VOLUME XI, NO. 24
JUNE 11, 1958

POLES OF THOUGHT

HUMAN attitudes and modes of inquiry seem to pass from one extreme to the other. In one age, men have no time for elaborate "doctrines." They want their religion intuitive and ethical, their science empirical, with as little "theory" as they can manage with. At other times, the demand is for intellectual and religious systems of an almost "total" character. There is a clear intellectual fascination in philosophies and religions which meet the longing for unified explanation, and while the intellectual experience of "wholeness" involves only a part of the human being, its satisfaction, for persons of a certain temperament, is very great.

A revolutionary epoch is a time when men throw out a world-view or "total explanation" which they find intolerable and are no longer able to believe. Inevitably, theories of knowledge are destroyed with the coming of revolution. The writings of d'Holbach and La Mettrie, most eminent of the materialist thinkers of the eighteenth century, were every bit as much of a revolutionary force as the political tracts of Rousseau and others. The aggressive attacks of the materialists on the foundations of conventional religion led, eventually, to the collapse of belief in a large part of the explanations of Christianity—those which related to the natural world and how it came to be—and weakened, also, the moral doctrines from which Christendom obtained its conceptions of moral and social order.

Science, as we know, gradually replaced theology as the authority on all the phenomena of the natural world, and introduced a basic skepticism toward all forms of "total explanation," whether naturalistic or religious, through the prestige gained by achievements of empirical method in the various fields of research. A new canon of "truth" was made popular by scientific thought, with the result that the idea of "total explanation" became a wholly utopian ideal, to be realized, if at all, in the distant and unforeseeable future, by means of the systematic application of scientific techniques of research to the mysteries of nature and life.

Science, however, while held to be competent to tell how things work, or how they came to be, has little or nothing to say on ethical questions. It follows that, when a system of total explanation loses its hold on men's minds, the areas of life which remain relatively untouched by science are left without any traditional control. It was natural, therefore, with the decline of faith in religion, that the values of immediate experience became more important than the promises or threats of theology. This led to hedonism as the base of popular morality, since pleasure is an obvious good and since science, as science, can have nothing to say against it. In religion, the emphasis turned to social action and attitudes of fellowship and tolerance in human relationships. These are manifest goods, needing no theological justification. Finally, there is an obvious relation between experimental method in science and mysticism in religion. Both place reliance on immediate experience, both are empirical, and both insist that theory or doctrine must give way to fact. The problem, in both science and mysticism, is the interpretation of experience.

This devotion to immediacy—to the pragmatic test of what "works"—and the associated indifference to pretentious theory, does not, however, erase the natural human inclination to seek total explanation. The tendency may be eclipsed, but it is seldom eliminated. It finds expression in unorthodox beliefs, in sects and cults which have relative immunity to the prevailing climate of opinion, and it often enters conventional attitudes in *sub rosa* form to produce doctrinaire attitudes in men who are really without

doctrines of any appreciable form or importance. It also leads to exaggerated claims for "science"—which are uniformly rejected by scholars and historians well aware of the limited authority of scientific knowledge—and to attempts to create "total" philosophies out of political systems and even from economic theories.

Such developments produce a difficult juncture in cultural history. Already we see the practical consequences of trying to extract total meanings from partial systems. The socialist system, for example, which may be, for all we know, a good enough system to operate an industrial economy, cannot give intelligible scope to the intellectual and moral aspects of human expression. It is equipped to facilitate the growth of technology, but it often warps, suppresses, and caricatures free intellectual inquiry, while moral values tend to be chained to the low floor of economic interest. The time will come, no doubt, when the totalitarianism of political communism will produce extravagant speculative reactions which will turn their back on the most obvious of practical "facts." Already this has occurred within the protective fold of so-called "Marxist" ideology, and this limit, effective until the present, can hardly contain the flights of the human imagination for very much longer.

It seems likely that the revolution against what is supposed to be "science" will be more extreme in countries dominated by Communism, for the reason that the restraints to metaphysical and speculative thinking in these areas have been more artificial than in the West. Marxist theories have degenerated into dogmas and the materialism implicit in the Communist world view is doctrinaire, without much relation to the good common sense from which modern materialism obtained its birth—the insistence upon explanations which really explain, which have a manifest connection with observable reality.

The West, at least, has been free of any compulsion to total explanation for several centuries. It still has in its mouth, therefore, the taste of the good sense of the agnostic revolution. But there are impulsions to look beyond agnosticism. There is the hunger for wholeness of meaning. We have had the neo-Pythagoreanism of the New Physics, the Wonder of the Universe which inspired Dr. Einstein, and dozens of more or less pantheistic credos which arise from the spirit of a science liberated from any further necessity to make war on religion.

