

DIRECT ACTION FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

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WITH the British and American elections past, this may be the time for the British and American peace movements to take stock of themselves and contemplate their future.

It has been clear to me, as an American observer, that the British peace movement is suffering from very much the same aimlessness that characterises the movement in the United States. Of course, peace activity continues in both countries, some of it quite strenuous. But there is the same sense in both Britain and the U.S. that a peak has been passed and that the energy of peace groups is diffusing and sharply diminishing in public impact.

Some American peace leaders believe this is not necessarily a discouraging sign. They argue that while the "social heat" has cooled (the big demonstrations, marches, vigils, etc.) the "ideas" of the peace movement have finally begun to permeate American society at large, even to the extent of influencing official policy. In evidence of this they offer the current East-West detente and the test-ban treaty of 1963. No doubt the defeat of Senator Goldwater will also be claimed as a success by some parts of the peace movement.

All one can say of these achievements is that they are a small purchase of what many have taken to be the great objective of the peace movement. A conventional and perhaps

temporary power-political stand-off, a partial test-ban treaty which two of the world's five nuclear powers disregard, and the defeat of a foolish, incompetent, and narrowly sectarian politician: these bear a disappointing relationship to the task of creating a dependably non-violent world order. Or as *Turn Toward Peace in the U.S.* puts it: "A disarmed world under law where free societies may flourish."

Of course, there are groups and individuals in America who never expected or wanted more than marginal adjustments in the cold war and the arms race, just as there are no doubt those in the British movement who will be satisfied with any slight change in the military establishment the Labour Party, may bring about by re-negotiating the Nassau agreements. But for at least one important wing of both the British and American movements, this loss of public momentum has a special significance. I am referring to the radical wing of the peace movement, for whom the pursuit of peace has meant the bold, unilateral elimination of military-based policy and its replacement by non-violent methods of conflict resolution: in short, a total end to the war system.

The great hope of the radicals was that their goals would—in fairly short order—attract a mass following capable of influencing or, more likely, forcing profound changes of official policy. To this end, they dramatised the horrors of thermonuclear war, organised great public demonstrations which mustered thousands into the streets, and staged heroic direct action projects which sent dozens to prison.

But the thousands in the streets did not turn into millions and the dozens in jail did not turn into thousands. The "social heat" soon damped down to become scattered embers of random, local action with little national visibility. In Britain

the turning point seems to have come soon after the defeat of the unilateralists in the Labour Party and the Committee of 100's Whitehall sitdowns in 1961; in America soon after the test-ban treaty which turned the edge of the growing Women's Strike for Peace movement.

In America this state of affairs has provoked a highly significant reassessment of the politics of peace. Among the major sources for this reassessment are the Triple Revolution and the Students for a Democratic Society; Robert Swann and Theodore Olson, both of whom have had important positions in the Committee for Non-Violent Action, have also made valuable individual contributions. One wonders if the rethinking which has gone on in America has anything to offer the British movement.

The war issue—so this analysis runs—simply does not have drawing power as a political issue. We all know it *ought* to have drawing power; it ought indeed to be so potent an issue that none of us can get to sleep at night for worrying about it. In order to make it that kind of issue, the peace movement has tried to scare, shock, shame and cajole people, and to inspire them with exemplary acts of civil disobedience. But nothing has worked, not for a sustained period of time, not with enough people. So much for what *ought* to be the case.

This need not mean, however, that the dramatic peace action of the last six or seven years has gone to waste. It has, at the very least, drawn together a number of activists who have developed some proficiency in the theory and practice of non-violence. And beyond this, it has proved a negative point: namely, that the war issue, in our own time quite as much as in the generations before World Wars One and Two, is simply too remote to mobilise millions into determined political action. The problem, then, is to locate the public—or publics—to which non-violence can be made relevant as a form of democratic conflict resolution.

If one does not find a significantly large public clustered conveniently around the war issue, then one must be prepared to go where the people are. What, if not thermonuclear war, *does* concern people to the point of leading them to protest and political action? One must discover where the contemporary world pinches people and begin there.

In America one does not have to look far to discover what the issues are that concern people deeply. While the peace movement has had indifferent success in mobilising a mass following, the civil rights movement is making American history: it is growing, dynamic, and potently influential—in effect everything the peace movement would like to be. Indeed, it is race relations, not the war issue, which has been the real proving ground of non-violence in America. It is the struggle for racial justice which has educated thousands in the techniques of non-violence and has made the word part of the American vocabulary.

