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FAITH IN MAN

THERE is only one force that can reform the world and redirect human energies toward the creation of a common life which has hope of being lived with an eagerness of spirit. That force is faith in man. Faith, not in labelled or classified man—not in socialist man or capitalist man, nor in religious man or atheist man, not in "free" man nor in enslaved and downtrodden man—but in human man, man without further description or qualification. There is no escape from this finality, no way around this momentous decision. We have to believe in ourselves and our fellows.

This is not a matter of ignoring evil or human weakness. There is no need to become naïve or sentimental. Belief in man is not naive or sentimental. It is the only "realism" that we can afford, for anything else will lead to rapid self-destruction. The time has come to wear away the imposing mechanisms and conventions of distrust. We cannot expect to avoid risks. To trust is to take a chance. What is now evident is that to distrust is to take a much greater chance—indeed, it is not a chance at all, but an invitation to unqualified disaster.

A new air is beginning to move across the face of the earth. It is an air which permits men's faith in each other to breathe again. Some kind of rebirth of the human spirit seems to be taking place, although, as yet, there are only isolated symptoms, unexpected declarations, and occasional wild gestures. These acts and statements take the form of recognition of simple truths. No longer are men ashamed to utter ancient verities, although they are saying them as though they bore the light of a new discovery.

The awakening to faith in man is not an unevenly emotional outburst. It exhibits men reaching down to some solid foundation for their lives. Here, they are saying, is where I stand.

This awakening is not coming to some special "kind" of people. You cannot predict who will be next to give it voice. It may be a general, a businessman, or a communist. It may be some youth who is reasoning for himself and is catapulted into the public eye by something he must do which is interpreted as an act of defiance. What is important in these events is the fact that men of every sort are beginning to feel unable to go against their own moral intelligence. They feel outraged by the way the world is going. A human being is a being who eventually resists outrage to his intelligence. To define human beings so is to give expression to faith in man. To refuse to let our intelligence be outraged, and to refuse to accept policies and public actions which will manifestly outrage the intelligence of others—this is to show an active faith in man.

Take for example the speech of General Omar N. Bradley, delivered last November in Washington, D.C., at the convocation of St. Alban's School. This speech was reprinted in full in *I. F. Stone's Weekly* (Nov. 18, 1957), and briefly reported in the New York *Times* of Nov. 6. General Bradley, the *Times* points out, was "the man who led the United States First Army in the assault on the Normandy beaches." On this occasion, he said:

> I am unable to understand why—if we are willing to trust in reason as a restraint on the use of a ready-made, ready-to fire bomb—we do not make greater diligent and more imaginative use of reason and human intelligence in seeking an accord and compromise which will make it possible for mankind to control the atom and banish it as an instrument of war.

General Bradley found an immense and awful irony in mankind's attempt "to stave off this ultimate threat of disaster by devising arms which would be both ultimate and disastrous." Describing the current international situation as "critical," he said that "with each effort we have made to relieve it by further scientific advance we have succeeded in aggravating our peril."

General Bradley said that earth satellites were claiming too much attention, that the "conquest of

space" is not half so important as finding a way to live in peace with the Soviet Union. General Bradley said nothing, however, of the sickening realization which must be overtaking some of our national leaders, who are now compelled to realize that the military supremacy of the United States is no longer certain. When policy-makers have staked their entire hopes for success on the certainty of overwhelmingly superior military force, what can they fall back on when the superior force no longer exists? What can result but a dazed and palsied indecision? Yet here, too, are reasons for rediscovery of faith in man, as an act of sheer necessity.

In London last December, George F. Kennan, former ambassador to Russia, and former chief policy planner for the State Department of the United States, appealed to the members of NATO to reject the offer of so-called "tactical atomic weapons" to arm the European members of the Alliance. Anticipating the "summit" meeting in Paris on Dec. 16, he said that European acceptance of such missiles from the U.S. would assure that any minor difficulty in Europe would at once "develop into a major one." Now a professor of history at the Princeton Institute for Advanced Study, Mr. Kennan urged that American, British and Russian forces agree to withdraw from Europe. He condemned the atomic arms race as suicidal.

Meanwhile, in Communist lands—in China, Hungary, and Poland—the awakening is taking other forms. It would be cruel to suggest that the brutal suppression of the Hungarian uprising by Soviet tanks and troops was a necessary stimulus to the disillusionment of communists the world over, yet the disillusionment is an undeniable fact. Wide notice has been taken of the moderate relaxation of thought-control in China, and the revolt of communist intellectuals in Poland and other countries is now well-established. Earlier this year, a French communist writer declared: "As long as we persist in the thesis that only that is moral and just which serves the working class, we shall encourage an ethics of amoralism in its most repulsive form: it is vulgar Machiavellianism and Utilitarianism." Commenting, a Polish Communist writer asks:

> Does the retention of Hungary within the socialist camp or, in other words, does a strategical victory warrant the enormous loss of moral prestige which Communists have suffered in the eyes of the whole world? Can one fight with Stalinist, anti-socialist means for Socialism? Shall strategical considerations and "ultimate higher political ends" forever triumph in the communist movement over ideological-moral and humanist ends?