Our greatest men have always had a kind of stoic, unarticulated faith in the dignity of the human being—the quality found in those whom Bertrand Russell spoke of as the Earnest Atheists of the nineteenth century—and this undefined tradition which embodies the moral excellence of the agnostic, the empiricist, the man who prizes impartiality and impersonality, continues in the present. It is a quality often disclosed when distinguished citizens are aroused to express themselves in public—the best voices of our civilization.

This quality we have in every age, even though it is sometimes hidden. Montaigne, perhaps, gave it the most characteristic embodiment. But these inner riches of rare individuals remain a mystery to the man who does not possess them—who is more a creature of his times than the Montaignes of history. It is here, in the hungering of those who feel the imbalance, the asymmetry, of the age in which we live, that we see the symptoms of change.

The extraordinary interest in Zen is one of these symptoms. Actually, it is a longing for a miracle, the hope to find in a mysterious psychological experience which is no-experience, but a mood, a sense of self which is both detached yet participating; which sees and understands, yet makes no explanation; which finds the infinite dimension in every finite happening; which delights in the smallest moment yet suffers no confinement by time.

What the Zen people are trying to get at is the *Self*—the most transcendent reality in or out of human conception. Yet this very "trying," they

are told, is the defeat of the enterprise. How can you become what you already are? Why use words for what is all around you, within you—this "truth" which is spoken of with such unctuous resolve?

There is no doubt a prime psychological and philosophical verity locked in the Zen paradoxes, and seeking it becomes a fascinating puzzle, all the more glamorous because it is a *Chinese* puzzle with an exotic vocabulary to take us a little way out of ourselves! The wonderful thing about Zen is that it is *permitted.* That is, it does not break the rules of our agnostic tradition. It carefully avoids all theories, all metaphysics; in fact, it mocks at them. One can pursue this exotic quest, therefore, with a certain intellectual respectability.

There are other ways of retaining respectability. What need have we, says the intense devotee of mystical religion, for immortality or beliefs about a life of the soul after death? Morality and goodness are here and now; why should we trouble our minds about such matters, which might distract from immediate duty? Let us give ourselves to life!

But still the longing for explanation haunts us. The man who supposes that the simple affirmation of love is enough neglects the complexities of human beings and the various levels of their psycho-mental constitution. He ignores the lessons of Dr. Freud; for, whatever we think of Freud's theories, he proved beyond doubt that human behavior is cunningly made from a multitude of known and unknown motivations. Numerous skeins of being unite to make a man, and to love a man truly, one must understand his "weave," appreciate the living pattern of his life. Love is not a monolithic emotion, some sort of ethical bludgeon to take the place of the tools of comprehension. And, let us note, the emergence of Zen in the history of Buddhism came as a kind of climactic flowering following centuries of philosophic brooding by numberless disciplined minds over the transcendental philosophy of Brahmanical and Buddhist metaphysics. Zen is a star in the vault of thought erected by the most rigorously metaphysical thinkers the world has known. Even if the creators of the Zen tradition seemed to neglect this part of their past in the anecdotal phase of their teachings, the rich meaning of the Zen paradoxes collapses into triviality when that past is forgotten.

It seems not too much to say that the world of serious thought is marking time, waiting for new theories of explanation it can accept, for a metaphysic that has some kind of harmony with the spirit of science, which the world has with good reason learned to respect. Meanwhile, a kind of "softening-up" process is going on. Half a dozen schools of thought are doing the kind of thinking which requires a metaphysic for the full flower of their investigations. The "self" psychologists, while they use the word "empirical," are really reaching for a framework, for a conception of the world in which a transcendental entity like the "self" can have a natural being and existence—a world in which there are laws of consciousness which operate as inexorably as the laws of the world of physics and chemistry and biology— a world in which thought and feeling and moral agencies have a substantial and independent being.

Can there be a "science" of the self, of the laws of consciousness, of psycho-ethical relationships? Can there be a progressive accumulation of actual knowledge in this field? These are questions on which any new attempt at whole or total philosophy will turn. Such questions, as they are taken seriously, may reveal the power to lift the entire weight of modern thought to a new level of inquiry, showing the way to the only kind of "revolution" this tired, frightened and anguished world can sustain.

Letter from ENGLAND

LONDON.—A few days ago the Prime Minister, Mr. Macmillan, received an appeal from six hundred and eighteen British scientists, including sixty-nine Fellows of the Royal Society, the most exclusive and distinguished of British learned societies. With that appeal came a letter from Bertrand Russell, mathematician and philosopher, now in his 83rd year. Wrote Russell: "We deem it imperative that immediate action be taken to effect an international agreement to stop the testing of all nuclear weapons. It is intolerable that Britain should continue its present series of tests despite the suspension by the Soviet Government."

In his reply the Prime Minister says, *inter alia:* "I cannot accept that it is the view of a large majority of the British people that the present series of British tests should be suspended. I know of no scientific evidence for this assertion in your letter."