Besides civil rights, there are the myriad problems of urban renewal and slum clearance. Hundreds of thousands are being squeezed by the squalor of American cities or by the bureaucratic brutality with which experts—often with the best intentions—see fit to reorganise their neighbourhoods. Robert Swann has suggested this as a new focus for the activity of radical pacifists: to organise and lead urban dwellers in direct action projects against the slum landlords and city planners who oppress them.

During the past summer, members of the Students for a Democratic Society ventured into areas of heavy unemployment—mainly abandoned mill and mining areas—to help organise the unemployed so that they might gain a greater public voice. SDS is deeply concerned about peace and determined to find the points at which the politics of peace converge with the crying social needs of their society. There is certainly no public to whom the criminal waste of arms expenditure can be made more vivid than the

impoverished and chronically unemployed Americans SDS works among. So too "convergence" is very much the key word of the Triple Revolutionaries, a group of high-powered economists and political scientists, who insist that war, racial injustice, and technological unemployment must be seen and solved as inter-related problems.

Theodore Olson neatly sums up this new current of thought in the American peace movement:

The grave social problems that are physically apparent—plus those less tangible ones that can be summarised as "the meaninglessness of modern life"—must be seen as soluble. If they can be perceived as soluble by actions the people can themselves initiate or undertake, then something fundamental will happen to the cold war. It is the very nature of the cold war to be totalistic, to demand primary allegiance. Once people start putting other concerns first—concerns that are more important because more closely related to the primary relationships of life, then the cold war falls into perspective. It is seen as what it is—a threat to these more important values. Because the cold war, for both ideological and economic reasons profoundly inhibits any real change on genuine social issues, any attack on these issues is an attack on the cold war.

As Olson observes, this change of tactics means "not that the role of non-violence is smaller than we thought, but that it is larger."

I cannot help but feel that this larger mission for nonviolence exists in England too. For example, there is the racial issue, which is not apt to be solved by the legislation the Labour Party at present plans to offer—certainly not in the areas of housing, employment, and apprenticeship training.

What opportunities are there here for educating people in the exercise of non-violence and thereby heightening their political consciousness and sense of power? A recent study of Notting Hill by Pearl Jephcott (*A Troubled Area*, published by Faber and Faber) suggests any number of possibilities for direct action in slum areas to improve housing,

sanitation, race relations, children's play facilities, etc. Then, too, Roger Moody's article in *Peace News* of October 16 indicates that urban renewal in England can be as poorly and inhumanly executed as it frequently is in America. Even the erratic and sometimes authoritarian way in which British Railways subtracts stations from its schedules might provide a focus for political organisations.

What the radical wing of the peace movement can bring to all these public needs is an instinct and talent for nonviolent direct action and a realisation of how all forms of social violence are intimately linked to the over-arching violence of thermonuclear war. In both these respects members of the peace movement have important lessons to teach, if only they can gain the trust and attention of a public that recognises them as sincere allies.

Once we are accepted as allies on issues that matter to people, our chance of being heard sympathetically on the war issue is apt to be greatly enhanced. If we, after all, have taken the concerns of others seriously, there is a much higher probability that they will take ours seriously in return. Cultivating this willingness to learn as well as teach, to listen as well as talk, may be exactly the discipline the peace movement needs to overcome its often obnoxious sense of messianic self-importance.

The very fact that England now has a Labour Government that is apt to be responsive to social wrongs would seem to favour the issues mentioned here as bases for political action. For one thing, the new government makes it somewhat more hopeful that the action undertaken will be successful, that it will sway policy—and success is something non-violent direct action very much needs if it is to sustain public interest.

Moreover, especially with a Labour Government in office which may prove itself admirably eager to take on all these social maladjustments, it is very important that people be

encouraged to recognise the democratic necessity of having problems solved *with* them and not always *for* them. Here, non-violent direct action can make its relevance clear as a radically democratic problem-solving technique, and as an important bulwark against the elitism that tends to characterise many well-intentioned but overly-zealous social planners.

Let us be clear what is *not* being suggested by this American reassessment of peace politics. The peace movement is not being asked to "use" various public grievances in some crudely self-serving way. Nor is it being asked to sacrifice its own identity and peculiar concern. Instead, it is being asked to learn from its own experience, to accept the fact that there can be no successful political action without people, and to recognise that non-violent direct action on the war issue is not mobilising nearly enough people to change the state of the world in the foreseeable future.

In this situation, it is important to grasp what every good teacher knows: namely, that one does not educate by stubbornly insisting that a student adopt his teacher's interests, nor by seeking to frighten or humiliate him into doing that. One simply takes the student *where he is*. One tries to work with, not against his motivations, to guide him and mature his interests. Not the least benefit of this approach is that the teacher may find he has a great deal to learn from his student.

