

## THE LONG VACATION

THERE is one thing that every human being has to do, whether he is wise or foolish, whether he is elevated high over others or humble and unknown, whether he lives in quiet isolation or takes the pattern of his existence from a city's congested maze. He has to acquire a set of working beliefs that give his life meaning. These beliefs may vary enormously, depending upon differences in experience and differences in individual reactions to experience, but all men have in common this absolute need for "rationalization" of their lives, which is as important as breathing. Without meaning a man dies or goes mad.

It is obvious that there are many levels of rationalization, and what we call "good" explanations of meaning as well as incomplete and patchy ones. And there are various and contrasting theories about how close one can get to understanding *everything* in human experience. There are optimistic claims and pessimistic warnings, and arguments about which meanings are worth pursuing and which are not worth the trouble, or simply illusions.

History, you could say, is made of the events which develop out of human thinking about meaning. Religious wars are fought to settle the differences between rival theories of meaning. The same is true of ideological wars. These contests are not "pure," of course. There are both deceptions and follies in these struggles. A deception is the imposition of a spurious doctrine of meaning on people who are not able to recognize that they are misled. A folly is a self-deception in which everybody believes.

So, there are at least two stages in the making of rationalizations. In the first stage, men make positive propositions about meaning. In the second, they find it necessary to distinguish

between Appearance and Reality in deciding about meaning. We want to feel that we know, but we must try to avoid fooling ourselves. It is very easy, apparently, to make mistakes about meaning.

Another statement about History would be to the effect that it records great alternations between the first and the second stage of making rationalizations.

The Scientific Revolution, for example, involved both the second stage and a return to the first. From the days of Copernicus and Galileo to the present, the scientists have been looking for the really *real* world behind appearances. Now what does "appearances" mean here? It means several things, including, for example, the idea that the sun moves around the earth, and the idea that the world is flat, with danger of people falling off into space if they go too near the edge. It also means stories about meaning which people have accepted because they were promised rewards or threatened with evil punishments for unbelief.

The Scientific Revolution had two broad objectives. It sought a theory of meaning which fitted experience. Second, it sought a theory of meaning which would have built-in protection against any kind of deception. In order to fulfill the conditions of this second purpose, the theory was limited to investigations which, it was hoped, would produce reliable facts—unequivocal facts which would not lend themselves to deception.

This brings us to the present. For we are now in the process of recognizing, or finding out, that a theory of meaning which produces only unequivocal facts is a theory which leaves out a large area of human experience—an area, therefore, to which it contributes no sense of meaning. And we are realizing that we cannot

*stand* the absence of this kind of meaning in our lives.

We thought we could leave to the scientists the definition of the real world behind the world of appearances, but we now find that this does not work.

But who is the "we" of this assertion? This is a very important question. It involves us in a comparison between public and private systems of rationalization. The problem is basically one of trying to decide whether knowledge of meaning can be communicated in statements by one man to another—or of understanding what happens when you say you "believe" in some publicly declared system of explanation. How much sense is there in statements which begin with "*We believe . . .*" or "*We know . . .*"?

The difficulty in getting clarity on this question seems to lie in the fact that you both can and can't use the explanation of meaning offered by someone else, or by some public system of rationalization: You can use it as a frame for conducting your own investigation, but you can't use it as a final solution.

Of course, decisions in such matters depend upon what you want, or think you want, or regard as a satisfactory solution of the problem of meaning. If you want a place at the beach, or, say, a Cadillac, and if your personal system of beliefs has enabled you to accumulate enough money, you can buy the beach place and acquire the Cadillac, ready-made, from the Technological System of rationalization. That kind of meaning is packaged very well according to the public truth known to real estate people and the Cadillac engineers. Meanings about things—how to make them, why they are desirable—are communicated quite easily.

There are two kinds of breakdown in such solutions of the problem of meaning. One is the public breakdown. Not enough people can get Cadillacs. The promise that everybody will eventually have a Cadillac, or its emotional

equivalent, has not been kept. This public breakdown is often mixed up with a private breakdown, which involves deep personal suspicion that satisfying the acquisitive impulse is not a sufficient answer to the longing for meaning.

The observable effects of these breakdowns come in terms of a wide variety of phenomena—the do-it-yourself urge, for example, or the longing to get close to *people*, or the massive enrollment in adult education courses in Psychology. Increasingly, individuals begin to question the popular faith in Scientific Method. Others challenge the authority of the State, and still others impugn the validity of all intellectual formulations. Men of enterprise and daring begin to leave institutional frameworks and these, left to the management of the unimaginative and timid, become increasingly rigid and habit-bound. In the field of organizational undertakings, talent is devoted to small and safe developments. In the society at large, folly and aberration are both blindly worshipped and wildly questioned at the same time.