That letter was written subsequent to a mass meeting in Trafalgar Square, London, and the four day march to Aldermaston nuclear centre in protest against the Government's nuclear policy.

We are, as your readers will know, to have rocket bases set up in East Anglia as part of the "defence system" *(sic)* agreed upon between this country and the United States. Much of this work involves the electrical industries, the union members of which are mainly Left, with strong Communist elements also. Now those firms who are to contract for this work face a labour problem of an unique kind. The crucial question is: Will members of the Electrical Trades Union work on the project? These firms now have to discover whether they could fulfill the terms of any Government contract and thus have to institute what has been dubbed a "conscience quiz" among the workers to determine whether they can muster sufficient willing hands.

In face of these indications, and many more, the attitude of the Prime Minister, and the hostile tone of his replies to critics, both in the House of Commons and by such published letters to individuals as that to Bertrand Russell, must be deeply disturbing to all who crave for the end of the present maniac arms race towards what would inevitably be the last World War.

Lord Acton's famous dictum that "All power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely" is true only when taken in its context, as applying to political power, and, even then, only if more qualified than as originally uttered. For power may be fairly equated with opportunity to exercise the will, and thus, only where evil is latent, will power find expression in evil, or in misguided deeds and policies.

Mr. Macmillan becomes an object of interest when thus considered. Armed with power, along with the original "Suez" government under the premiership of Sir Anthony Eden, he took part in and approved, before and after that event, the armed invasion of Egypt under conditions of international lawlessness that invite comparison with the bombing by Japan of Pearl Harbour. Today, we hear much of the atrocity of the French who bomb a Tunisian village, and we are shown in the press pictures of that village's dead victims. But we see no pictures of the humble Arab folk—men, women and children—who were killed by the bombs of the Eden-Macmillan invading force.

The Prime Minister, then, is revealed as a man who has disclosed characteristics in power unsuspected in him formerly. He speaks in terms of *realpolitik* as brutally as did Hitler at the zenith of his power.

Thus a State which has for long stood for the Rule of Law finds itself exposed to the reproach of the civilized world as hostile to the usages of International Law, and with a leader openly contemptuous of them.

Britain is now unanchored from those principles of Law which have generally been the

yardstick and measure of her political activities in the past. One instance of this reckless acceptance of lawless action, and the one current as I write, is the continuation of H-Bomb tests now being conducted in the South Pacific. It is commonplace International Law that all States enjoy equal rights to the high seas. Britain has enclosed a vast area of the South Pacific in order to carry on H-Bomb tests, thus rendering that great danger zone unavailable to world shipping. No Hague Court could fail to find this is a lawless procedure.

Britain today might be likened to an exhausted giant who is being pushed around by pigmies. No great or noble figure emerges in official public life, only from the ranks of the great who function as individuals, of whom Bertrand Russell, J. B. Priestley and many more are examples.

The Prime Minister remains impervious to all opposition, all criticism, in a psychological state which suggests that he is now suffering from euphoria, or an abnormal inability to envisage that which does not endorse the final wisdom of all his acts. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, who, in importance, stands second to the Prime Minister, resigns, and the Prime Minister shrugs off that startling and rare political situation as "a little local unpleasantness." And this is the man whose hands, with those of the other guilty Suez men, are stained with blood, and whose record reveals an arrogance unique in British political history.

That the present Government—so deeply stained as the minds of its members are in the emotional temper of conflict, and whose voices are never heard in tones that might help in some measure towards the healing of hatreds, suspicions and all those emotional ingredients that build up into wars—that this Government is on its way out is clear even to its own Press. But of this fact the Prime Minister is curiously oblivious. And a shattering by-election defeat, as was recently suffered, is for him unimportant.

So much for the political set-up in Britain to-day. It is one, I venture to suggest, that does not represent the people of these Isles. There is everywhere a passionate desire for peace and for international good-will. There is everywhere a deep-seated and psychologically damaging consciousness of peril. This must become a national anxiety neurosis in time, poisoning the wells of happiness and health.

This generalized detestation of all nuclear tests and weapons is not reflected in official public life. The Government no longer represents the will of the British people in this vital matter. A Referendum to-day would, I firmly believe, reveal the national will in a way which would leave no doubt as to where the people of these Isles stand in this matter. Even making allowances for misguided Party loyalty, I believe the result would be overwhelmingly against present policy.

ENGLISH CORRESPONDENT

REVIEW
A MELANCHOLY REPORT

SOCIALISTS AROUND THE WORLD, by Helen and Scott Nearing, is a report of socialist activities in many countries, as observed by the authors, who are themselves committed socialists. The book is not intended to be a "survey" of world socialism, however, but to give an account of the experiences and attitudes of "men and women who hold socialist points of view and to present conclusions based on those contacts." (*Socialists around the World* is available from the Monthly Review Press, New York, at $3.00.)