THEODORE ROSZAK

London

REVIEW

A PHILOSOPHER-STATESMAN AND HIS WORK

WHILE India's Ambassador to Russia, Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan completed a comprehensive and luminous presentation of *The Principal Upanishads*. First published in Moscow, *The Principal Upanishads* are now source reading everywhere for students of Eastern religion and philosophy, and particularly valuable for instructors who seek ways of deformatizing and vitalizing courses in comparative religion. Today, as the President of India, Dr. Radhakrishnan has a position which enables him to have a great deal to do with education in all its aspects.

For this and other reasons, S. J. Samartha's *Introduction to Radhakrishnan: The Man and his Thought* (New York Association Press, 1961) is worth the attention of many readers. We quote from Dr. Samartha's Preface:

In the present dialogue between the East and the West at all cultural levels and in the encounter between world faiths today, it is necessary to have both a fair exposition and a responsible appraisal of differing points of view. Without this, mere friendliness will not lead to deeper understanding.

The importance of Radhakrishnan both as a representative of the renaissance of modern India and as one of the interpreters of its religio-philosophic foundations cannot be overestimated. It is true that in the complex cultural life of our country today other trends are also discernible which seek to reinterpret the old foundations to meet modern demands. Between militant Hinduism on the one hand, and aggressive secularism on the other, there are many shades of thought and action. Further, it should not be forgotten that within resurgent Hinduism itself there are various trends differing from each other in ideological foundation, method of interpretation, and practical application. Radhakrishnan's significance, in this context, lies in the fact that he is not merely a philosopher, but also a responsible statesman actively participating in the life of his country. As President of the Republic of India, he brings to this exalted office wide scholarship, deep thought, mature experience, broad vision, and a profound concern for the life of the nation in the world of today. Although

he is rooted in the national heritage of the country, he seeks to go beyond its narrow confines to the larger horizons of international understanding. In a considerable measure therefore, to understand Radhakrishnan's thought is to understand the new outlook that is slowly shaping itself in India and elsewhere.

One can hardly fail to feel agreement with this appraisal. As a philosopher, Dr. Radhakrishnan early realized that *living* philosophy cannot be acquired by "mere study and reading," but that it is "born of spiritual experience." He affirms that "philosophy is produced more by our encounter with reality than by the historical study of such encounters."

Is Radhakrishnan "religiously inclined"? The answer to this question depends upon the meaning of the word "religion." The following quotation provides a basis for individual conclusions:

I am persuaded that there is more in this life than meets the eye. Life is not a mere chain of physical causes and effects. Chance seems to form the surface of reality, but deep down other forces are at work. If the universe is a living one, if it is spiritually alive, nothing in it is merely accidental.

Philosophy is committed to a creative task. Although in one sense philosophy is a lonely pilgrimage of the spirit, in another sense it is a function of life.

Throughout Dr. Samartha's samplings of Dr. Radhakrishnan's thought we sense the idea of a spiritual destination for mankind—not so much for the species as for every individual, and not as a final terminus. In an address before the International Congress of Orientalists at New Delhi (Jan. 4, 1964), Dr. Radhakrishnan distilled the ancient Indian view of the endless "Kalpas" or "Yugas" of time. "Our duty," he said, "is not to escape from time but to establish our superiority to the tyranny of time." World redemption as the theme of Hindu and Buddhist classics need not be interpreted as the attainment of a condition of stasis. The aim of overcoming anger by love, evil by good, greed by sharing, and falsehood by truth, is not to enter a separate state of existence, whether called Nirvana or Heaven. Rather, the

reaching toward these ends is the "timeless" goal, because the refinements and developments which make periodic attainment possible can never be exhausted. In the same address Radhakrishnan affirmed that "every human being has rational, ethical and spiritual sides; it is wrong to think that some people are rational and others spiritual," and concluded:

Every religion has to live up to this high quality of spiritual adventure, or it will fade away. It is this religion that we require in the contemporary situation.

Today the world is eager for the development of a world community based on unity and harmony as distinct from unanimity and uniformity. We have to remember what the great teachers of the world have affirmed, that all men are brothers, and that their differences are not to be obliterated but are to be fostered and sustained by mutual understanding. We must learn from other peoples' beliefs and experiences. We have come to realize that conflicts between countries can no more be settled by wars, which are devastating in their character. There are no losers or winners, nor victors or vanquished, in modern war. The differences require to be reconciled in a large understanding of human depth and its varied expression. Through sheer political folly and fanatical zeal for our own view, we may bring about the end of the world. We must learn to be loyal to the whole human race. Exclusive loyalty to an individual nation or group or creed is not enough in the present world.