The dreadful wondering, *What have I to do with all this?*, wells up in people with irrepressible insistence. After a long vacation from personal responsibility for their rationalizations of meaning, they begin to look into their own hearts. Mostly, they look away quickly, because of the emptiness they find there. But some see only emptiness elsewhere, also, and return to their inner questions.

There is always a need for men to resolve to think as if no man had ever thought before. This is the way great philosophies, great systems of explanation, are born. And it is also the way in which men get what serenity is possible to have during their encounter with experience. But certain epochs present experiences which exert extraordinary pressure upon men to do this kind of thinking. It is then that the basic question of the relation between public and private explanation—between revealed and realized truth—becomes urgent and unavoidable.

What are the hallmarks of such an age? Anguish and anxiety. Heroism and degradation. Innovation and reaction. It is a time of agonizing uncertainty and the birth of a new conception of the human situation.

All the claims of the systems of public truth—the well-received and widely accepted rationalizations of meaning—are now looked at with the desperate eye of disillusionment and fear. *But we believed you!* is the cry in the hearts of all those who were never told that the public systems can never meet the needs of private longings. This is the terrible stuff of revolution. The revolution comes either as a demand for a better system of public explanation, or as the beginning of a cycle of intensive private inquiry. To the extent that individual meanings are sought, there is manifest need to establish working relations between the ideas and the feelings—so long separated—which together give coherence to the inner life of every human being. We know that we can *think* an explanation of meaning without feeling it, and that we can *embrace* a feeling without understanding it or anticipating its consequences. We know that there are gamuts of explanation which seem "complete," but which ignore deep human hungers. And there are imperial flushes of emotion which give the illusion of "wholeness" to blindly partisan intentions. Seeing these things, we recognize that the great offense of any public system of truth is its tendency to justify carelessness or opportunism in the individual's balancing of his private understanding. A man is able to say to himself, I don't need to figure that out; it has already been done.

Let us try some definitions. Science is what can be said publicly about the world without prejudicing what a man must learn to say about himself. Religion is what can be said, semi-publicly, about a man without excusing him from the ordeal of self-discovery. Both, in these terms, amount to the construction of portals; which is to say that what is publicly certain is not privately

final, and what is only privately certain can not be made publicly explicit.

This is by no means to argue that the line which divides the subjective from the objective never changes, but only that, wherever that line is, public truth can never cross it.

Let us argue, for example, that wisdom is the content of statements of meaning by men who have moved beyond other men in converting the subjective into the objective. We recognize these statements as wisdom by means of our intellectual appreciation of symmetry in explanation. Their metaphysical appeal satisfies the mind. We also recognize wisdom because we *feel* its truth by some inward intuition. But we are not yet able to put together our ideas and feelings concerning what is said. These truths are paradoxical—beyond our capacity to be certain. Our attempts to rationalize them break down.

It follows that a brave insistence on "objectivity" for all explanations will make us suspicious. How can we be hurried along in such matters? Wisdom is only the golden glow of hope among our uncertainties. On the other hand, we do know from experience that there are a lot of plain facts which at least some men have neither intellectual or emotional vocabulary to handle, so that for them these facts are still "subjective"—although for us they are yesterday's wisdom. And "we"—representing the contemporary consensus—don't mind being ahead of these people in our understanding. Why, then, should we be unwilling to concede the possibility that there have been a few who are in advance of ourselves? Abstractly, the proposition is not unreasonable. At any rate, it gives a kind of justification for the "portal" theory of both science and religion.

It seems clear that the portal theory is the only one that we can afford to adopt. It is the only one without obvious prejudice. It is the only one which protects us against the impressive certainties proclaimed by other men, in which we "believe" at our peril. It is the only one which

underwrites public responsibility for private discovery and growth.

Actually, the portal theory is no more than an expansion of the relationship which already exists between teacher and pupil, or parent and child. The business of the teacher is to help the pupil to get a general understanding of what the world now regards as knowledge, which means an understanding of *why* it is regarded as knowledge. In principle, knowledge is the measure of certainty. An educated man is a man who, without help from any authority, knows how to distinguish between certainty and uncertainty—between what is knowledge and what is not. He understands the meaning of "knowing." The business of the parent is to help the child to grow into maturity—which means learning to distinguish between the problems a man has to solve for himself and those in the solution of which he can accept help from others, or leave entirely to others. The mature individual understands the "dignity of man."

