Indian citizen attitude first. The Indian mind is at present divided into many fragments of castes, provinces, religions, etc. We usually find a Brahmin or a Gujarati or a Muslim, we hardly find an Indian. In order to give our Shanti Sainiks an attitude of being above all these sections of life, quite a considerable part of the syllabus deals with problems of caste, language, religion, etc.

The city of Varanasi has been chosen as the site for the training centre for more reasons than one. We have the headquarters of Sarva Seva Sangh here. This gives an easy access to many of the visiting lecturers. Varanasi is one of the oldest cities in the world. It has, therefore, a long tradition of Indian culture. Being a place of pilgrimage, Varanasi is a cosmopolitan city. We have a glimpse of almost all the communities of India staying in the city. It therefore serves as a good practicing ground for our trainees. The rural areas in India are comparatively more peaceful than the urban areas. It is good to have the institute near a possible point of tension! We do not aspire to change the whole city, however, into a Sarvodaya city. That is too ambitious a goal for an humble institute like ours. But our trainees spend three hours every day to study

various causes of tension in society. After having a general idea of the city life, they have enumerated and classified the various causes of possible tension. They have now formed small groups and each group is trying to go into the details of specific symptoms of the problems such as alcoholism, students' indiscipline, child-labour, etc. As the principal was a complete stranger to this place it has taken a fair amount of time in getting started. We will probably be knowing the various problems of the city life, and tackling some of them at the end of this term. But it will be a good preparatory work for the next batch. In this connection, we are contacting several organisations and individuals engaged in social service, such as teachers, professors, specialists in psychology, psychiatry, criminology, administrators, police officers, etc., and are offering whatever assistance we can.

The theoretical part of the work consists of the study of various problems of India, such as the linguistic problem, the communal problem, the caste problem. Part of the syllabus deals with the spiritual basis of a Shanti Sainik. Selections from various faiths are being studied as also the selected works of Gandhi and Vinoba. Various aspects of nonviolence of course are an important part of the study. We are also trying to give our trainees an idea of the peace movements in the world, including a detailed history of Gandhiji's Satyagraha. Besides their regular lectures, each student has selected a special subject of some specific tension for preparing an essay on it.

We are still wondering what we could do about the Sino-Indian and the Indo-Pak questions in the institute. We are already trying to study the problems dispassionately. But we are not sure what actual work we can do regarding them. We are trying to invite at least two trainees from Pakistan next term, but we have had no response as yet.

We may be visiting Jabalpur, which was recently the scene of ugly communal riots. We may be able to help in restoring normalcy there. We may also spend a few days walking with Vinoba towards the end of this term if he permits.

The organisational aspect of the Shanti Sena as well as the discipline of Shanti will be discussed towards the end of the course, when the Shanti Sainiks have had some experience in self-discipline, mutual help and leadership.

I hope this will give you some idea about the training camp. The training of peace volunteers is a new idea. A1most every experience is new. I am a completely inexperienced man myself. The training camp has been an excellent school for me. There will always be something new to learn with every batch.

NARAYAN DESAI

REVIEW
THE LONG, BAD STORY

ONLY once, so far, has actual history corresponded to the nightmares of science fiction. The Nagasaki and Hiroshima explosions—whether considered to be epoch-making or epoch-ending—are still beyond the comprehension of most of us. Now, in 1961, the journal of a Japanese doctor who barely survived the Hiroshima blast is much more than the reminder of an event. *Hiroshima Diary*, the account of Dr. Michihiko Hachiya, should be required reading for the bright young men who seek "challenging" futures in the missile and armament industries (Avon reprint).