This book has the virtue of producing for the reader one inescapable conclusion: Socialism in Europe and America is dying; that is, the socialist thought which grew up in the nineteenth century and blossomed into strong political movements in the twentieth century, has lost its political impetus and its moral strength. The reasons for this we leave to analysts more schooled in political history: the fact remains. In contrast, the picture painted of socialist activities and progress in Oriental countries is filled with optimism and inspiration.

The Nearings visited veteran socialists in Britain, Holland, Belgium, France, West Germany, and Scandinavia. Everywhere, the story was the same: compromise, defeat, disillusionment. A young British socialist visited by the Nearings had this to say:

> For years the men and women of my generation, who held our socialist faith, believed that when the socialist parties of West Europe came to power, they would be able to resolve the difficulties which confronted us. In almost every West European country, during the past few years, the socialists have held power, or at least have been in office. What have they done? With unimportant exceptions they have followed policies which can hardly be distinguished from those of the Right, except in Scandinavia, where the socialists have succeeded, not in building socialism, but merely in setting up a Welfare State. Here in Britain, after the initial fanfare over "Nationalization," the Labour Party, since its 1953 conference, has turned its back on further expansion of the public sector of our economy and is competing, rather feebly, with the conservatives in attempts to placate, wheedle, and corral middle class votes, The story is much the same in France, Italy, Austria, Germany, and Holland. The socialist parties of West Europe seem stalled in a dead end street.

In India, the Nearings found inspiration in Prime Minister Nehru's address which opened the Congress Party's 1957 campaign, a month before parliamentary elections. The Indian leader's speech was about as "non-political" as you can get. He spoke on the political subjects of interest to his audience, but made no attempt to arouse the emotions of his listeners. "While Mr. Nehru was emphatic regarding foreign troops on Indian soil, he discussed Kashmir as objectively as though he were a professor in a classroom."

Nehru is a socialist who has wide personal support in India. The Nearings summarize an address he gave to student socialists at Lucknow University:

> Mr. Nehru rejected the idea that there was only one road to socialism. Each people must discover its own road and follow its own way of life, he said. Doctrinairism had no place in either social or economic affairs. There should be no dogma in such matters. In this connection he called attention to the teachings of the Buddha, which in their original form symbolized freedom of the mind and a spirit of inquiry which was inflexible.

The encounter of the authors with Japanese socialists and political thinkers marked a high point in their experience of maturity and orderly interchange of ideas. In other Asian countries, the Nearings met men who had spent their youth as agitators and revolutionists, and are now engaged in the practical administrative work of building socialism. A socialist in Ceylon said: "Like all innovators, we have the opportunity of enriching and ennobling the lives of those who will follow the trail we are blazing and who will convert it into a broad highway over which our fellow Asians and eventually the entire human race may pass."

It is evident that a mood of idealism and high striving pervades the socialists of Asia. Through their unique history, they have escaped the heavy-handed materialism of the Western radical movement and seem to have blended something of the transcendentalism of Oriental religion with their political conception of the good society. This seems quite customary in the East, whereas a traditional religious note in Western radicalism would be a startling anomaly. Mr. Nehru, for example, found it natural to cite Buddha's teachings to illustrate the desirable mood of open-minded inquiry. In Burma, the socialist and political leader, U Nu, is indefatigably active in the revival of Buddhism. He is currently contributing an article each month to the *Guardian,* a Burmese magazine, in which he expounds the doctrines of Buddhism.

While it may be said that East and West are slowly growing together—that a "one-world" culture is on the way— it must be added that the political temper and attitudes of the East are very different from those found in the West. There is little or no "fear" of socialism in Asian countries. Possibly an ancestral heritage of communal life has prepared these people for political conceptions of sharing. Another factor would be that the populations of these lands have never acquired any kind of "stake" in the doctrines of private property and the acquisitive ideal of free enterprise. Their experience of "free enterprise" has rather been of the looting of imperialism. Socialism, to them, seems a natural way of progress and emancipation. It remains to be seen how well the people of these lands are able to cope with the problems of industrialism, which include the non-political developments of the assembly line and all the psycho-social complexities of a technological society. Meanwhile, they have their idealism to carry them along.

Saddest of all is the Nearings' account of conversations with socialists in the United States. With some few exceptions, the socialists in America are old-time radicals who have seen the world change about them and have been powerless to keep socialist ideals alive among their countrymen. This, however, is a process of history, and something to be understood. The occasion for sadness comes from the smog of timidity and fear which surrounds these old radicals, making them feel like aliens in their own country.

America is plainly between great historic epochs. There is no radical movement in the United States today—nothing, that is, which resembles the activities of the Socialist Party of 1912. Radical politics no longer attracts followers. Actually, there is far more interest in anarcho-pacifism among young Americans than in any kind of political radicalism. Some might say that what life there is in the Socialist movement in the United States is due to the presence of pacifists who may be forging a new kind of thinking for the American Left of tomorrow.