This questioning is by the Polish writer, Jadwiga Siekierska, and appears in an article in the Indian *Radical Humanist* for Oct. 13, 1957, reprinted from the Polish journal, *Ost-Probleme*.

Siekierska is concerned with reviving the original humanist inspiration for the revolutionary movement. Against the Hungarian tragedy, he sets a quotation from Marx:

> Somewhere Karl Marx has written that "an end that requires a unjust means is no just end." We should remember these words when we examine the world of today. . . . The idea of the young Marx that the highest end of man is man has been fundamentally revised. Man has been devoured by the Moloch of production and political expediency. A new spectre arose: "the ever sharpening class war." In the name of that new myth, men have been morally degraded: lies, deception, denunciation and all manner of amoral motives were given free play on the pretext that they served the class interests of the proletariat and the destruction of the class enemy. . . .
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> In the relations between Communist Parties blind faith was demanded and unconditional obedience vis-a-vis The Party, which had always to be right. Black was called white, and crime was presented as class ethics; lies were raised to the dignity of truth, and history was forged; facts were distorted, science became partisan and the embellishment of reality was called socialist realism.
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> But it was man himself who suffered the greatest alienation and degradation. The subject who was to create Socialism became an object and a blind tool in the struggle. The masses were invoked and held in contempt. The Party was extolled into a great abstraction, but the party members were condemned to silence, their independent thinking was suppressed with violence. Human dignity was trampled under foot and those who revolted against the Stalin terror were reviled. . . . the accumulation of errors and crimes against Humanism in Communism is a dangerous phenomenon which undermines the

confidence of the people in Communism and its ideology.

This candid analysis of Communism under Stalin is as forthright in its judgments of the moral decay in revolutionary idealism as anything claimed by democratic critics of Soviet Russia. And if it be said that Siekierska is still a *Communist*, it could be rejoined that *this is the point:* that intelligent Communists are capable of the integrity of thought and critical independence Siekierska shows in his indictment of the Soviet State under Stalin. His article represents a return to the civilized tradition of intellectual discourse, in which it may be assumed—*must* be assumed—that a man means what he says. To be able to credit political opponents with an integrity equal to our own is a necessity of rational international relations and not the least of the requirements of world peace.

In the United States, the articulate expressions of Howard Fast, who left the Communist Party after Nikita S. Krushchev's "secret speech" attacking Stalin, give added weight to the proposition that Communists are not incapable of intellectual and moral integrity. This talented novelist, long proudly claimed by the Russians as a supporter of Soviet policies, has become bitterly critical of the Party hacks who still defend the crime against Hungary as a "price" which had to be paid for Soviet unity and prestige. Fast's declaration of independence will go far in removing the blinders from the eyes of others who have lacked the courage to break with the Party discipline.

There is evidence of a general loosening of the bonds of conformity in quite different quarters. Last December, Dr. Walter Donald Kring, the Unitarian Minister of All Souls Church in New York, said in a sermon:

> Sometimes I wish that someone in my afternoon class [of young people of high school age] would come up with the dogmatic idea that killing is wrong, and that Christians should not kill. I know the practical treatment that this sort of idea would get from the rest of the group. But I wonder sometimes if in this whole process of being well-informed and understanding the world of which we are a part, the practical has been too much with us and the ideal, even the impossible ideal, has been literally abandoned. If it has, we are doomed. If being informed today means only that we know what a statesman means when he says that our production capacity should be increased, or that our relations with such a country should be thus and so, we do not know enough. If this is all we know or understand, our so-called practical education has been short-sighted indeed, for we have missed the inspiration in ideals which has always been and will always be a part of our culture. It has been such an important part of this great principle which we have called "The American Ideal." When our idealism disappears and we do not appreciate the importance of love and tenderness and concern for other individuals except as political expediencies, we have missed the real basis of what we call "The American Ideal."
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> What we need to do is to bring to bear upon our present situation not only the possible but the impossible solutions. . . .