Dr. Hachiya was an administrator in the Central Hiroshima Hospital when the first atomic bomb was detonated. Critically injured, he worked with all his failing resources to do the most and best for thousands of patients who were completely ignorant—as he was—of the nature of the injuries sustained. At first, it was assumed by the surviving hospital personnel that their city had been razed by immensely powerful loads of TNT, but the complications which followed in the weeks immediately after the blast forced them to realize that an entirely new *kind* of destruction not only had occurred, but was still occurring. The following paragraphs graphically represent this transition stage of realization in Dr. Hachiya's day-to-day account:

> We thought that by giving treatment to those who were burned or injured recovery would follow. But now it was obvious that this was not true. People who appeared to be recovering developed other symptoms that caused them to die: So many patients died without our understanding the cause of death that we were all in despair. They all had symptoms which we could not explain and during the past few days spots began to appear. These were cause for greater alarm.
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> We had several instances of presumably healthy people who developed petechiae and died before persons who were obviously critically ill. You can understand what an ominous portent the development of petechiae had for us.
>
> It was now obvious that epidemic dysentery had nothing to do with the bewildering symptoms we witnessed. The thesis was advanced that the symptoms could be explained on the basis of a decreased white blood count and that the decrease could be explained as a sequel to the toxic effects of gangrenous tonsillitis. It did not occur to me that the gangrenous tonsillitis might be caused by a reduction in white blood cells.
>
> Why should leukopenia occur?
>
> That was as far as I could go. There was no making heads or tails to this puzzle. But what were we to do? What would happen next? Was there no answer?

The pathos of Hiroshima is literally without end, but in Dr. Hachiya's diary we encounter many instances which dramatize its beginning. A friend of the doctor's, for example, describes the following "episode":

> "I ran into four middle-school students near the hypocenter in Tenjimmachi who were badly burned," recounted Mr. Kobata. "Desperately ill and forlorn, they sat in a small circle beside the road, and I stopped to ask one where his home was. He replied that this was his home and asked that if I should encounter his mother or sister would I tell them not to waste time looking for him or his companions because they were all going to die. The others nodded in agreement. The lot of these boys was all the more tragic because nothing *could* be done for them, and so there they sat under the hot sun in dust and rubble. Tears came to my eyes.
>
> "One boy asked if I would make some shade for them, and by borrowing a few straw mats and sheets of galvanized iron from some soldiers, I made them a shelter. I asked another boy where his home was but he was too weak to say anything but 'ye' so I couldn't discover whether he was from Yano, Yagi, or Yaga.
>
> "Some tomatoes I had for my lunch I cut into halves and squeezed the juice into the boys' mouths . They could hardly swallow but all mumbled *'oishii!'* 'delicious!'
>
> "One boy begged for water and as I had no container with me I told him I would try to get some in my hat. This I did and finally left with the promise I would try to find a first-aid squad to come to their

assistance. I had a few pieces of Jintan, and this I divided among them.

"I couldn't find a first-aid squad, search as I might, so all night the thought of those poor boys was on my mind. When I left home the next morning I took things I thought might add to their comfort, and searched until I found them. I found them all right, but they were dead, huddled in the same small circle I had left them in the night before."

And what of today? A novel by Edita Morris, titled *The Flowers of Hiroshima* (Viking Press, 1959), translates first-hand experience of the after-effects of the atomic explosion into a story with contemporary setting. A young and wealthy American finally discovers the nether-world life underneath the surface of Hiroshima hospitality:

"Yuka-san and I and these ladies—just five out of hundred thousand survivors of A-bomb," Maeda-san goes on. "Many of us burned horribly, not to mention more serious damage inside. That reason why healthy Hiroshimans, most come here since war, wish avoid us. They say 'Ugh!' when see our keloid scars—rough, disgusting welts. Not wish look at naked bodies of A-bomb survivors in public baths."

"Harada-san here typical A-bomb victim," the old painter continues, and he exchanges a glance with one of our three friends kneeling behind him on grass. "She asks me tell you not feel upset by her not-pretty face. Too flat, she feels, as railway station luckily fell on it. I say lucky, for cement protected Harada-san from lethal radiation. Ah, my friend Harada-san terrible experiences! Had nice flower-arrangement school—lost it. Had nice sons—lost them. Lost husband, lost health, lost beauty in one minute on famous August sixth. Now registered as day laborer at Municipal Office, like many impoverished survivors. Hacks up roads."

Something extraordinary happens then. Behind the cloud of steam I catch a glimpse of Harada-san as she was before the A-bomb ruined her features—young, lovely, and loved. Harada-san draws in her breath. She leans softly forward. In the pupils of my eyes she sees the true image of herself, and her poor face relaxes in a smile of gratitude. She gives a tinkling, a youthful laugh.