We doubt if the portal theory is in any sense new. It sounds something like what the "rites of passage" were meant to be, and what the "initiation" of the old Mystery religions seems to suggest. It sounds very much like the account of the despondency of Arjuna in the first chapter of the *Bhagavad-Gita*, and the story of the Temptation of Christ in the Bible. The portal theory is a way of saying to individuals: This is as far as your age, your civilization, your friends and companions, can take you; now you are on your own.

Further justification for this view can be had by asking if there must not be, in the life of every human being, a time when he is really "on his own." We can hardly deny that a man's entire past is in some sense an apprenticeship in preparation for that moment. We can hardly have failed to notice the signs of longing for that moment, throughout the childhood and adolescence, of nearly everyone we know.

If you don't adopt the portal theory, what theory will you adopt? A theory which proclaims certainties that will some day crumble, leaving your children, or your children's children, unwarned and uninstructed concerning the choices they will have to make by themselves?

We might as well get down to cases. What are some certainties we have believed in that are already becoming perilously uncertain? Well, if you question the policies of modern nation-states in behalf of national defense and "security"—as many or most of the thoughtful people in the world now do—you have to go on and question conventional ideas about "human nature" and why people let themselves be organized into enormously destructive military machines. And then you are led to question whether human responses to threat and danger might change, should another set of ideas regarding human nature become current in the world.

There is of course the problem of "daring" to ask these questions and to think in this way. And the counter problem of daring *not* to.

Then there are the questions which arise about the popular imagery which is impressed on the young in an acquisitive, technological society—in which the songs the children sing are mostly echoes and tag-ends of television commercials; and questions about the tolerance shown by religious institutions toward the "ideals" of a society whose creative capacities are very largely in the service of merchandising goods and services. There are questions about the substitution of a choice among things to buy, as the symbol of human freedom and individuality, for the choice among ideas and ideals, and questions about educational systems whose administrators are comfortable only when the teachers in the schools have been reduced by covert threat to a condition of docile timidity. There are questions about newspaper publishers who insist that they will face economic collapse unless they convert most of the information they print into a low-grade entertainment, and

questions about the horrors of criminal courts, jails, and prisons and mental hospitals in this most advanced and progressive land.

These conditions, to which many more might be added—such as the growing unemployment of the technologically displaced—are bad enough; but what is worse is the general indifference to them, as though, in *our* "good society," they are either unimportant or do not exist.

It is not a matter of denying the fruits of modern progress. We have these fruits, however their enjoyment is diluted by an unslaked appetite for more, or by fear of losing them. It is not a matter of failing to acknowledge that the world, with all its difficulties, is slowly becoming saturated with high social objectives and conceptions of the common good that were not even imagined a thousand years ago. It is a question of whether, as individual human beings, we are doing anything at all to bring these ideals into practical being. It is a question of not discussing with any seriousness the problem of whether we can do collectively what we have hardly begun to do individually.

If it be argued that the world has become too complicated for free lance development of the individual, for determined private philosophizing, for making up one's own mind about the meaning of existence—if this is the conclusion to be adopted, then simple honesty demands the admission that, for all our pretensions, we are *not free*. If we are so confined by our institutions and our highly organized way of doing things that we cannot practice the basic humanity we say we believe in—then we don't believe in it.

There is another aspect of this picture of self-defeat. While we were on the long vacation, busy getting affluent, busy applying our technological system of rationalization to the resources of a great continent, the scientific authorities were doing our private homework for us, building an impressive image of conditionable, malleable, responsive but not responsible, mechanical man. These authorities have accumulated innumerable

volumes of reliable research on the objective or "thing" aspect of human beings. And since what is objective and scientific is what is "real" and free from deception, we more or less accepted this image as the portrait of ourselves. We made ineffectual private reservations, of course. We're not dead yet. And some of us assumed that if *we* do the manipulating of man as object, man as "thing," we somehow get out of the grave in which the technologists of the psyche are burying all vestiges of human identity. Possibly this marginal view of ourselves is made more tolerable by corporate acts of supremacy and bold decision, such as winning a war, inventing the atom bomb, and scaring Khrushchev out of Cuba. But the fact remains that the science of man, except for a handful of psychotherapists who are crossing over to the other side, is mostly practiced *against* man and in opposition to the freedom of human beings. Mechanistic science of man is the precise opposite of the portal theory of public truth. It seals up the door to self-investigation and denies there was ever any real opening.

These are some of the effects of the long vacation.

The main difficulty, in the present, lies in getting the courage to draw back from the big rationalizations of public truth on which, as a whole, Western civilization has relied for its certainties for some two thousand years, and then, having become free and questioning men instead of either anxious or confident believers, taking a long look at ourselves and the human situation.