What Dr. Kring may not realize is that for many, the solution he speaks of as "impossible" already appears to be the only possible thing to do. The London *Peace News* for Dec. 13 provides a verbatim report of an interchange between the president of a French court and Christian Desmazieres, a thirty-five-year-old conscientious objector who was brought before the court a third time for refusing to accept military papers of any kind. Following is a portion of the report:

> "There are far too many cases of conscientious objection to military service these days," the President of the court began, making himself the mouthpiece of official opinion.
>
> He added: "It is indeed much too easy to evade the sacrifice of blood."
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> "Not as easy as you think, Mr. President. The purpose of my refusal to receive military papers is to show my solidarity with the imprisoned conscientious objectors, some of whom have been in jail for eight years."
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> "It's shirking, all the same," said the President.
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> "You will realize that it is hardly likely that at my age I should be sent to Algeria. If you still believe that I am acting from cowardice, I shall venture to draw your attention to the fact that I took part in the second world war and was awarded a distinction."
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> "Then you must have changed your mind. Explain yourself."

"I have been thinking a good deal since the war. My attitude is easily explained. I am a sincere Christian. To me all men are brothers, and I have no reason to kill a German or an Algerian. Besides, the Algerian war is madness and cannot possibly succeed."

"Indeed," protested the President.

"Those are not my words. They were spoken by Prime Minister Guy Mollet in an election speech. 'You have been deceived, you and I,' he said."

For a moment the President seemed stumped by this reply. But he must have thought that Guy Mollet's inconsistency was no exception, for he said:

"You have changed your mind because you took part in one war and don't want to take part in another. I assure you that you will change your mind once more."

"You can sentence me as often as you like. But you can bet your last penny that I shan't be the first to give in," Christian Desmazieres replied firmly.

After long deliberation the court arrived at a surprising decision. Desmazieres was sent to a psychiatrist for a report on his mental health!

Here is a clear case of the bewilderment of the administrators of our past-bound and institution-directed society by the lucid common sense and intelligence of a free man. The obvious comment, made by the *Peace News* reporter, concerns the question of who needs psychiatric aid the most—statesmen, or those who reject war.

Now these several instances of revolt and honest expression—from a general, a statesman, a Unitarian minister, a novelist, a Polish political thinker, and a French soldier turned Christian pacifist—do not of themselves create a "trend." They do, however, reflect a mood of questioning, an attitude of independent judgment, and a growing conviction that it is time to speak in behalf of *man.* Moment by moment, day by day, this spirit is gaining a hearing in the world. While the press may for the most part ignore General Bradley's astonishing and desperate appeal, while few American readers may have opportunity to see analyses of the world communist movement such as that offered by Jadwiga Siekierska, and while the news of what conscientious objectors the world over are now saying to their judges may never reach the pages of any but pacifist papers, the light is spreading, the initiative is being taken by men of faith and good will. Fear and distrust are powerful, but they have this against them, that they are completely unoriginal, that they can inhabit only inherited structures—structures erected by the free imagination which was active in the past. Eventually, fear and distrust always go bankrupt, since they are totally unable to produce moral inspiration.

It is no gamble to place one's faith in trust in man. In the long run, all other faiths but this one fail and perish. Men do not always see this truth. Most men who discover it do so only under the pressure of crisis, and from exhaustion of all other hope. But the periodic rediscovery of faith in man has been the genesis of every historic change in the affairs of men. When there are great leaders, and when events pregnant with destiny press this discovery upon the masses of mankind, the dead, hard shell of habit melts away in the fire of a new vision. The vision may not last—it never lasts for whole societies—but there is at least a new beginning, and countless innovations are established, giving the creative spirit scope for several generations. It is not too much to predict, simply on the basis of the utterly sterile character of the status quo, and the slowly rising tide of individual independence and private intelligence, that a fresh beginning for mankind is on the way. The task of those who long for and would serve a dawn of this sort, is to strengthen, illuminate, and guide the multiplying impulses to freedom, as they emerge. And a basic faith in man must anticipate that these impulses will often disclose themselves in strange vocabularies and burst forth in unexpected places—*wherever there are men.*

REVIEW
"SOME ATTITUDES TOWARD DEATH"

IN the Fall, 1957, *Diogenes*, Harold Orlans presents the result of an unusual study, which he explains in the following paragraphs:

> The massive literature of modern psychology, which embraces so many important and unimportant subjects, fails conspicuously to deal with one fundamental human problem—many would term it *the* fundamental human problem—death. Why, when there are libraries of books on every aspect of normal or abnormal character in infancy, childhood, adolescence, adulthood, and (more recently) old age, is the human adjustment to death ignored? An essay by Freud, several articles by Schilder, a volume by Anthony, and a few scattered papers virtually exhaust the scientific literature on the subject. Does the vain Faustian spirit, searching ever for the light, fear to examine the heart of darkness? Or has society, uncloaking sexuality, put death in its place as a secret rite not to be discussed in public? Has psychology, like so much of physics, become a kind of dignified engineering, forsaking truth for utility and therefore disinterested in a matter about which nothing can be done? Or is it felt that inquiry can disclose no more than what has always been known—that all men are mortal?
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> By itself, this article can hardly rectify such a long-standing condition. However, it does indicate that an empirical approach is possible in an area traditionally consigned to poetry, philosophy, and theology. These disciplines have made an indispensable contribution to man's conception of death; but the poet's sensitivity, the philosopher's intelligence, and the theologian's passionate humility can be fruitfully supplemented by a collection of prosaic facts viewed with a modest objectivity.
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> The facts which will be reported consist of 530 personal statements, ranging from a few words to many pages, in the London files of Mass-Observation. An organization of sociologists whose independence of academic circles has had some refreshing consequences following their work, Mass-Observation operates with a panel of two thousand individuals throughout Britain who voluntarily reply to questions mailed them each month.

From a philosophical point of view, the results of this poll seem to be but another measure of emotional immaturity. Mr. Orlans reveals that when panel members were asked: "What are your own personal feelings now about death and dying? Do you think about it much, occasionally, or hardly at all? Has the war had any effect on the extent to which you think about it, or your general feelings about it?" the questions were seldom cordially received:

> "Death," writes a subway-station attendant, "is one of the subjects at which my mind tends to 'job.' It's also 'taboo' as a topic of conversation in all my immediate circle of friends." A young woman confesses, "I have always had a tendency to shy from any discussion and hastily to switch my thoughts in other directions." And a soldier writes, "I try to think as little as possible about death and dying." . . . "I excuse myself, with apologies, from answering this one," a woman writes, "having been suffering for the past few months from an abnormal state of mind and abnormally preoccupied with ideas about death." Consciousness can be a sword which cuts the hand that wields it.

However, as Mr. Orlans points out, "to strive to avoid a subject is not to be indifferent to it,"—and, we are sure, the psychologist would add, "or even to be successful at avoiding it." Dr. Karen Horney devoted a portion of her *Neurosis and Human Growth* to a "non-Freudian" analysis of man's reaction to the thought of death. Her conclusion was that *normal* human beings must come to terms with the thought of death through some philosophical means if they are not to be subject to a thousand and one derivative fears of a destructive nature. After all, she reasoned, our fears are related, and every personal concern is both logically and emotionally involved in the idea that one's entire individuality may some day be blotted out. Tolstoy once wrote that "one can go on living when one is intoxicated by life; as soon as one is sober it is impossible not to see that it is all a mere fraud. . . . I now see that if I did not kill myself it was due to some dim consciousness of the invalidity of my thoughts. I, my reason, has acknowledged life to be unreasonable. But how can reason, which (for me) is the creator of life, and (in reality) the child of life, deny life? There is something wrong here." But just what is it that is "wrong"? Is the trouble necessarily in the

structure of human nature, or is it that we have not yet learned how to interpret man's nature correctly? Are we really in possession of all the knowledge needed to form the judgment that death is the final end of life? Can the fears of death described by Mr. Orlans perhaps be neurotic reactions growing out of immature philosophies?

But Mr. Orlans does not feel that the problem is philosophical. In a summarizing paragraph he remarks that "the last thing we would suggest is that there need be any overriding harmony or consistency about these thoughts within any one person and still less among individuals within a society." He believes that "the unity of a man" must include all his inconsistencies, ambivalences and vacillations. But isn't this conclusion itself another version of Tolstoy's frustration? Perhaps rightfully disregarding the doctrines proposed by various religions, Orlans concludes that the desire for immortality is no more than a vanity—albeit a most cherished one. Yet it may not be irrational to rebel against the conclusion that, as Macneile Dixon once put it, "human life is mere buffoonery, that the story is without a point, that men must leave the theatre in which they played their sad, incomprehensible parts with their instincts mocked, their understandings unenlightened."

Just what can be said in behalf of immortality without deserting reason and logic is for every man to decide for himself. But some of the poets and some of the philosophers have at least established the fact that, should we seek an affirmative answer to the question, we are in good company. Schopenhauer once wrote: "In the furthest depth of our being we are secretly conscious of our share in the inexhaustible spring of eternity, so that we can always hope to find life in it again." And this simple affirmation is no more illogical than to say that "in the furthest depth of our being" we are aware of an inexorable march toward ultimate oblivion. At this point we can perhaps do no better than to quote a few sentences of Dixon's *Human Situation,* which suggest an obvious ground for reflecting on the possibility of a continued existence:

> Our interest in the future, how strange it is if we can never hope to see the future. That interest rarely seems to desert us, and in itself appears inexplicable were we not possessed of an intuition which tells us that we shall have a part in it, that in some sense it already belongs to us, that we should bear it continually in mind, since it will be ours. So closely are all human ideals associated with futurity that, in the absence of the faith that man is an immortal being, it seems doubtful whether they could ever have come to birth.