Although Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan's intellectual capacities are tremendous, he conceives "intellectualizing" as no more than preparation for development of higher orders of ethical perception. Two quotations from *The Philosophy of Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan* (The Library of Living Philosophers, 1952) will illustrate. First we note his view of the significance of the "mystic":

Conceptual substitutes for ineffable experiences are not adequate. They are products of rational thinking. All forms, according to Samkara, contain an element of untruth and the real is beyond forms. Any attempt to describe the experience falsifies it to an extent. In the experience itself the self is wholly integrated and is therefore both the knower and the

known, but it is not so in any intellectual description of the experience. The profoundest being of man cannot be brought out by mental pictures or logical counters. . . .

Philosophy can also be seen as the guide to "self-transformation." In a summary of Radhakrishnan's critique of naturalism, by Bernard Phillips, there is this apt characterization of a great man's thought:

If the great mystics have often been impatient with the ordinary philosopher, it is because he strikes them as being like the man who is presented with a map which points the way to a great treasure and who, instead of setting out to find it, spends the rest of his days recopying the map, and probing into the etymological derivations of the place-names which are on it.

There is then at the heart of that tradition which we have been calling the *philosophia perennis* quite a different conception of the nature of philosophy from the one which is current in academic circles in America today. Philosophizing is not an end in itself, but culminates in vision and in personality transformation. Philosophy is not a purely cerebral activity but a way of life, a therapy of the soul which eventuates in a growth into new modes of being.

COMMENTARY THE ROLE OF ART

THE epistemological maxim quoted by Radhakrishnan (see Review) from Samkara (a variant spelling of Sankaracharya) illustrates an understanding of the role of intellect that seems far in advance of Western thought. In the first place, the mechanistic empiricism and preoccupation with "objectivity" of Western science completely secularized the idea of Truth, to the point where the word could not even be used. This made it impossible for there to be any working alliance between science and philosophy, with the result that, however acute the judgments of psychology, they brought no meanings which men could use as human beings, but only a harvest for specialists.

Accordingly, the really serious thought of the West has for generations been in the hands of essayists, poets, humanists, and perceptive individuals of every description—people who write as men and not as some kind of scientific technician.

Radhakrishnan's formulation, which recalls the distilled clarity of a scientific law, has of course been approximated by those who recognize the importance of paradox in any kind of authentic philosophical communication. And a big, iconoclastic point has been made of this idea by the expositors of Zen, who often seem more determined to outlaw conceptual thinking than to combine a criticism of its limits with illustrations of its use.

How much more helpful this simple statement, drawn from Sankaracharya, which throws great light on the function of drama, poetry, myth, and allegory, in education and in the shaping of culture. Here, you could say, is a foundation for a scientific approach to aesthetics, which might lead to a new kind of criticism—evaluations which would rest upon a grasp of the importance of *symmetry* in the use of symbols to suggest the truth behind experience.

Good criticism, of course, is this already; but Sankaracharya's rule could be turned into a more self-conscious use of critical insight. And writers, with such a principle before them, might stop torturing themselves by trying to do the impossible with words, and acquire a better understanding of the role of *art*.

Through the kindness of a friend, we have been put in possession of a book we should have read years ago—Aneurin Bevan's *In Place of Fear*, published in this country by Simon and Schuster in 1952. This man's statesmanlike understanding of the issues before the world ought to be examined by American readers, especially those with an interest in national affairs. In one place he says:

Fear is a very bad adviser. Its companion is hate, and hate is the father and mother of cruelty and intolerance. Fear of Soviet Communism has led the United States, and those who follow her lead, to take a distorted view of the world situation and of the forces which are at work in modern society.

There is more than this, of course, to be said about U.S. relations with Soviet Russia, but in saying those other things it becomes easy to forget the primary truth declared by Mr. Bevan.

CHILDREN ... and Ourselves

NOTES IN PASSING

DURING a recent discussion of coordination and cooperation in teaching, mention was made of the "Four-College" cooperative in New England. Amherst, Mount Holyoke, and Smith Colleges, and the University of Massachusetts have for some time shared lectureships, professors and instructors, and the Hampshire Inter-Library Center is a separate institution with a board of directors composed of the four presidents of the Colleges, the four librarians, and faculty representatives. As a resource for research materials and learned periodicals, the library has apparently been exceedingly useful, making available much material beyond the reach of any one college library operating independently.