"Arigato," she whispers as she takes the tea. "Thank you!"

Over Harada-san's shoulder I can see Sam's face. How distressed his eyes look! Now he knows the truth. Will he flee from our misery? . . .

COMMENTARY
A SIMPLE RULE

IT seems absolutely certain that Ignazio Silone will some day be listed among those who discovered the nature and ills of life in the twentieth century long before the great majority of their contemporaries. The quotations from him in this week's Frontiers cover almost the full spectrum of symptoms. He is a man who is thinking at the height of his times and seeing, therefore, into the future. Readers who are not familiar with Silone's major works, particularly the trilogy, *Fontamara, Bread and Wine,* and *Seed Beneath the Snow,* owe it to themselves to acquire this perceptive entry into the meaning of the present. There has not been, since, a much better analysis, nor a better solution offered, at least in symbolic terms, than the one in *Seed Beneath the Snow.*

Why does what Silone writes ring so strong and true? Because, we think, he is a man who acted on what he thought was right. For years he worked in the radical movement, seeking to lay the foundations of social revolution. When "the tricky question of the link between collective well-being and moral life" began to bother him, he didn't set it aside, but undertook to rethink the actual course of his own life.

Men who have personally experienced the vise of contemporary history and have made their discoveries about life and meaning in this way are likely to have something important to say. When Viktor Frankl and Bruno Bettelheim write with vision about the possibilities and riches of human existence, you are hearing from men who forged their views in the most hideous possible circumstances—the concentration and death camps of the Nazis.

These are the true men of action in our time. They are *thinkers.* What is the matter with our time? We have lost, we are told, our sense of values. Such men are engaged in the rediscovery of values, and what they find moves them to action of the mind. You find values with the mind; maybe you feel them first, but when you can speak of them as values you have used the mind.

Reading these men makes you say to yourself that before you have any right to talk a lot about the importance of security and survival, you ought to have made a life that is valuable enough to be worth security and survival. And then, if the lives of these men are any measure, you won't be able to do most of the things that others insist they must do in order to have security and survive.

The idea that those Japanese boys Mr. Kobata found, "huddled in the same small circle," dead, on a street in Hiroshima, are an impersonal item in *our* security, is not a pleasant one.

One day, intelligent, humane people will simply get up and walk away from the security, welfare, and survival of the modern military State. They will turn away from the grotesque agencies of our material well-being, our "cheap and coarse pleasures," as they would from any atmosphere hopelessly saturated with infection. They will find a way to create Waldens of their own. They will have to, for the Waldens of the earth are now nearly used up.

Thoreau was indeed a prophet for our time. No effort that a man makes in emulation of Thoreau can be regarded as wasted. Thoreau has impact upon his readers because they know in their hearts he is right. He has the secret of every lost or forgotten Gospel. He may not tell us everything, but nothing that he does tell us is wrong.

But while we are anticipating large-scale changes in human behavior, largely as a result of the nausea of modern life, it may be well to recognize that these changes can hardly come without some of the madness alienation produces in people who are not yet prepared for its condition of loneliness and isolation. We shall probably have to learn to deal patiently and understandingly with scores of sects, cults, and even mobs of rebels without causes. The

nineteenth century produced its crop of nihilists and men of total anger. Can the twentieth century avoid parentage of a similar generation?

Here, perhaps, in consideration of this question, we are better able to measure the debt of the twentieth century to Gandhi. Gandhi would not compromise, but he spent his life setting an example in the nullification of hate. Already large numbers of men are trying to follow that example. There will be many who, in the troubled days to come, will refuse to inflict physical harm and refuse, as well as they can, to hate because of Gandhi's rule. It is a simple rule and it is being remembered.

The great principle that the people of the twentieth century have to discover is the principle of acting as an individual human being, although with and for others as well as for oneself.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves
IN SUPPORT OF. . .

WE were recently privileged to receive the 28th annual report from the interracial Highlander Folk School in Monteagle, Tennessee. Out of such rare efforts as that of the Highlander School have come essential ingredients of "the informed heart" in the South.