The study of the possibility of immortality need have nothing to do either with spiritualism or religion, nor is it necessarily dependent upon the results of such researches as those undertaken by Drs. J. B. Rhine and J. G. Pratt (see the recent volume *Parapsychology—Frontier Science of the Mind.*) It is simply an inquiry, which may be individually undertaken, into the meaning of human individuality. While it is obvious that many persons believe in immortality because they cannot dispense with the vanities of personal existence, others may approach the question from the standpoint of serious philosophical inquiry.

COMMENTARY
GIVING THE DEVIL HIS DUE

WHY should we be so interested in the "distinguished individual"? An interest of this sort can easily get you into trouble, as it did with the reader who finds serious fault with the evidence we presented to show that the "distinguished individuals" of any society are comparatively few in number (see Frontiers).

The answer is probably that only distinguished individuals seem to cope successfully with life. We should like to know more about their secret, and the more we study them and what they have done—who they were, and the circumstances attending their lives—the more convinced we become that they were not the result of planned parenthood and an especially designed environment.

That is why we get a little tired of attempts to "explain" them in conventional terms, and why we remain more interested in their attitudes and ideals.

This week's Review gives ample illustration of the fact that life—and death—is too much for most of us. Mr. Orlans reports (from Mass Observation data) on the impoverishment of modern thought on the subject of death. It is a subject from which most men take flight. But for a handful of philosophers and poets—Plato, Montaigne, Wordsworth and William Cullen Bryant are good examples—death was an avenue to the greatest of thoughts. And so with all the climactic aspects of human experience. The best of life and the best of reflections on the meaning of life come to us from the very few.

We can learn something, no doubt, from statistical sociology, but we shall never learn from studies of mass behavior—the behavior amenable to the makers of charts and the planners of utopias—what a human being may make of life all by himself. Let us raise the "average" by all means; let us have good sanitation, sound nutrition, and an even chance for all; but let us not become so engrossed in all this "leveling up" that we neglect to make it clear that the best in human beings arises from causes which are not known to us.

Nor is this a contemptuous neglect of the "common man." The common man will have what he wants, will become what he longs to become, only by raising his own life to an uncommon level. Why should we fool ourselves with the hope of satisfaction from the ordinary—nothing but more and more of the ordinary, however excellently turned out? What has made American life so vapid and tasteless but an incredible variety in the ordinary, a sumptuous display of the commonplace? What but this has made wealth the false symbol of distinction, deceiving rich and poor alike?

What have these people to say to the bleak pessimism of the Existentialists? Exactly nothing. So far as they are concerned, the Existentialists could not be more right. Make a "statistical analysis" of the past three hundred years of history to see, by any reasonable standard you choose, if they are not right. If you speak for the common man, what has been his fortune at the hands of the Church, the State, the Revolution, the Middle Class Republic, the Communists—or any of the self-appointed "managers" of human society? Look at the persecutions, the wars, the perversions of ideals in "mass" terms and then find an answer to the Existentialists if you can! You will not find it in history, although you may find it in the promises of theorists and hopeful radicals, if any of these still exist. You will not find it on any mass basis if you are determined to deal in facts.

But you will find an answer in the lives and the thinking of distinguished individuals. Here you will find men who saw all that the Existentialists see, yet were not overtaken by negation and despair; who felt within themselves the anguish of the great mass of men, yet did not thereupon conclude that the universe is a vast, entropic conspiracy against human intelligence.

The great, it is true, have not been exactly "happy" men. But where did we get this conception of "happiness" as the be-all and end-all of life? From the Utilitarians, from the benevolent Paternalists who thought they understood the needs of human beings better than the philosophers and the great religious teachers. *Waiting for Godot* has an appropriate reply to these people: "Now that we are happy, what shall we do?"

The angry face of a man with a grenade in his hand; the mushroom cloud which hangs over the future like a canopy of Hell—these are dread symbols of a humanity which has turned against these false theories of the Good Life in blind and furious reaction. What did you expect, from promises which could not be kept?

What will you say now? Will you say, "Let us do it *differently* next time," or will you seek out the wisdom of men who set about ordering their lives without waiting until the discovery of Never-Never Land, who were the unmanaged, unbenefited men who found in themselves the harmony and vision that we have hoped to imitate by sound management and equitable distribution?