The FM radio station WFCR (88.5) is also a "Four College" project operated by representatives of these institutions. The station's cooperative activities, designed to give added strength in one way or another to the participants, include a joint astronomy department, pioneering courses in the history of science, and new courses in non-Western studies. Financed for three years by the Ford Foundation are a Ph.D. program, a Film Center, a common calendar of lectures and concerts on all four campuses, and a committee on transportation. Additional cooperative projects are always being planned. The entire undertaking is under the supervision of a Coordinator who is a member of the administration of all four institutions.

This program seems to conform to the ideal requirements set forth by Samuel B. Gould (MANAS, Dec. 30, 1964). It is, first of all, a spontaneous regional development rooted in community interest. Despite its large-scale proportions, the values gained by this work are identical with those which emerge in any educational community where cooperation and broadening of the base are obtained. The

Coordinated Education Project of Santa Barbara, previously described in these columns, is one of what may be a growing number of endeavors to approach the ultimate philosophy of lifelong learning and the education of the "whole man."

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We have at hand a proposal by Donald Kingsbury, of the Mathematics Department at McGill University (Canada), which might provoke some discussion. Dr. Kingsbury has deep-rooted objections to "the lecture system" and in the fall of 1963 launched two calculus classes on a "workshop" basis. Despite the confusion which attended the introduction of fifty-one students to unregimented, individual learning, he is convinced that this experiment moves toward the ideal given lip-service in teachers' colleges, to the effect that "each pupil should proceed at his own pace, accompanied by recognition that he will establish his own cycles of intensity in desiring to learn."

Dr. Kingsbury has outlined one way to proceed without recourse to lectures, yet avoiding the "painfully expensive" tutor system:

Abandon lectures. A professor should never give a lecture unless he has something new to say or a new way to say it. Put your lectures on tape. Have hundreds of tape machine booths so that a student can listen to a lecture when he is himself ready to take responsibility for learning what is on the tape. If visual material is required for the lecture, use video tapes and TV booths or cheap eight millimeter projectors with self-loading film capsules. For special courses, such as languages, tapes could be keyed to illustrated texts along with equipment allowing an extra tape band for the student to record his own voice.

A staff of Consultants would replace the lectures. A consultant in a subject would do nothing but answer student questions. He would *not* tutor. If a student was so lost he needed a tutor he would be referred to the proper tapes and texts and programmed texts.

Abandon registration day, years and semesters and final exams. Take in your student any week of the year he is ready to start. Give him a checklist of everything he has to know to get a certain degree. . . .

A completed checklist covering everything you have to know and be able to do for a certain field is exchanged by the university for a degree. Graduation would come at the student's own learning rate and motivational level, maybe after two or after seven years with time out for nervous breakdowns or broken arms or six months as a beatnik in Mexico City. Graduation would become a personal triumph rather than an assembly line in May. Every time someone graduated would be an excuse for his friends to put on a big bash.

Would it be too expensive to hire all the Testers and Consultants necessary to run such a system? No. The student body is a wonderful source of slave labor. Put down as part of a student's checklist requirements a period of duty as Consultant or Tester. There is no better way to get a subject down cold than by having hordes of undergraduate monsters asking you questions about it all day long which you have to answer in a meaningful way, or than by thinking up nasty questions to see if they really learned what they were supposed to have learned.

Any comments?

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There are many aspects of the work of the "School for Living," pioneered by Ralph Borsodi, which relate to the ideal of "total education." A recent paper by Mildred J. Loomis concerns what she calls the "major problems of living":

The seventeen major aspects are in three groups: *i.e.*, those which are purely intellectual in nature—problems with which science and metaphysics deal, those which are chiefly emotional and concerned with values—*i.e.*, axiological; and those which require motor action, either individual or collective, to deal with them.

The questions raised by the first, or noëtic group, include: (1) Should human beings assume that the universe and everything in it is spiritual, material or natural in its ultimate essence? (2) What should human beings assume to be the basic aspects of their own nature? That they are souls, bodies, or persons in process? Basically good, bad or neither good nor bad? In what areas can they be accountable for what they do because of choice? In what ones not accountable because choice is in fact an illusion? (3) What should human beings assume causes the experiences and events with which all are confronted? that they are divinely ordained, mechanistically

determined, or that persons are effective in the process? If so, how and in relation to what types of events?