Begun in the '30's as an adult school, Highlander has served as a residential education center where Negroes and whites meet together and learn to cope with Southern problems. Needless to say, any such endeavor is subject to violent attack, both by elements in surrounding communities and by "white supremacy" organizations. Since the 1954 Supreme Court decision attacks and schemes to close the school have redoubled in intensity. Nevertheless, at the present time, hundreds of voluntary teachers from the South are being trained at Highlander to set up "citizenship schools" to help Negro citizens acquire essential reading and writing skills.

An annual workshop in April brought together 82 persons, 47 Negro and 35 white, representing twenty colleges and nineteen states, including Hawaii, and three foreign countries. The theme was "The New Generation Fights for Equality," and an attempt was made to acquaint the teachers and supporters of Highlander with the thinking behind sit-in demonstrations, etc. The Report comments:

> To our knowledge this was the first occasion when a fairly wide cross-section of student leadership came together for a depth discussion of the movement's philosophy and goals, the consistent but not clearly defined use of the term "non-violence," original motivation and the choice of the sit-in demonstrations as a particular device for action, the whole dilemma of law and morality, and the quality and extent of the students' commitment.
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> It was also the first occasion when adult leaders in the liberal movement were invited to state views about the exclusive nature of the student demonstrations, and to require a clarifying of the students' eventual goal in the "wider community."

Another workshop was conducted in May:

> The invitation to the May workshop—*The Place of the White Southerner in the Current Struggle for Justice*—brought together sixty-four white and Negro leaders in the integration movement, 36 white and 28 Negro. Among them were some of the college sit-in demonstrators.
>
> Discussions centered on the problems of cooperation at the policy-making level, at personal and social levels, and in joint activities and interests. Dr. Viola Bernard, psychologist from Columbia University, Dr. Sam Williams, professor of philosophy at Morehouse College; and Dr. Lewis Wade Jones, professor of Sociology at Tuskegee Institute, were among the consultants.
>
> The basic principles of the Highlander workshop plan have not changed, and the weapons of social usage, forged and tempered in the past, have proved equally useful in attacking the problems of a changing present in the South. The old stance "we can do this when" becomes with our new agenda "now is the time" and this is the new workshop emphasis.

The latest activity of Highlander is an intercultural youth project, designed to investigate the many problems which accompany the first steps of integration in the schools:

> Forty-four high school students, Negro, white, American Indian, and Spanish American were enrolled, representing North and South, high and low economic backgrounds, various types of formal educational experience, and several religious faiths.
>
> The young people lived together in tents and dormitories for six weeks, shared in small housekeeping chores, played, danced and swam together. But the core of the program was a shared class experience in the arts—painting, music, literature, dramatics, and the dance. Skilled artists were their teachers. Counselors lived with the students and supervised recreation. The project was directed by Rev. Ewell Reagin, of the Cornell University Department of Religion. Herbert Haberland, a sociology student from the University of Chicago, was an observer during the six-week period, and kept records of individual and group development.

Statistics will record the "changed attitudes." Mural paintings, made by the art class, will remain on the walls of Highlander's Community Room as lasting reminders of a unique experiment in living. A book of stories and poems written by the young people will be a permanent record of new and deeper ideas about human relationships. But it is likely that no report will be so graphic or so permanent as the changes made in the lives of the forty-four young people themselves.

They will remember as long as they live friendships made across color and culture lines; a four-day bus trip through the South when they visited the "Atomic City," and a Cherokee Indian reservation, and saw the open air play *Unto These Hills.*

They will remember sitting as eager observers in the adult workshops, where, as one of the students said, "we learned more about civics than in two years of school classes." They will remember the night of the pageant when adult Negroes portrayed the history of the Negro people in America; the spirituals sung by people from the South Carolina Sea Islands; worship services in the library when able, consecrated ministers added theological insights to the new sociological experiences.

They will remember the final program when the artists, dancers, musicians and writers all interpreted through their different disciplines the new ideas learned here about human dignity and worth.

They will remember Hattie Cain's story "A Day's Crisis." The "Day" was the one a Negro child "feared most but rejoiced in its coming"; when he got out of bed thinking "I'm not afraid," although "deep down inside he was trembling as a leaf does when the autumn wind blows." It was the day he dressed more carefully than usual because "they say we're dirty and unclean," and then he cried "Oh God please help me to go through this day." He whispered when he left home "If I don't make it back, remember I've tried!" It was the day of the greatest crisis of his life—the first day when he entered the integrated school.