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves
NOTES AND QUOTES

A SUBSCRIBER who apparently shares our approval of the career of Robert M. Hutchins recently mailed us an article from *Life* for Nov. 11, 1957, entitled, "Nobody Loves the Football Hero Now." The writer, Marshall Smith, seeks to show that commercialism in college athletics, particularly in respect to football, has entirely discredited this featured American sport for the students of universities. He unhesitatingly proclaims that "the football player is now an object of scorn rather than adulation," and continues in the following "authoritative" tone:

> A survey of leading football colleges across the country shows that the old rah rah, without which heroes cannot survive, has subsided to a murmur. The new breed of undergraduate does not believe in heroes any more than he believes in Santa Claus. He is usually more concerned with the size of the college library than with the size of the team's left tackle. When he is exposed to a football player, he generally finds him a rough, uncouth fellow incapable of discussing earth satellites or, for that matter, even the earth. Consequently he views these athletes as a special group, apart from the regular student body. Except for a few hours on Saturday afternoon, today's football players are ignored or pitied or even resented, depending on the campus.
>
> Little effort is made to hide the fact that the bigtime college player of 1957 is no less a mercenary than Rome's ancient gladiators. No regular student at a big football school today would think of going out for the team on his own hook.

Our reader apparently feels that Mr. Smith's "exposure" is all to the good, signalizing a new recognition of the proper function of a university as a place for thinking rather than a place for spectacle. We, however, would be more impressed by Mr. Smith if he had argued for starting a school of philosophical repute, instead of selling *Life* a story based on "startling" revelations. So far as we can tell, this attack on the reputation of football athletes contains about as much reliable data as a House Un-American Activities Committee's report on "radical" thinkers. And so we stand somewhere in the middle, deprecating the bigtime commercialism of a huge spectator sport, yet appreciative of the physical and other benefits which many of the participants in college football seek and receive. And we don't mean pay for play.

Granted that public interest in football reflects adolescent enthusiasm for tangible physical prowess, it remains a fact that this preoccupation is obviously a spontaneous expression of the American psyche. The excellent football player—perhaps later to become a coach of all sports in some high-school—helps to keep alive the ideal of rigorous physical conditioning, courage, and the ability to "rise to the occasion." And the fact that, because of his services to the athletic department, he is often enabled to work his way through school with a campus job, rates something better than a sneer.

Our reason for reporting on Mr. Smith's rather flamboyant article is simply that we believe, along with other admirers of the old Athenians, that athletics plays a useful and important role in education. While we agree with Dr. Hutchins that a university truly dedicated to the "higher learning" cannot be bothered with football as "big business," few if any universities of this sort exist today. Considering college life for what it is, a great deal can be said for the rigorous disciplines and physical conditioning of a major sport—so far as the participants themselves are concerned.

In fairness to the thousands of excellent American athletes who gain lasting benefits from the Spartan training of a football career, we should say that, however much one admires Dr. Hutchins, one can hardly admire the technique of Marshall Smith, who knocks football in order to sell a story. When he remarks that "no regular student at a big football school today would think of going out for the team on his own hook"—that is, without being "paid"—he has misrepresented the facts. Good athletes are often good men and good intellects. Every sport, honestly pursued, is a true "game" for the most interested players, however much may be done by spectators to make the whole procedure mercenary. At the University of California at Los Angeles, football players have maintained a higher scholastic average

than the rest of the student body, while the sport pages reveal that Phi Beta Kappas, promising physics majors, and future ministers of the Gospel contribute outstanding physical talents to a perennial team of spirited youngsters. There are many more criticizable things about the modern university than the over-emphasis of football and the participation of athletically-minded young men in the game.

As a last note, and by way of deploring a tendency sometimes observed in *Life* Magazine to publish features based on psychological gimmicks, we wish to report that two quotations claimed by Mr. Smith to support his thesis that "football is no good any more," are apparently made up out of whole cloth. Sports columnist Dick Hyland of the Los Angeles *Times* interviewed two of Smith's "authoritative" sources, Stanford University's coach, Chuck Taylor, and a star Stanford fullback, finding both amazed at Smith's alleged quotations from them. They both denied saying any such thing to the dimly remembered person who hung around the locker-room to ask some questions.

So, in both high school and college, let's give justice where justice is due. While the major work of education is philosophy and while a football career is a poor substitute for this, the two need not be irreconcilable. Neither the coaches nor the players are "what's wrong with football," but merely the frenetic enthusiasm of a public suffering from prolonged adolescence. This game is often played for its own sake, and it may often offer more in the way of "personality development" than some of the subjects in the regular curriculum.