There are some unspoken conclusions which one may draw from this book by the Nearings. One is that traditional social democracy has very little future in the modern world. The heavily booted communist societies are making some kind of "progress"—that is, they are creating a new pattern of life for their people through ruthless measures which give no attention to the "libertarian" or "individualist" conceptions of the good society. There is no place for the ideological dissenter in these countries. There is even candid denial that there should be a place for such people. A zealous self-righteousness in the name of the greatest good for the greatest number declares that political dissent is a luxury which true devotion to the revolutionary tasks cannot afford.

The political radical, therefore, has a choice between impotence and totalitarian methods. This, at any rate, seems to be the decision for European radicals. The pacifists would say that there is a third camp—their camp—which offers another kind of radical discipline and commitment.

Their politics of resistance is Gandhian, their theory of government is decentralist and non-violent. In time, the bankruptcy of the radical movement on any other terms may draw more and more recruits to the pacifist camp and lead to more thorough-going elaborations of non-violent political theory.

It seems apparent, meanwhile, that the enthusiasm for socialism which is possible in Asian countries can never be recovered for the West. On the other hand, it is certain that the fresh enthusiasm of the rebuilders of the East along socialist lines will increasingly affect Western thinkers, while the new developments of small minorities in revolt against the abuses of centralization and industrialism in the West may provide an instructive example to Eastern leaders who have no wish to inherit all the anomalies of Western capitalism along with its methods of production.

COMMENTARY
IS PSYCHOLOGY A SCIENCE?

WE have a letter from a reader who objects to a statement (in Review for May 21) which drew a parallel between the views of Peter Viereck, as found in the Pendle Hill pamphlet, *Inner Liberty*, and expressions by David Riesman and Erich Fromm. Our Review suggested as the idea common to these men the following: "It is that the public interest—or what is ostensibly the public interest—is no longer the private interest; that it is, in fact, against the *private* interest."

Our reader says:

> Perhaps because you weren't acquainted with Viereck's major opus, *The Unadjusted Man*, published about two years ago, you have made an incorrect assumption. I find no relationship, aside from a most flimsy, superficial kind, between Viereck alla Fromm or Riesman. This imaginary relationship I believe, might be a wishful reading-in on your part. This I've found to be usual with those habitually oriented to the "psychological revolution." Viereck, I declare, has indeed spoken well for freedom—and that includes *freedom from* the pseudo-sciences represented by Fromm and Riesman. I think we should bear in mind that the greatest invasion upon the inner liberty and privacy of man has been made by the alliance of those fashionable and so-called sciences. No machine man has yet invented has gone about causing as much damage to our individual freedoms as the horde of psychologists, psychiatrists and psychoanalysts.

This correspondent has other comments, notice of which we shall defer until we have read Mr. Viereck's book. We might argue, also, that Riesman and Fromm need no defense, suggesting simply that readers turn to *The Lonely Crowd* (Riesman) and *The Sane Society* (Fromm) to measure the accuracy of the above judgment.

The judgment, however, is a sweeping one. Why this animus against the psychologists, *et al.?*

Our correspondent is far from being alone in his feeling. We can think of one explanation. It is that psychology is gradually beginning to play the role in our society that religion has played in societies of the past. Now religion, when it is real, is concerned with ultimate matters. Religious reformers have aroused more antagonism in their contemporaries than any other sort of public figure. True reformers go to the root, and those who go to the root expose the nerve. By this is meant that they throw a fresh light on common assumptions, showing them to be poorly founded or false. Jesus did this, Socrates did this, and so have lesser men.

The discoveries of psychotherapy often reveal revolutionary implications. This is disturbing.

The question of whether psychology (in its various branches) ought to be called a science is a good one to raise. No doubt there are elements of science in psychotherapy, although it seems to us that there is far more of art and intuition in this practice than in any other branch of medicine. Whether, because of this, it is fair to name it a "pseudo-science," we would question. The matter seems to call for definitions, not epithets.

There is the further consideration that psychology is more of a *terra incognita* than other areas of scientific or medical investigation. Psychology occupies a territory poorly marked for the reason that it borders upon the regions of philosophy and religion and often crosses into the sacred precincts. A psychologist, therefore, can easily manipulate human hopes and exploit human fears. He can become, in short, a quack. He can do, almost with impunity, all the things our critic implicitly accuses him of doing. But so can any man who is clever enough and irresponsible enough. The license is a detail.

There is no safety for the human race in dogmas, restrictions, licenses, and regulations. You can't issue badges to the "true" scientists or the "true" medical men. You can try, but when you do you get an A.M.A. You can of course buy some second-class security with licensing procedures, but this saddles medicine with the rules of mediocrity and the control of the status quo. The problem is to recognize the true innovator when he turns up, and to give him the

freedom he needs. For this, institutional yardsticks are practically no good at all.