It is natural to ask: But if we are to question the very faiths which have supported us until now, *on what can we stand*.

We can stand where we have always stood, although often without knowing it. We can stand on the ancient proposition that Man is the Measure: that we have had other faiths and have changed them; that our capacity to change our faiths is the greater reality, a more substantial support, than any limiting or defining view ever adopted, taught, or claimed to be true. And while

we are wondering about who we are, what we can do, and where we stand, the earth, its seasons, and the sun and rain won't go away. The objective world will still support us. The flowers will still bloom and seeds swell in the earth. Not even the Cadillacs will disappear.

Further, nothing great happens all at once. History, progress, change—these are tides, not cataclysms. Anxiety does not abolish time.

Again, suppose for a moment that the universe has a meaning in it equivalent to the process of self-discovery in man. If this should be the case, then natural law determines that, sooner or later, every man will arrive at the portal of self-determination; nature, if not philosophy—evolution, if not man's own transcendent rationalizing power—will bring him to the threshold. On this hypothesis, he can either seek out the place of self-identification or he can be dragged there. He can either climb of his own will or be left on the steps like a helpless, unwanted babe. Why should we suppose, in a universe which has so much trouble in it, that progress for human beings is a sure thing?

Right or wrong, the portal theory seems the best one to adopt for our conception of public truth. If there is no portal to self-determination, we are not really men. The best men of this bleak persuasion are the Existentialists, and what do they say? They say we have to be men *anyway*, ignoring or defying our absurdity, since there is nothing else that a self-respecting human can do! Thus even despair is a secret affirmation of meaning. Meaning must be manufactured, since it does not exist!

Actually, the portal theory is already consistent with a number of strengthening attitudes in our society. It has much in common with the Humanism of Pico della Mirandola. It has harmony with most of the traditions of mystical religion. An impartial, self-examining science can adopt no other basis for the study of man. Politics and business will find it difficult to accommodate to, but we know without invoking

any particular theory of knowledge that both politics and business are in for some vast and perhaps sudden changes, out of sheer necessity. The Triple Revolution of Automation, Racial Justice, and Abolition of War is going to transform politics and business, regardless of what politicians and businessmen do to prevent it. The politics of nuclear armament is a self-destroying politics, and it will have to go, one way or the other. Business will have to change in adjustment to the revolution of automation, which means production for use instead of for profit, and whatever goes along with this idea. The third revolution is inevitable also. It can't be stopped. Color can no longer be taken as a measure of the quality of a man. As James Baldwin says, "The world is no longer white, and it will never be white again."

These are some of the big, objective pressures of the times, pushing us on to the portal theory of knowledge. The subjective pressures are well known to MANAS readers, since writing about them makes most of the contents of this magazine.

## *REVIEW*

### DOOMSDAY INGREDIENTS

IT is not necessary to be a nihilist in order to appreciate the humorously perverse work of cinema art called *Dr. Strangelove* (based on the novel *Red Alert*, by Peter Bryant), which brings to motion pictures a vivid glimpse of the ultimate insanities which are bound to follow in the wake of ideological war. Of course, to appreciate *Strangelove* one must know how to be uncomfortable, and must recognize its value, and be able to admire Peter Sellers and company.

Sellers plays three roles: "Strangelove" himself—a "weapons scientist" who reaches ecstasy in contemplating the marvels of inventions which insure the obliteration of life—the President of the United States, and a "right-thinking" British liaison officer whose professional duties make him share the secret of a general's insanity. Both as President and as English officer, Sellers does the best he can to avert the touch-off of nuclear finality, but the best is not, cannot be, enough. In the end, only Dr. Strangelove is fulfilled as, to the accompaniment of touching orchestrations, the world blows itself up—finally and irrevocably.

The humor of the exchanges between Washington and Moscow is prejudicial to no one, not even the "ideology" of the Soviet Union. The leaders of their peoples are presented as being beyond their depth—in a situation which has already passed outside the reach of reason. The Russians, it is true, are forced to reveal the location of their ultimate weapon, the "doomsday device"—planned for use in the unlikely event that Russia begins to succumb to superior force and sees no prospect of surviving, so that the rest of the world will also suffer extinction. The doomsday explosion, to be set off under the conditions described, will obliterate all life for at least ninety-nine years. But the real doomsday ingredients, as this motion picture makes clear, are psychological and to be presently observed in every acceptance of the notion that the best way

to put down evil is to threaten more evil. *Dr. Strangelove* is a work of art because it dramatically illustrates the helplessness of courage or intelligence in opposition to the neuroses of nations.