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A feature story in the New York *Herald-Tribune* for Dec. 18 describes the attempt of Prof. Beberman and a small group of mathematics experimentalists at the University of Illinois to make "math" an adventure. Helen Rowan, editor of the Carnegie Corporation of New York Quarterly, suggests that there can be few things more thrilling than a successful combination of the "exact" science of math with "the glowing sense of wonder our children are born with." Prof. Beberman writes:

> Numbers are as abstract as angles. Mathematics is as creative as music, painting or sculpture. The high school freshman will revel in it if we let him play with it as an abstraction. But insisting that he pin numbers down is like asking him to catch a butterfly to explain the sheen on its wings—the magical glint of the sun rubs off on his fingers and the fluttering thing in his hands can never lift into the air again to renew his wonder.
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> Rather than asking a pupil to explain the fascinating tricks he sees numbers perform Beberman and his colleagues discourage verbalization as long as they can without frustrating creative curiosity. "You don't ask a boy or girl to dissect his response to the first seascape he sees or the first string quartet he hears," the professor shrugs amiably. "Why expect a description of a mathematical operation?"

Miss Rowan continues, offering explanation of the Beberman technique:

> Adults who were never freely exposed to math's fascination while they were at the susceptible age—that is, most of us—are far more likely to ask, "Of what use is it?" This is the question which all scientists, not merely mathematicians, will recognize as the great "practical" barrier to appreciation of fundamental research. Professor Beberman may open a broad new avenue for the teaching of all science through his observation that when children ask "What use is it?" they don't really mean it. The brightest pupils never raise the question. Youngsters whose minds are somewhat slower ask it only when they encounter a particular problem they can't solve quickly. Let the math teacher inquire, "What's the problem?" and the emphasis immediately shifts. "What use?" is forgotten. The question was asked in the first place only as an unconscious justification for the child's difficulty.
>
> What comes finally from the Beberman experiments is more a change in emphasis than in content. Along with that goes a change in the traditional sequence in which high school math is taught. Pupils follow threads of arithmetic and algebra and geometry all through, and so develop a feeling for the essential unity of all mathematics.

FRONTIERS

"An Unpopular Question"—Comment

A FRIENDLY critic takes exception to the use of a table in "An Unpopular Question" (MANAS, Dec. 4, 1957), representing the distribution of "intelligence" (based on IQ scores) among a population of 100,000,000 people. The table showed some 60,000,000 persons falling in the "average" category, with 250,000 geniuses or "near" geniuses at the top of the scale (IQ—140 and up), and the same number at the bottom in the imbecile and idiot class. The reason for citing this table in the MANAS article was to emphasize the fact—or presumed fact—of a wide spread of differences among human beings. This conclusion was then incorporated in what might be loosely termed an "aristocratic" theory of human progress and relationships.

The argument was this: So long as power remains the crucial goal of those who work for the good society, there is a strong tendency among such people to ignore or brush aside human differences as simply non-existent or, at any rate, undesirable. But when power—meaning political or coercive power—is found to be no longer a reasonable objective, the reason for ignoring human differences loses its force.

Why does this follow? Because, when significant differences among men are acknowledged in a power-seeking and power-oriented society, a natural logic suggests that the power should belong to the most competent, wisest, or best men. In the past, men have sought power and justified gaining and having it by claiming to be the best men. More often than not, they misused the power and established tyrannies of caste or class. Accordingly, the "best men" theory became extremely unpopular among lovers of justice. It is still unpopular, or should be, when made an excuse for the drive to power. If you are going to talk about the best men, and still show regard for justice, you have to believe and insist that by "best" you mean the men who don't want power, seldom accept it, and never misuse it even if it is practically forced upon them.

The point of "An Unpopular Question" was that recognition of the futility of power as a means of "doing good" enables us to look without moral prejudices at the matter of human differences.

Our correspondent does not approve of the statistical approach to the question of human differences, in terms of IQ scores. He writes:

> . . . your "Unpopular Question" article seems to me to contain what I regard as the most serious error I've encountered in MANAS yet. Not that you're unique; the same error is implicit in practically all teacher education and in much, if not most, psychological writing.
>
> This error lies in the unspoken assumption that the present norm is the necessary norm. This error has been around since Gauss came up with the normal distribution curve.
>
> There is no—repeat, *no*—evidence to show that the average IQ of the human being, if he were differently trained, might not be 140-160 instead of 90-110. There *is* evidence that proper training of children (and, in fact, proper diet for expectant mothers) can raise IQ's at least as much as twenty points.
>
> Furthermore, there is no evidence to show that there must necessarily be a 70-point spread (barring physical brain damage) [in the table, the scores from the "moron" grade to the "geniuses" ranged over a gamut of 70 points—70-140 IQ]. It might very well be that the biological norm—as opposed to the present *statistical* norm—would be on the order of a 20-point IQ spread, from 180 to 200, for instance.
>
> I am using the admittedly inadequate IQ scale for purposes of argument here, simply to make clear what I mean. The inadequacies of that scale are generally known to psychologists.