In answer to the question of how a Borsodi type of school might originate, Mrs. Loomis suggests one "grass roots" approach:

Those concerned and interested in new adult education would gather to discuss formation of such a school in their community. The first meetings no doubt would include only a few persons with commitment and time to work on it. Realizing the significance and magnitude of their undertaking, they would have the patience and persistence necessary to slow growth. Leadership would be recognized, volunteered or selected. The group would choose a name, write out their purposes, qualifications for membership and indicate the regulations by which it would function. They would make their existence known to the community, welcome and enlist those interested in their goals and activities. In due time the group would apply for legal recognition from the Secretary of State as a non-profit, educational institution. In its beginning informal activities, it could meet in someone's home, or find a convenient place in a school or community building.

A Community School of Living could set up a loan library and make available books, texts and other materials that bear on the major aspects of living. They could be catalogued according to the problem most significantly dealt with in their contents. Assistance in selection and cataloguing of such books could be had from a parent School of Living.

Leaders in the local School of Living would arrange night or day classes which adults in their community could attend, to secure the basic orientation in Major Problems of Living. When qualified, local leaders would conduct these classes, or bring in leadership from college and other Schools of Living qualified in these problem series.

FRONTIERS Through Lazarus' Eyes

I HAVE just read "Faith in Man" in the Dec. 2 MANAS. I have not read Teilhard's *The Future of Man*, but some years ago I read with care his *Phenomenon of Man*. I read it because I had been reading Julian Huxley frankly in the hope that he could convince me that his theory of evolution and humanism had promise not only of progress in social power, but also in values and individual excellence. That is an attractive belief, especially the theory that progress must be indefinite, leading to ever higher realms of both social power and individual excellence. Utopias as a goal are less optimistic in life because, supposing Utopia is attained—then what?

Because of their belief in indefinite progress, both Huxley and Teilhard represent an evolution of nineteenth-century beliefs and hopes. Both are recognized authorities in their chosen scientific fields, yet both devoted great energy and writing ability to integrating science with a humanistic religion. Unfortunately, despite their brilliance, both men failed from my point of view and the MANAS article does not get to the crux of this.

In the first place, I am by no means certain that the more or less orthodox scientific theory of biologic evolution as described by Huxley and accepted by Teilhard is sound or supported by adequate evidence. For example the question of teleology is still a moot point, despite the dogmatic rejection by orthodox science. This, however, is of minor importance here. Where both Huxley and Teilhard fail in my opinion is in their unscientific faith in evolution as a source of progressive psycho-social excellence in terms of values. This faith in "noogenesis," to use Teilhard's term, replaces the older faith in a supernatural God pretty much for Teilhard as it avowedly does for Huxley. A faith such as this does nothing to solve the old problem presented in the book of Job; it merely intensifies the problem.

Huxley's psycho-social evolution represents a fairly recent enormous gain in social power obtained by methods which were anything but transcendent or divine. Following World War I, I watched the buildup for World War II with horror and great skepticism about the brief period when pacifism was almost respectable. In my opinion, the one thing the world needed in those years was an end to the institution of war. Compared to this, all other social reforms from an ethical and religious standpoint were of little account and ephemeral as long as wars were accepted as the ultimate means to desired ends. This was considered an extremely limited attitude by everyone except a relatively few conscientious objectors to war. To me it was and still is a vital "truth." Modern war approaches the absolute as a means and it does not discriminate. It is as nearly absolute in its immorality as society can attain. Its methods are evil and they inevitably make for centralized power, amoral or immoral social attitudes, and a loss of individual freedom because freedom depends on moral values which are relative but no less important for all that.

Power has evolved socially, but values have not progressed comparably—in fact they have regressed in certain respects—while love as a virtue and affect is an eternal individual spirit which is no different in essentials now than it was at the beginning of history. It's silly to talk about the evolution of love.

A God or evolution which brings progress through exploitation, torture, cruelties, and the suffering of countless individuals who are innocent so far as the causes of the conflicts are concerned, is not admirable or worthy of worship. Social power has progressed, but not individual excellence. Pessimism with respect to social evolution does not necessarily mean that the struggle for individual excellence on a relative basis is doomed.

READER

What comes through, unmistakably, in this communication is a reversal of the appeal of ancient religious rhetoric. Our correspondent is really asking, "What shall it profit a man to save his own soul, if he loses the whole world?"

Two modes of seeking the common good stand questioned: Politics and Science. The comparison with the plight of Job, we suppose, means that modern man has done everything he thought he was supposed to do: He abolished the authority of irrational religions; he drew up constitutions; he established universal education, he provided for the civil rights of the individual; through science and technology he harnessed and released in the public service the resources of nature. He did all these things, and still the heavens rained disaster upon him: "Modern war . . . is as nearly absolute in its immorality as society can attain."