In the motion picture version of James Jones's *The Thin Red Line*, the viewer is also made uncomfortable, but by specific situations—such as the scene of a man in prolonged agony after being partially blown apart by a land mine. We feel uncomfortable, too, when we see the cramped quarters which at zero hour crowd the men about to assault a Pacific island. This mechanized imprisoning has much of contemporary symbolism. The dialogue is good, too—Mr. Jones at his best; but somehow or other, as the reels unroll, you discover that the makers of this film have managed to restore elements of heroism to modern war, suggesting that although the business of war may not *seem* to have point and purpose, the victory in the Pacific was really a part of the grand plan.

In *Dr. Strangelove*, however, nothing that any one individual could conceivably do can change the imbecilic actions and reactions of a war machine set into motion. And all of the roles in *Strangelove* "make sense"—from the standpoint of the men encapsulated in justifications of their mechanized roles. There is, of course, strong criticism of this movie, because we are not accustomed to being made basically uneasy when we sit in front of a large screen, any more than when we sit in front of a small one. (Several faculty members of a philosophy department in a leading university recently fell to talking about *Strangelove*, and one of them, affronted by its implications, protested that "everything was overdone." But an associate retorted: "Overdone? It seems to me that this is a little bit like saying that *Alice in Wonderland* is overdone. Is there any way, really, of overdoing the theme of blowing up the world by a logical progression of responses to unbalanced thinking?" )

In *The Thin Red Line*, Mr. Jones's original story sought to indicate there is not, cannot be, any heroism in modern war. In reviewing this book for the *Nation* (Nov. 17, 1960), Terry Southern summed up the matter with great effectiveness. "War novels," he said, "present a curious creative problem, for no matter how 'anti-war' they ostensibly are, they never wholly convey their position." Mr. Southern continues:

The reason for this is that the worst aspect of war cannot be treated dramatically—the worst aspect being those moments when men are reduced, by pain, fear, shock, or hunger, to a level of mere survival-reflex. At these moments men cease to exist as personalities—they are no longer distinguishable, one from another. Without personality, or human behavior, you cannot have drama—you have only identical ciphers, or animals. So that while a novel, as an antidote to chauvinistic myths of glory and adventure, may attempt to portray war truthfully, showing its horror, degradation, brutality, filth and privation, it can never quite reach full strength because there is always that one area which is beyond dramatic treatment, and which is the worst of all. Given that inherent limitation, Jones's achievement is most certainly a remarkable one; if *The Thin Red Line* does not wholly deglamorize war, it probably comes as near doing so as is possible.

Interestingly enough, the same Mr. Southern wrote the screen play for *Dr. Strangelove*. From this we might conclude that Southern feels it necessary to jolt people out of their complacency, yet understands that this can sometimes be achieved better by humor than by horror. But back to our main theme:

A few months ago, one of the TV programs, *The Defenders*, portrayed a court martial concerned with the slaying of a conscript by a brutal Marine sergeant. The sergeant had been an impressive (or, shall we say, "valuable"?) figure in war. But his destructive impulses, so effective in the war situation, and glorified by the press, became a menace after the war was over. Such changes in values have made drama again and again; but *Dr. Strangelove* reaches beyond this familiar moral concerned with sick individuals. By stylizing the characters and types who play

scientists, generals, politicians and diplomats, it makes us confront, not the individually insane, but collective insanity. *Strangelove* equips its viewer to oppose the logic which holds that, because one is identified with a particular ideology, and because it is unthinkable that this ideology is in any way deficient or blind, the end of "defending" it will justify any means.

To accustom them to the unpredictable insanities of a combat situation, Sergeant Welsh, in *The Thin Red Line*, tells his men to expect nothing to make sense; this way they can deal with the machinery in which they are enmeshed. But in *Strangelove* the insanity is dramatized, not by sergeants but by the leading characters. The Doctor himself—apotheosis of technical delight in weapons of destruction—and the psychotic general—who feels that he and he alone understands the enormity of the plot against the democratic world—become proof of the incapacity of any individual to break the chain reaction of death-dealing technical events—because no one can stop the escalation of the fully technologized neuroses of the nations. Decisions are out of everyone's hands, so that the world of private reaction and evaluation no longer exists. Doomsday, indeed.

**COMMENTARY**  
**SIMONE WEIL**

WE can make no better use of this space than to call attention to a new book by Simone Weil—*Selected Essays* (Oxford University Press, \$7.00), edited by Richard Rees. These essays are writings concerned with history published between 1934 and 1943.