In a word, this correspondent argues that ideal nurture and education might do much to level off human differences, producing people who are both better and more alike in their capacities.

One would hate to deny this possibility. If our correspondent's claim can be verified by figures, the data would have to come from a population of children who have all had superior

and much the same advantages. Perhaps such figures exist. We can certainly admit that the IQ scores of a great many children would be bettered by improved environmental conditions and better teaching. Work done at the University of Iowa with children of feeble-minded parentage has proved this beyond doubt. But whether even the best possible environment could eliminate the fact of individual distinction remains an important question. Further, there are too many cases of unusual individuals who have arisen from extremely bad environments to make it possible to assume that environment and good teaching are the only significant factors to be considered in questions of this sort. At any rate, at risk of contradiction, we maintain that even under optimum conditions, the distinction of individuals would still be a major fact to reckon with.

Meanwhile, we have the contribution of another look at this sort of problem, drawn from Arthur Morgan's talk on education last fall at Antioch (quoted in MANAS for Jan. 22). The following gives some support to our critic's observations:

> . . . to a very large degree our early influences (what the psychologists call our early conditioning) set the pattern for our lives. We may illustrate this in the field of race relations. The people of Arkansas are inherently about the same kind of people we are. At least it seemed that way to me during the time I lived and worked in that state. The percentages of whites and Negroes in Arkansas are approximately the same as in our village of Yellow Springs, and that has been the case for nearly a century. Here we find a large degree of integration and of mutual respect. The attitude in Arkansas has been disclosed by recent events. I recall hearing one Arkansas planter say to another concerning an especially good sharecropper tenant, "A nigger like that is very good property." If we had been born and reared in Arkansas our attitude probably would have been the same as theirs. If those who have been expressing disapproval of integration in the Little Rock schools had grown up in Yellow Springs, their attitudes probably would be about the same as ours. The differences in attitudes are largely a matter of early influence or conditioning.

In one context, what Dr. Morgan says may be taken as argument for a basically civilized environment. Parents and teachers who believe in the right things will pass their attitudes along to their children.

No one can quarrel with this. The values of environment should not be minimized. But neither—and this is our point—should they be exaggerated into *absolute* values. The proposition that human beings are and ought to be free is the proposition that every man, woman and child has innate qualities which make him potentially able to transcend the limitations imposed by *any* environment. You do not manufacture people; you may nurture them, but you do not manufacture them.

Rigidly equalitarian theories of education tend to assume that people can be made, and made properly, by their environment. It is only a short step from this view to totalitarian theories of education. For if you think you can "make" a good man, you are likely to think you ought to be given full powers so that you can work on the project without interference from backward types who don't understand your high purposes. The Communists had something like this in mind when they outlawed scientific doctrines and theories which did not jibe with the prevailing version of dialectical materialism. They would have no reactionary biology, no capitalist physics, any more than they would allow reformist or counter-revolutionary sociology to pervert the education of the coming generations of the good Socialist Society.

You get into deep trouble by claiming *too much* for environment.

Well, what does make the man?

Heredity makes some of him, environment makes some of him, and "X" makes some of him. What is "X"? "X" is a mystery and a postulate necessary to every free society. If you pare down "X" to an insignificant value, you eventually come up with some kind of production-line theory of

man. And if you re-interpret "X" in theological terms, you get another sort of tyrannical mandate on how to produce good men, including, perhaps, another Spanish Inquisition to keep production up to par.

"X" is "X" and sacred to itself. This doesn't mean that you can't or oughtn't to think about it. Thinking about "X" is the vocation of the philosopher, which is one way of saying that it is the vocation of man.

Now it can and probably will be argued that much of the foregoing is a uselessly high-toned argument which seeks to guarantee elbow-room for mystery and obscurantism. We prefer to regard it as an argument in opposition to the tendency to explain man and human behavior away in terms of causes and forces outside himself. It is, if you will, an anti-scientific argument: anti-scientific in the sense that it affirms the right of human beings to regard themselves as more than an outgrowth of their genes, more than an offprint of their times, more than an elaboration of their conditionings.

It is an argument for the Platonic conception of the soul as a self-moving unit, of man as a responsible moral agent. It rejects the idea that the differences among men can be entirely accounted for by external causes, whether biological or psychological. It admits the hazards of a theory which takes human differences more or less as given in experience, but finds greater hazards in the proposition that these differences can be controlled or "erased" by a carefully conceived and scientifically engineered program of human production.