The indictment of politics rests upon the judgment that political virtue remains aggressively partisan: holders of political power still drop bombs on other holders of political power. Universal good is not yet a political objective. The politics of universal good is a powerless politics; it is a dream of the future, not a reality of the present, in either fact or ideal.

The questioning of science is at a different level. By implication science appears as a standard of objective reality, and it is the use made of science (by Julian Huxley and Teilhard de Chardin) which is challenged. Our correspondent looks at the evidence presented by optimistic scientists and finds no reason to justify the assumption of an underlying "progress" in the sense of socio-moral evolution. He questions the claim that the operations of nature disclose a purpose which is in some sense related to the human longing for the good life.

Two arguments are commonly presented in reply to such contentions, but since they are inconclusive, and could be disposed of as "wishful thinking," we shall not press them seriously. One is that nature is rich in evidence of cooperative

enterprise as a goal of "evolution." Kropotkin gathered some of this material in *Mutual Aid* and in *The Evolution of Ethics*. Our correspondent would probably say that Kropotkin's efforts are negated by nuclear warheads. The other argument is from history, it being maintained that socially successful federations of political units—the Cantons of Switzerland, the United States—promise at least the possibility of a peaceful and just world order. But here the incapacity of the present loose association of nation-states to include or even treat with the excluded millions of China, and the incredibly "dirty" wars pursued by countries within that association (France in Algeria, the U.S. in Vietnam), give little support to optimism.

More to the point, we think, than urging these views would be an examination of the grounds of contemporary pessimism. In effect, our correspondent is asking: What right have you to exhibit any faith in the future development of man, when the evidence is so unreliable? How can you discourse with confidence about some coming "good society" when there is so little actual movement in that direction?

Pessimism, it seems fair to say, comes from disappointed expectation—in this case the breakdown of "nineteenth-century beliefs and hopes." We have only to go back to the eighteenth century and the optimism of the Enlightenment to obtain a full sense of what seems to have been lost. Rising upon the ruins of theological superstition, turning away from the barren rationalism of scholastic philosophy, and in militant triumph over the waning power of emperors, kings, and an hereditary aristocracy, the *philosophes* laid out a course for human progress that seemed irresistible. It had both social righteousness and scientific methodology. What more could be needed?

A lot more, apparently. The question of how men may be led to embody in their lives the qualities of mutual regard, voluntary responsibility, and ethical foresight is still

unanswered. We have ample criticism concerning the failures and inadequacies of the present form of organized societies, but very few concrete proposals as to how to better existing conditions. The continued application of political power flattens society out into one-dimensional failure of external manipulation and control.

In these matters science has been of practically no help at all. Man in society is man as both subject and object, while in science he is always an object. The only "scientific" society we know of—the one which lays claim to being an application of "scientific socialism"—is notorious in its disregard of man as subject, in its explicit indifference, that is, to the unique individual.

This sort of science may be an impressive exercise of power, but it is massively irrelevant to the basic questions of the human situation. And so with the rest of all "physical" investigations. As Camus wrote with his disenchanting twentieth-century vision:

Of whom and what indeed can I say: "I know that!" This heart within me I can feel, and I judge that it exists. This world I can touch, and I likewise judge that it exists. There ends all my knowledge, and the rest is construction.

. . . here are trees and I know their gnarled surface, water and I feel its taste. These scents of grass and stars at night, certain evenings when the heart relaxes—how shall I negate this world whose power and strength I feel? Yet all the knowledge on earth will give me nothing to assure me that this world is mine. You describe it to me and you teach me to classify it. You enumerate its laws and in my thirst for knowledge I admit that they are true. You take apart its mechanism and my hope increases. At the final stage you teach me that this wondrous and multi-colored universe can be reduced to the atom and that the atom itself can be reduced to the electron. All this is good and I wait for you to continue. But you tell me of an invisible planetary system in which electrons gravitate around a nucleus. You explain this world to me with an image. I realize then that you have been reduced to poetry: I shall never know. Have I the time to become indignant? You have already changed theories. So that science that was to teach me everything ends up in a hypothesis, that lucidity founders in metaphor, that uncertainty is

resolved in a work of art. What need had I of so many efforts? The soft lines of these hills and the hand of evening on this troubled heart teach me more. I have returned to my beginning. I realize that if through science I can seize phenomena and enumerate them, I cannot, for all that, apprehend the world. Were I to trace its entire relief with my finger, I should not know any more. And you give me the choice between a description that is sure but that teaches me nothing and hypotheses that claim to teach me but are not sure. A stranger to myself and to the world, armed solely with a thought that negates itself as soon as it asserts, what is this condition in which I can have peace only by refusing to know and to live, in which the appetite for conquest bumps into walls that defy its assaults? To will is to stir up paradoxes. (*The Myth of Sisyphus*.)