Further information concerning Highlander Folk School may be obtained by writing directly to the School at Monteagle, Tenn.

Our review of A. S. Neill's *Summerhill* called attention to Erich Fromm's Preface, which recommended the establishment of similar schools in as many locations as possible. We have now heard from a group in New York, which has been successful in forming a "Summerhill Society" designed to assist such ventures, and it is possible that a Summerhill School in the region of New York may come about as a result. Membership in the Summerhill Society is open to any person who sees value in the effort and, of course, no person will be denied membership "by reason of race, color, creed or political affiliation." The following is from a statement of policy:

> We hold that when children are given a responsible freedom, in a climate of understanding and non-possessive love, they choose with wisdom, learn with alacrity, develop genuinely social attitudes, and grow to be non-fearful, warm, and loving human beings. . . .
>
> I. We have formed the Summerhill Society:
>
> *a.* To establish a Summerhill School based on principles set forth in A. S. Neill's *Summerhill: A Radical Approach to Child Rearing.*
>
> *b.* To support the Summerhill School in Leiston, England.
>
> *c.* To cooperate with groups having similar aims.
>
> II. The school shall be based on the principles of self-regulation with the aim of developing happy and self-assured children.
>
> Therefore, the school shall be free of the regulatory pressure and constrictive discipline generally imposed on children in our culture.
>
> *a.* Neither pressure nor persuasion shall be employed to induce attendance at any specific class.
>
> *b.* There shall be no compulsory homework, but assistance shall always be available to any child desirous of pursuing individual projects or research.
>
> *c.* Examinations shall be given only to those students requesting practice in taking prerequisite examinations.
>
> *d.* No marks shall be given; nor shall pupils be graded; nor shall report cards be rendered to parents about the scholastic achievement of their children.

e. The school, insofar as possible, shall be run by the entire Summerhill School Community. The School Community shall consist of all children and adults at the school. Each member of the School Community shall have an equal voice and a single vote. This government shall make the rules of discipline. However, the adult administration may impose rules of safety and restrictions demanded by law. It is emphasized that wherever feasible the establishment of rules of conduct and school laws is to reside in the hands of the School Community itself.

f. The Summerhill School will follow the principle of "freedom without license," implying equal rights of teachers and children with no one infringing on the rights of any other. Teachers may—and should—demand respect for their personal rights. A teacher should not tolerate invasion of either his person or his privacy.

g. No teacher may impose retributive punishment.

h. The reading or language of a child shall not be regulated or censored.

i. The normal somatic and sexual freedom of the child shall not be invested with a sense of guilt or shame.

j. The practice of religion shall neither be fostered nor discouraged.

III. The School shall not deny admission to any child because of race, color, creed, or because of the social status or political affiliations of his parents.

IV. The school shall be open to children from nursery age through high school.

It is also provided that if a Summerhill school is formed in the New York area, it is to be run entirely on a non-profit basis. Further information may be obtained from Karin and Neal Marcus, 6201 Bay Parkway, Brooklyn 4, New York.

FRONTIERS

The Psychology of Wealth and Welfare

IGNAZIO SILONE'S writing is unusually lucid and penetrating on all socio-political questions, and he also creates a means of communication that is easily understood. Reading his article, "Reflections on the Welfare State," in the Spring issue of *Dissent,* we thought what a remarkable thing it is that these characteristics of Silone's always manage to get through in translation.