Since this issue of MANAS is practically an anti-war issue, a passage from Simone Weil's letter to George Bernanos, probably written in 1938, gives appropriate illustration of her response to the agony of civil war. She wrote to Bernanos as a kindred spirit, explaining that in 1936 she found it intolerable to remain "in the rear" while the Spanish Loyalists were fighting for freedom. She left Paris for Barcelona, intending to enlist. Then, at Sitges, she saw some militiamen return from an engagement in which nine, nearly a quarter of their number, had been killed. The next night there were nine "revenge" operations:

In that little town, . . . they killed nine so-called fascists. Among the nine was a baker, aged about thirty, whose crime so I was told, was that he had not joined the militia. His old father, whose only child and only support he was, went mad. . . . Another incident: A village was finally captured by the red militia after having been taken and re-taken over and over again. In the cellars there were found a handful of haggard, terrified, famished creatures and among them were three or four young men. The militiamen reasoned as follows: If these young men stayed behind and waited for the fascists the last time we retired from here it means that they must be fascists too. They therefore shot them immediately, but gave some food to the others and thought themselves very humane. Two anarchists once told me how they and some comrades captured two priests. They killed one of them on the spot with a revolver, in front of the other, and then told the survivor he could go. When he was twenty yards away they shot him down. The man who told me this story was much surprised when I didn't laugh. . . .

One sets out as a volunteer, with the idea of sacrifice, and finds oneself in a war which resembles a war of mercenaries, only with much more cruelty

and with less human respect for the enemy. . . . I now continually listen to and read all sorts of observations about Spain, but I could not point to a single person, except you alone, who has been exposed to the atmosphere of the Civil War and has resisted it. What do I care that you are a royalist, a disciple of Drumont? You are incomparably nearer to me than my comrades of the Aragon militias—and yet I loved them. . . .

A small warning: Readers of this book who come across the editor's assertion that Simone Weil's "pacifist opinions" do not appear in her writing after 1939 should turn to her essay, *The Iliad* or, *The Poem of Force*. While Simone Weil wanted to take part in the struggle against the Nazis, her opinion of war remains unmistakable.

# CHILDREN

## . . . and Ourselves

### PEACE, BROTHER

THE current issue of *Columbia College Today*, an alumni quarterly, devotes attention to "the new problem of students' problems." The editors note the increasing call for psychiatric services on the campus, observing:

(1) At Columbia College the number of undergraduates seeking professional counsel and psychiatry has tripled in the last ten years.

(2) Yale has eleven full-time and nine part-time professionals in its mental hygiene clinic.

(3) Harvard facilities are so extensive that some students refer to the Health Service, directed by Dr. Dana Farnsworth, as "The Farnsworth-Hilton."

Dr. Preston Munter, assistant director and psychiatrist of Harvard Health Services, hails this situation as an "unprecedented opportunity to apply preventive medicine to more than 4.5 million enrolled in higher education." Apart from the slight emotional jolt one gets from big-brother talk of "applying" any kind of medicine to 4,500,000 students, the question obviously becomes one of just what "preventive" medicine entails in this situation. Dean Truman, of Columbia College, points out that the adult world gives youth "very few consistent definitions of the behavior that is expected of them." This generalization, presumably, is meant to apply to interpersonal morals and to ethics in business and status-seeking. But what of the schizophrenia involved in preparation for a nihilistic war? Neither Dr. Munter nor Dr. Truman relates the insane "rationale" of war-preparedness to the fact that, while students are brighter each year, according to intelligence tests, they are also more emotionally confused.

Dr. Alexander Reid Martin, for twelve years chairman of the committee on leisure time for the American Psychiatric Association, has written:

Leisure is a particular state or condition of mind and being, more specifically, an actively receptive

condition of the whole personality. Leisure is both the occasion and the capacity of the whole personality to open up to all stimuli. The mood is one of affirmation in contrast to idleness, which has a negative mood.

There are obvious difficulties in sustaining a mood of "affirmation" in a milieu characterized by uncertainty as to whether a bomb will drop or where it will come from. The finer the intellect, the more likely a negative attitude and the greater the improbability of fruitful use of leisure.

In the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* for February, in an article titled "Teaching War Prevention," Saul H. Mendlovitz describes an educational effort to overcome passive or negative attitudes toward the prospect of world peace:

In the spring of 1963, I was given the opportunity to offer the course at Rutgers Law School as an elective for second and third year students. Eighteen students (fifteen per cent of the total eligible) signed up, including the top half-dozen students of these classes. We met three times a week for fourteen weeks, and from the response of students and faculty alike it is fair to say that the course was successful. The students did all the assigned reading, were generally prepared to deal with the questions raised in the readings, and frequently had additional questions of their own. The discussion was tough-minded and at the same time elicited some original and provocative thinking. Some students volunteered to speak in the community on war-peace issues, and a few have decided to go into graduate work in the field of world order. For reasons which go beyond a concern for war prevention, the faculty of Rutgers Law School has made the course mandatory for all incoming freshmen, so that currently 142 freshman law students are working with the problem. Some sixty other schools, including the Stanford and Notre Dame law schools and various departments at such universities as Colorado, Harvard, and Michigan, have also organized courses around these materials.