The great question now emerging is whether or not there can be a science of man as *subject*—or, in what are probably more complicated but more pertinent terms, a science of man as *both* subject and object, with endlessly variable relationships between these two aspects of human identity?

There is a sense in which anticipations of such a science can be discerned in the insights of antique religion, in the startling announcements of poetic vision, and in the slowly accumulating increments of understanding in certain fields of modern psychology. How can we be sure? We can't, of course; and those who, in the face of their own skepticism and disillusionment, insist upon objective certainty come close to asking to be persuaded against their will, and upon grounds which now stand more or less discredited. Certainty about the future of man on an "objective" basis could mean no more than the destruction of man on a subjective basis. This, at any rate, seems a lesson of recent history, and to be implicit, as well, in such analyses as Seidenberg's *Post-Historic Man* and Herbert Marcuse's *One-Dimensional Man*.

It *could* be argued that there is more real ground for optimism, now, with our retrospective understanding of recent failures, than there was at the dawn of the nineteenth century, when Western man was filled with the emotional ardors of a

grossly over-simplified doctrine of Progress. Now, at least, we know a little more about how to set the problem.

It is a thesis of this journal that the clues are slowly accumulating. They began to appear, some twenty years ago, in Dwight Macdonald's *Politics*, and some basic assumptions were given explicit outline by Macdonald himself in his essay (later issued in book form), "The Root Is Man." The bearing of these conceptions on the social order is hinted at in Gerald Sykes' *The Hidden Remnant*. Other relevant ideas still need to be excavated from the corpus of Gandhian material and put into the Western idiom. The experience of various experimental communities, including therapeutic communities such as Synanon, must be looked at carefully and repeated in a variety of social contexts. We know practically nothing of the dynamics of communicating the ethical temper and atmosphere of individuals and small groups to the structure and function of larger societies. There have been virtually no large-scale attempts at voluntaristic social formations and very little ingenuity exercised to create partial communities which attempt leavening relations with the larger political order. We shall find out nothing about the capacity possessed by disciplined individuals to modify our existing society until various projects—most of them undertaken by conscientious objectors of the same general persuasion as our correspondent—have had more time to prove their value.

Then there are the characterological studies of A. H. Maslow and some others to be considered in their application to the gradual reform of social life. The reader of *Toward a Psychology of Being* and *Religions, Values, and Peak-Experiences* should have no difficulty in seeing the pertinence of these researches to the health and morality of the human community. We have only to ask: Suppose there had been a Thoreau and an Emerson in every small town in the country, instead of Concord alone?

These suggestions cannot of course survive the impatient rejections of the psychology of crisis. We suspect, however, that ancient man, when confronted by the chill invasion of Pleistocene destiny, remained uncomfited by mystical predictions that the ice would one day melt. It seems likely the victims of the Dark Ages felt a like hopelessness and found reason to believe that no ordinary human measures could alter their descent to oblivion. It is true, perhaps, that the threatening evil of the present is climactic—outdoing all previous trials of the human species—but we may be saved from utter despair by recognizing that we know very little, really, about the human condition, and still less about the possibilities of change. To admit this, we have only to look at the stars, which gave Immanuel Kant one of his great consolations. His other solace came from what he recognized as human potentiality, and modern man, now deep *in extremis*, may find reason to take heart from a similar awareness. A recent review, by David Horowitz, of Viktor Frankl's *Man's Search for Meaning* (in *Peace News*, Oct. 30, 1964), ends with this paragraph:

Frankl's account of life ruined down to the barest remnant of itself (in the Nazi death camp of Auschwitz) has much to teach those who inhabit what is described in the analytical (and less satisfactory) part of his book as an "existential vacuum." For Frankl's account is an account of the "dead," most valuable in its insight into what is alive in this death. The truth towards which Frankl is striving seems to be the perception that to discover the meaning of one's life, the life that one *has* to live, one must see it first through Lazarus' eyes. Intellectual analysis may bring us to the doorstep of such solutions, but it cannot take us across the threshold. Here, neither optimism nor pessimism has any legitimate voice or role. Yet intellectual analysis, on the other hand, may produce that exhaustion of remedies which, if honestly faced, might open the door.