In this article, Silone investigates the contrast between mere affluence and the psychology of state welfare. He begins by relating his own first contact with "affluence" after political activities in Italy in the '30's necessitated an escape to Switzerland. Here he wrote his unforgettable *Fontamara,* in circumstances very different from the conditions he was describing:

> Stirred by homesickness and a political passion that I could not express in any other way, I wrote that story of poor southern peasants, and tried to describe the tragic, sometimes even grotesque collision between their still semi-feudal mentality and the new forms of exploitation and tyranny. At the same time, my Swiss friends were providing a no less harsh criticism of their own country's spiritual decadence. They denounced the vulgar hedonism—especially of the Swiss of the richer cantons—the mercenary neutralism, the infatuation with technology and the subsequent boredom. In support of their complaints they cited the most recent statistics on divorce and suicide, the growing fashion of psychoanalysis among all classes, and the mediocrity of artistic and literary production—in spite of substantial public and private patronage. In my frequent discussions with these friends, it was impossible not to consider the possibility that the spiritual stagnation of which they were complaining was really a consequence of the collective prosperity, and that the same stagnation would result in any other country on the road to well-being.
>
> Although they did not divert me from what I was doing, these were not unimportant problems for me. I believed that they were problems to be dealt with when they became relevant—and it would be some time before the "cafoni" of Fontamara would have to cope with the inconveniences of opulence. But the tricky question of the link between collective well-being and moral life remained a flea in my ear all the more because it was an aspect of the more general relationship between social structure and cultural superstructure which was already at the center of my reconsideration of Marxism.

Although the central points of Silone's article reach beyond a criticism of affluence itself, there is no doubt that wealth itself actually *contributes* to the conception and maintenance of dependence upon the welfare state. For it becomes intolerable for anyone, in a wealthy society, to conceive of existence without most of the things which money can buy. The state itself is importuned, so to speak, by the psychological demands of the public for material security. (It is only within the context of material security that one feels fully free to dream of even bigger and better appurtenances to one's life.) Silone, incidentally, gives a dramatic instance in which the inhabitants of one European region showed that they were more impressed by the *idea* of receiving something from the government than they were by the small pension they were actually able to get by making claims. They wanted the security of *knowing* that they were Supported, would be economically Protected. (This attitude is hardly limited to one European community, but is rather a state of mind that is slowly insinuating itself into the minds of a large proportion of the world's population.)

However, it is to Silone's analysis of the contribution of affluence to a "leveled-down" (instead of *up*) culture that we draw attention, for here we encounter a force that works directly on all our lives and the lives of our children, not merely through the complicated relationships between an individual and his government. Silone writes:

> It has become impossible to count the voices criticizing a social order based on the idea of welfare. These are warnings from the economically more developed countries against the illusion that cultural and moral advances derive from material well-being. It seems instead that the unpleasant characteristics that often make the *nouveau riche* appear grotesque, are reproduced on a larger scale in nations which

> have attained economic wealth and security. Prosperity apparently serves mainly to satisfy the long suppressed hunger for cheap and coarse pleasures; vulgarity increases together with income. The protected individuals of well-fed nations appear to us as massive, extroverted, boring and bored beings, the permanent objects of external solicitation. Memory becomes weaker; men no longer think or stand alone; they do not have friends but only acquaintances. Just at the moment when philosophers have rediscovered the Hegelian concept of alienation, a complacent reality demonstrates it.
>
> Mechanical progress has created machines which resemble men and corresponding social evolution fashions men who resemble machines. Even the leaders are called "big wheels." It would be useless to object that these are now, as never before, mass produced, like all other objects of common usage. The size of the capital investment in consumer goods industries, from automobiles to phonograph records, from food preserves to clothing, makes it imperative that sales volume not be left to chance: consumer desires must be excited, directed, controlled.
>
> Whatever the nature of the political regime, the manifold functions of a wealthy society tend to be directed by a class of anonymous, well-paid, disciplined, efficient and docile bureaucrats. The result reminds us of the caricature that, until a few decades ago, liberal writers drew of the future socialist order: in medical records death by tuberculosis would be replaced by death by boredom. One might conclude that the affluent society created by industrialism has all the faults of socialism without its advantages.

What is also likely is that when the socialist societies have themselves turned into affluent societies, the patterns of life created by industrialism will have made them so like the capitalist societies that it will be difficult to tell the two apart. It seems certain, at any rate, that the problems of both sorts of societies will be essentially the same, and it may be that the reconciliation of their differences will begin when it is recognized that a well-fed, self-indulgent human being who has become bored by the ease with which he satisfies his desires is a man who cannot be helped by political solutions. We tend to forget that to say a man is a socialist or a capitalist is a very trivial remark by comparison with the statement that he is a *man.*