I think that this need not be a unique experience. Certainly my own work in this area has convinced me—and the Rutgers faculty—that a course responsible to academic and intellectual standards can be put together on war prevention, that it can be integrated into the existing curriculum in a rational way so as to meet other pedagogic requirements, and that it will engage students in a meaningful fashion. I do not suggest that this

particular compilation is best, let alone the only way to teach such a course. I do suggest, however, that the teaching of a course on war prevention is feasible and should be done.

Commenting on the article by Dr. Mendlovitz, the editors of the *Bulletin* indicate that there are other, similar attempts at peace education:

Not reported in this article are some initial efforts to encourage the introduction of courses on war prevention in other parts of the world. Appropriate persons have been approached in Canada, Great Britain, Japan, Germany, India, Mexico Holland, and some African states. The response of these people to the program has been, on the whole, quite enthusiastic. Two meetings of distinguished academicians and statesmen focusing on the problems of introducing such courses on the university level have been held in Great Britain; a similar conference of like personnel in India is scheduled for late spring at the University of New Delhi, final plans are now being made to hold a conference in Mexico City with Latin American representatives in the summer or fall of 1964. Suitable teaching materials and other problems of course adoption are central concerns of these conferences. As the materials are produced, the World Law Fund, which is acting as a catalyst to these conferences, hopes to be able to translate all the materials into the major languages so that there will be a common core of literature for use in world discussion on war prevention.

Still other approaches encourage active participation in protest movements by peace walks, etc. A reader has sent us a copy of a mimeographed letter by a teen-ager:

I am a sophomore, age 16, student of Friends' Boarding School at Barnesville, Ohio, walking for peace from Pittsburgh, Pa., to Washington, D.C.

I shall walk without money. I shall not accept any money on the way, but I shall depend on goodwill and hospitality of People.

People of the world want peace. Then why are all the governments of the world spending an enormous amount (\$16,000,000 every hour) for war preparation?

People of the world want *bread, not bombs*. Every nine seconds one human being is dying because

of starvation. Our money must be spent to wipe out the hunger from the world.

Bombs cannot defend our freedom. They will destroy the entire human race. So let us destroy bombs before *they* destroy us.

I believe in *non-violence*. Through non-violent means we can defend and extend the values of freedom we hold so dear. Policies based on *non-violence can win the cold war*.

I want your blessings, your cooperation, and your help to work for peace.

## *FRONTIERS*

### A Craving for One World

[This article—which is made from remarks during a Friends' meeting in Yellow Springs, Ohio—has both the simplicity and strength of lifelong conviction. Early in his career, Arthur Morgan recognized the importance of distinguishing between what you believe and what you know. From this commitment to intellectual honesty has come an integrity in the quest for knowledge that has inspired countless students and other men. As resuscitator of Antioch College, as flood control engineer in charge of the Tennessee Valley Authority, as rural sociologist with several valuable books to his credit, Arthur Morgan has been animated by one driving purpose throughout his life: the understanding of the formation of human character. The present article is one more summation of the fruits of this quest.]

IT is a fairly universal characteristic of men that experiences which have been earliest and most intimate make very, very deep impressions. This is particularly true if these are the experiences of an integrated group with a philosophy and a design and policy and habit of mind. The attitudes and values transmitted by these early experiences come to seem to be the real truth.

Now it is historically the case, as we know, that the human family is diverse in its relationships, its characteristics, its circumstances, and especially in its cultural history. As cultural groups have diverged and have lived somewhat separate from each other, each group comes to have its own distinctive characteristics. When a group has come to have a distinctive pattern of thoughts and beliefs, those beliefs come to seem to its followers to be the very truth of God which has been revealed.

If that were true of only one group of men, or if all groups should arrive at a single pattern of beliefs and convictions, then we might all turn to it and say, "Here is the voice of God." But many groups, of diverse outlook, often of conflicting views, develop in many times and places, and the sincere, devout members of each group have the feeling that they are being spoken to, that the inner voice is a voice of authority, and that if we listen to it we are listening to the truth.

If we are somewhat objectively critical in our thinking we will come to question this state of affairs. I used to ask myself as a boy when I was six or eight years old: "Isn't it strange!—and how fortunate that I grew up in the country that has the true form of government; that I grew up in a religious fellowship which has the truth. And of all the people in the world, with other governments and other policies and other religious fellowships—so many of them, with their diverse beliefs—isn't it a strange good fortune that I was born in the little group which has the truth!"