So, despite the hazards of an area of "free" inquiry—unconfined by either the safeguards of tradition or the barriers to originality—we shall continue to regard what our correspondent terms the "psychological revolution" with interest and often with favor. And we shall especially admire those psychologists who place the major burdens of human decision on the right shoulders—the shoulders of individual men, unorganized men, private people. The important decisions in life can never be made by anyone else.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves
MORE ON THE GENERATION

AMONG the various communications from readers on the recent "DISCUSSION OF A GENERATION" series is a letter from a teacher-parent in Northern California. She writes:

> In your "Discussions of a Generation," it seemed difficult to connect the cynicism of the Hipster with many present-day college or highschool people. One sidelight seemed to reflect in my reactions . . . and that is the significance of "Jargon." Thirty years ago we had "slang" and phrases which revealed a mood among a few who used them. We might say that cynicism, the hipster psychology, was again evident.
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> The jargon and the mood travel. Terms in use four years ago, such as "Square," have only now become current in some places, while it is "square" to even use the term "square" in our town today. But running concurrently with the "Hipster" phase of cynicism (for a "square" is an inferior human being) was the boom in the jargon of "Positive" thinking—Peale's books were in tremendous demand, the Youth for Christ were going strong, and Billy Graham was thrilling our High School population. Could this be the "Dopester" phase, the hopeful aspiring side of each human? Sometimes our enthusiasm becomes mere gullibility, as our realism becomes morbid.
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> It might be worth-while to consider from what source in our human nature cynical jargon develops—from some defensive drive? Some need to assert superior insight? It always manifests as a "twist"—a "surprise" interpretation, a shock. Reactions are highly gratifying to any personality seeking prominence—there is emotional excitement, exaggerated laughter, hand-waving, head-shaking, etc. We see the "twist" very much in children at the beginning of adolescence. They mix-hear all remarks, so that answers are very incongruous. They will squeal, to surprise or scare. Their emotions need a good run, and anything is good for a laugh . . . a pun, tripping a friend with an outstretched foot, or a stink-bomb in the principal's office. Therefore, as soon as "new" jargon gets old, it disappears. The new "twist," the new insult, the new outrageous expression is born. But quietly waiting beneath the surface froth, beneath the ego-drive for conformity by *some* group (conformist or bohemian), is the need of the soul to be truly at home in the world. Groups, conformity, mean very little to the single person of any age who has the good fortune to have one or more true friends.
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> True friendship makes anyone independent of group membership as such. It does depend on what we will be old-fashioned enough to call "soul" qualities. That is, can you keep a confidence? How do you accept a confidence? Are you jealous, envious, personal, or do you look at your friend's problems as though they were your own? Are you loyal in speaking of your friend to others? Are you completely honest and truthful yet tactful and kind in offering advice? Such relationships last throughout life. Hobbies are no basis for friendship—nor any mere activity. A real friend, however, mentally enters into any interest or hobby, giving honest reactions to it.
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> The basis for group conformity is hiding one's real self and real interest (the opposite of friendship or acceptance of the inner person). It is based on fear of ostracism, not love. It must use hypocrisy. The term "Hep" or "Hip." That is, one must know the "right" clothes, express the accepted jargon sentiments, etc., and all for what? In the hope that within the group one may find a friend. And friends there usually are, concealed behind similar walls of pretense. The lucky accidents, the stress and strain of life will strip pretense away. Time is needed. Almost any association, any relationship, will deepen and mature with time, just as usually the callow youth (in time) overcomes his emotionalism, by-passes fads, and shows forth the man of strong decision who was there all along.

These comments give us pause to wonder if the age of television and other copious means of entertainment do not increase tremendously the difficulties in attaining deep friendship among youths. Even before these intrusions, of course, many youths had to combat grievances formed around the indifference of parents. Adults who fail to understand the child's world drive him to the creation of a secret life of his own.

To the surprise of many, perhaps, James Jones, successful author of *From Here to Eternity* and unsuccessful author of *They All Came Running*, has a flair for depicting the intensity of a child's imagination. In a short story titled "The Tennis Game," which appeared in *Esquire* for January, Mr. Jones reminds us how apparent ennui

may be but a mask for seething desires to play a heroic role. Outwardly, "The Tennis Game" consists of the batting of an old tennis ball against the garage door. Inwardly, John is feeling the whole gamut of heroic emotions, from agonizing struggle to both triumph and defeat. Some paragraphs will illustrate:

> The tennis game was a new one, one that he had invented only a few weeks ago, when he read a story about a championship tennis match in a *Collier's* Magazine that his mother had brought home. The idea for the story obviously came from Don Budge's victory over Baron von Cramm in the Davis Cup and the Wimbledon, which John had followed in the sports pages with interest.
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> Sometimes, when he played the match through against the garage doors, he would become so involved in it and its struggle that the play of emotions which ran through him became unbelievably intense, almost unbearable, exquisitely powerful. He *became* the German, and the young American too. Of course, he never played it when any of the other kids were around; and he never told anybody about it. He would have felt silly and embarrassed. So to all intents and purposes he was merely practicing tennis strokes against the garage. But the very secrecy itself added to the excitement of it, and even before he would begin to play out the match that secret, completely contained, private pleasure which caused his stomach to spin, would steal over him, as he marched out onto the court.
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> He had arranged it all so it would be very realistic. The playhouse was the grandstand, and the concrete driveway which was double for two car-lengths back from the double doors was the court. The garage doors, which were on rollers and slid from side to side one behind the other, were made with two-by-four braces that framed their edges and crisscrossed from corner to corner and were painted white, and the brace that ran across them cutting them in half horizontally across the middle was the net, every shot that hit below that was a lost point. And every shot that went off the concrete was an "out," and another lost point. The crisscross braces themselves, as well as the offset door joint, gave an added element of chance to it since at times the ball would hit one of them and squirt off out of bounds to the side, or else hit the concrete where he could not possibly get it back. In spite of this element of chance, however, the deciding factor was once again, of course, as with the lead-soldiers' battle, himself. He could make whichever one win he wanted to, and could *be* whichever one he wanted whether winning or losing, according to his mood. Usually he chose to be the Baron and to lose.
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> Just as the German thought he had it, thought he was safe at last, he switched sides to the young American and really began to go to work.
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> Cold, calm, collected, the young American (he had always been noted as a pressure player) began to play tennis like he had never played in his life before. Ferocious drop shots, sizzling volleys, high lobs in the very corners, everything. He, and John with him, was everywhere on the court, growing steadily and relentlessly stronger in confidence and power. Even the crowd hushed and became quiet at such a brilliant exhibition. And slowly the score crept up on the weakening German. The American, playing brilliantly, took the third set 6-4. Then came right back to take the fourth set 6-2.
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> And then, as the two of them stood staring implacably at each other across the net after their rest, John switched back to the Baron for the fifth and final set and the climax. With the game score 3-2 in his favor, the American broke through his service, and on the last point he, and John with him, staggered and fell, trying to reach an impossibly brilliant drop shot, and he knew it was all over. Lying stretched out on the court, his racket still reaching across the concrete after that irretrievably lost ball, breathing convulsively, he rolled over, then got wearily up to one knee and looked across the net at the man who had defeated him. And, his stomach spinning almost sickly with excitement and emotion, John climbed back slowly to his feet.
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> Knowing what he must do, now, he walked slowly over to the umpire's stand on the little porch in front of the grandstand to congratulate his opponent.

Parents as remote from their children as John's parents were from him have never known or felt their child's capacity for emotional experience. But since such intensity is often a torture, there is small wonder that children often seek the dullness of group conformity. Out of that conformity, in the hipster age, come irrational and sometimes brutal outbursts—evidence, perhaps, of the lack of constructive stimulus to the imagination which the present world affords for the young.

FRONTIERS
A Point of View

AMONG the various magazines which cross our desk from time to time is a British quarterly—*Vegetarian News.* The Spring issue of this journal contains an address delivered before the Vegetarian World Conference by Dr. Rajendra Prasad, the President of India. The fact that such matters are important to Indian political leaders tells us a great deal about Indians in public life and Indians in general. Dr. Prasad provides a further explanation:

> You have had previous sessions of the Vegetarian Conference in other countries, but India has certain characteristics which are her own. I do not think there is any other country where people in such large numbers are vegetarians and have been abstaining from meat diet for generations. That has been so because meat diet has been regarded as unsuitable, if not harmful, to spiritual growth, and our scriptures have laid down rules regulating food. These rules are based essentially on an appreciation of the laws of non-violence or *ahimsa*, that is, avoiding harm to all, not only living creatures, but plants, etc., also. All our ancient sciences and shastras look upon life as an integrated whole and co-ordinate different activities in such a way as to fit in with and help in the upward growth of man. We have thus no double standards nor artificial divisions in our activities such as we sometimes hear made by some people. For example, it is common enough to hear that a man's religion is his own affair and has nothing to do with his politics. Similarly his life and politics are two different things, and what he eats, how he lives and carries on his other private affairs have nothing to do with his public activities. We, as a matter of fact, believe that each activity has its repercussions on other activities and we cannot divide either the activities or their effects. It is on this basis that food is sought to be so related as to create that kind of calm and unperturbed mind which in its turn may devote itself to private or public functions, to spiritual no less than to mundane affairs.
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> When I say all this, I do not claim that as a people we are living up to these ideals. If we did, the country and our people would be something very different from what they are: and yet it is some of these which have enabled us to survive trials and vicissitudes which few other nations or people have faced as we have had to do in history.