For a time I had no doubt about it. It was a source of wonder to me. And then as I watched other people in other and very different groups, and found them having exactly that same inner feeling of having had the truth revealed to them, my wonder gradually turned to questioning.

My good religious counsellors told me that I must not have such doubts; that I had the truth and that all I needed was to hold it tight, not question it, rely upon it, and that it was the way for me. But it was hard to do that. That is, the sense of uniqueness seemed to me to be of doubtful validity. Then I observed that this sense of complete assurance sometimes was strongest in people whose judgment did not seem to be surest.

As I grew up, looked around, and thought, I observed that it was a fairly general characteristic of men that if they were deeply imbued with a pattern of thought and feeling and action, if they were conditioned to that by the environment and by the customs of their group, their convictions became, to them, ultimate truth.

If a devout, sincere Christian will look within his own heart and observe that sense of ultimate assurance, he will know just how the Muslim feels about his faith, how the Buddhist feels about his faith, or the Confucian, or the Hindu. There is a fairly natural process, which is almost biological—at the beginning it is genetic and biological with men—that in any group of people who are tightly knit, who have a culture and a spiritual life-pattern, the young people who grow up in it come to be imbued with

full confidence that this is the culture which has the truth.

Very often our policies and programs on a large scale revolve around our convictions that our particular beliefs are to be fully trusted, that they are true expressions of divine revelations to us, and that they are very important. About the smaller affairs of life we may question our judgments and modify our positions, but on what seem to us to be the basic beliefs, we must not waver.

So important do these deeply rooted inner convictions seem that often men have felt impelled to try to purge the world of conflicting doctrines. Out of such conflicting beliefs some of the bitterest of wars have come. When Protestants and Catholics were fighting it out in the Thirty Years War, half the population of Central Europe was exterminated. But we do not have to go back to the Thirty Years War, or to the Crusades, or to the Inquisition, with its hundreds of thousands of "heretics" burned at the stake. The same stresses are with us today.

Less than twenty years ago, when Britain took her hands off India and left it for self-determination, the Muslims and Hindus, who for a thousand years had lived in close proximity, flew at each other's throats, and slaughtered a million of each other. Today these outbreaks are renewed in Calcutta and East Pakistan. In Cyprus, where eighty per cent of the population are Christians, they and the Muslims are killing each other. In Viet Nam it is the dominant Catholics against the more numerous but less warlike Buddhists. Near the Eastern Mediterranean, Jews and Muslims are poised on the verge of war. In Quebec, religious alignment creates stress, and threatens national unity. Over and over again we see that this feeling of unquestioning inner assurance, even if it takes the form of civilized expression, can be erosive of human values.

Gandhi wrote that it was impossible for him to reconcile himself to the idea of Christian conversion after the style that goes on in India today; that it is an error which is perhaps the greatest impediment to the world's progress towards peace.

I think that there is now occurring for the first time in human history a world-wide craving for one

world of humanity—a world in which men are not separated by impassable barriers—where the assurances men have would be universal, instead of each group feeling that it and no other has the one true faith. There is that growing craving for universality and unity. The response to it is not as warm as it might be, partly because of the strength of the inner conviction of each group that it particularly has the supreme truth. We see the sincerity of some provincial assurance, sometimes the insincerity, but we do not always see the extent of the disadvantages and losses.

This spirit that is moving in the world today has some elements of a new emergence. It is a spirit of universality.

As I look at the values of the Christian culture, and within that framework, at the Society of Friends, I feel it would be a disaster for the world to move away from those values. I think there is a body of social values and of spiritual values which would be a very great loss if the world should lose them. And there is danger that they will be lost if we go among men as people to whom alone the truth has been revealed, "We who have it are bringing it to you who have not . . ." If instead of that there can be an attitude of mutual searching for the truth, with a feeling that some elements of it have been exposed to us, some to you, some of it neither of us has, and we are searching for it together, that feeling of mutual search, or mutual seeking for the truth with respect for each other, of mutual consideration and mutual good will would find increasingly friendly reception in the world.

Now the disturbance that is taking place over the world is very deep. It will be at work for generations and probably for centuries. In the process of striving for a world pattern, there tends to emerge a world view which requires that people, as friends, and trusting each other, work in good will with each other toward a common faith and practice. It would be a great loss to the world if the Christian faith, out of its sureness of being right while others are wrong, should to some extent exclude its values from that emerging tradition.

ARTHUR E. MORGAN

Yellow Springs, Ohio