It is not our intention, here, to laud the virtues of a vegetarian diet, but it does seem that the synthesizing view of Dr. Prasad—which for many devotees of non-violence comes to include the determination to live without harming animals in any way—is worthy of some attention. Dr. Prasad is not a faddist. He accompanied Gandhi throughout the most troublous years of the fight for Indian independence. He is a scholarly, responsible man, and he only knows one way to live. He always has and always will speak out for a point of view which he feels to be important, whatever its "political" consequence. Nor is this considered to be at all odd among the present leaders of the Indian state.

In any case, the practice of vegetarianism, perhaps more than any "personal" habit, poses a number of philosophical and psychological questions. Many who have given thought to the subject feel that there may be a definite connection between military violence and indifference toward the taking of lives of innumerable creatures in order to please the palate or simplify the preparation of meals. John Ingersoll, the young pacifist who dropped a commission in the Navy to adopt a non-violent way of living, said that he found the practice of vegetarianism a natural corollary to his position in regard to war.

Just what it would take to arouse serious interest in abstinence from meat-eating among the peoples of "leading" nations of the world would be hard to say. Several years ago, Lord Boyd-Orr prepared a paper for the British Government in which he pointed out that the population of England could easily be supplied with adequate food, with only a little importing, if excessive meat-eating were curtailed. An English author and lecturer, Roy Walker, at the same time published a pamphlet, *Bread and Peace*, containing data from nutritionists and statisticians to prove that a drastic cut in world meat consumption would release enough land for the

raising of other foodstuffs so that all the under-nourished peoples of the globe could be adequately supplied. Actually, Americans may be more susceptible to the sort of "physical culture" argument for vegetarianism offered by the nineteen-year-old Australian swimming star, Murray Rose. Rose, a three-event Olympic Games winner, is perhaps the greatest swimmer the world has known, and he attributes his success in large part to the fact that he has been a complete vegetarian since he was two years old. A meat diet, Rose contends, makes for too many acids productive of fatigue.

As long as we are reviewing the idea of vegetarianism, some of its "philosophical and psychological" overtones may be examined. Edmond Taylor tells in *Richer By Asia* why the practice of vegetarianism is, for most Hindus, simply a natural extension of "pantheist philosophy." Gandhi ate no meat, not only because of the Hindu tradition, but also because he felt that it schooled men to unnecessary killing. Taylor remarks that "perhaps, as the Hindus and Buddhists believe, man diminishes himself when he takes the lives of other creatures. Certainly he impoverishes himself by being unaware of them. I think that the reason why the jungle was always a magical place for me, an animist grove and at some times a pantheist temple, was because I discovered in it, more vividly than I had in the Western countryside, the biological background of the drama of human life, which our present urban culture tends to push out of consciousness. This discovery could not be a systematic one, it was a series of flashes of awareness."

Towards the close of World War II, Fairfield Osborn, President of the New York Zoological Society, proposed that the habit of meat-eating seems to go with predatory habits in general. He wrote:

> Man, at an early stage, became a hunter and a killer while his nearest relatives in the animal world most similar to him psychologically remained vegetarians, and at no time, even to the present day, have depended upon the lives of other living creatures for their own survival. It is unlikely that all primitive human beings were predatory, and consequently it is probable that considerable groups of primitive people were plant and fruit eaters, especially those living in tropical or subtropical regions. But the explosive, dominant groups, which appear to have made the strongest impact on the course of human civilization, particularly those living in the temperate zones, resorted in the earliest times to hunting, combat and killing.
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> The uncomfortable truth is that man, during innumerable past ages, has been a predator—a hunter, a meat-eater and a killer.

In *Themes and Variations* Aldous Huxley suggests the somewhat mystical but nonetheless direct ethical connection between one's determination to treat "Nature" respectfully and one's ability to respect his fellow man:

> The Golden Rule is to be applied to animate and inanimate Nature as well as to our fellow men. Treat Nature with charity and understanding, and Nature will repay you with unfailing gifts. Treat Nature aggressively, with greed and violence and incomprehension: wounded Nature will turn and destroy you. Theoretically, at least, the ancients understood these truths better than ourselves. The Greeks, for example, knew very well that hubris against the essentially divine order of Nature would be followed by its appropriate nemesis. The Chinese taught that the Tao, or indwelling Logos, was present on every level from the physical and the biological up to the spiritual; and they knew that outrages against Tao, in Nature no less than in man, would lead to fatal results. We have to recapture some of this old wisdom. If we fail to do this—we condemn ourselves and our children to misery and deepening squalor and the despair that finds expression in the frenzies of collective violence.