VOLUME XVII, NO. 31
JULY 29, 1964

ENDS AND MEANS

SOMETHING rather wonderful, having to do with ends and means, is happening to the Radical Movement. To put it simply, you could say that present-day radicals are learning how to live with internal contradictions in their ideas of progress. Certain principles, of growing importance, lie behind this change. One is the conviction that you cannot do evil and expect to get good. A corollary is that, when it comes to a choice between the humanness of a man and his righteousness, you honor the humanness. No one, in other words, can be so confident of knowing what righteousness is as to be justified in killing or excluding from the human community people whose ideas of righteousness are different from or opposed to our own. You argue that in humanness lies the only potentiality of righteousness, and if you do not honor humanness above all, you destroy the possibility of the attainment of righteousness.

Why should we discuss "radicals"? For the very good reason that radicals are the only people who are willing to risk their lives and their fortunes (if they have any) for the sake of the common good. Throughout the turbulent centuries of Western history, they have put the motives of altruism, self-sacrifice, and the solidarity of mankind first in their lives. The authentic literature of the revolutionary movement reads like a cry of the human heart. From the beginning, its inspiration has been ethical. Its anger and outrage have risen from a passion for justice. Since the eighteenth century, the radical movement has been very nearly the only place where the Promethean longings of human beings could find expression. No one can understand the dynamics of Western history without a study of the radical movement. No one can have a reasoned and thought-out opinion concerning world peace, freedom, and social order without knowing something of the lives, the thinking, and the acts of men who worked until they dropped for these objectives. A random scatter of books to provide the beginnings of a background in radical history would include Edmund Wilson's *To the Finland Station,* Irving Stone's *Clarence Darrow for the Defense* and his *Adversary in the House* (on Eugene Debs), Louis Adamic's *My America* and his *Dynamite* (on violence in the labor movement), Arthur Morgan's life of Edward Bellamy, the biography, *Keir Hardie,* by Emrys Hughes, *Inside the Left* by Fenner Brockway, and *The Root Is Man* by Dwight Macdonald. (For the grain of radical thinking in the United States, say, twenty years ago, the reader can do no better than to read the file of four or five volumes of Macdonald's magazine, *Politics*.) These books will introduce the reader to the vision, the commitment, the dilemmas, and the frustrations and failures of the radical movement. They will also move the heart. For contemporary reading, the independent socialist quarterly, *Dissent,* and the radical pacifist monthly, *Liberation,* are recommended.

The radical movement has had great human qualities from its beginning, but it has also suffered all the vulnerabilities of politics from its beginning. Its principles have been adulterated by the drive for power, and its organizations have been split into sectarian fragments. It has been as badly cursed by delusions of self-righteousness as the organizations of the Christian religion. Its claim to serve all mankind has been compromised by the extreme partisanship of the "class struggle." Its internal dissensions have been marked by greater animosities than the rivalries of acquisitive imperialism. Its ruthless exercise of power, when power has been achieved, has often been more brutalizing and tyrannical than the rule of the corrupt authorities it displaced. The betrayals of

the radical movement must be measured by the height of its aspirations. Yet the radical movement has had grandeur of purpose and the dignity of all-out resolve. Its story illustrates the human condition far better than any bourgeois chronicle. It has the intensified humanity of Lucifer as the type of mankind. It is a fallen angel which rises to new struggles in every epoch.

What, then, *is* a radical? On this question we quote Karl Marx, not because he is an "authority," but because in this case he gave an answer that is precisely correct. "To be radical," he wrote in 1844, "is to grasp the matter by its root. Now the root for mankind is man." Radicals, then, are those whose primary devotion is to man—the understanding and service of man. And we might repeat here James Baldwin's version of this idea:

> Let us say, then, that truth, as used here, is meant to imply a devotion to the human being, his freedom and fulfillment; freedom which cannot be legislated, fulfillment that cannot be charted. This is the prime concern, the frame of reference; it is not to be confused with a devotion to humanity which is too easily equated with devotion to a Cause; and Causes, as we know, are notoriously bloodthirsty.

Baldwin has put the matter essentially. The new radicalism has given up strenuous ideologies. Ideologies become blood thirsty, and bloodthirstiness, in the second half of the twentieth century, can no longer be excused as "necessary" to the "cause of humanity." For the modern radical, goodness, or goodness of life, must have a pragmatic sanction, a non-theoretical, here-and-now reality. The goodness of the end must be present in the means. Threads of the thinking of John Dewey and Mahatma Gandhi meet in this idea. But the view is more than an absorption of "influence." It is also some kind of secretion of the times. Too many men are now dead of the righteousness of their fellows. There has been too much darkness in the high noon of revolutionary triumph in the twentieth century. The argument for liquidation in behalf of the good life is plainly maniacal. Too many *millions* have to be liquidated, and the good life does not result.

So we have the conclusion: Whatever the good life requires, it must not require the slaughter of human beings. And since war is now slaughter—indiscriminate, massive slaughter, with weapons that are no longer subject to rational control—radicals tend to become pacifists.

Now this change in the means available to radical action has an inevitable effect upon radical thinking. It makes the need for ethical justification more immediate. And it brings the need for "radical" change in theory and doctrine. This change is taking place. In America it began, say, about twenty years ago, when Christian pacifists and Debs socialists met in the conscientious objector camps of World War II and began to leaven each other's ideas. Out of this interchange came the anarcho-pacifist coloring in contemporary radical thought. A clear humanist version of this current of thinking found expression in Dwight Macdonald's essay, *The Root Is Man* (in a passage quoted many times in this magazine—see MANAS for June 26, 1963).

The best place to examine the continuing changes, new syntheses, and self-criticism in present-day radical thinking is in the pages of *Liberation* (Room 1029, 5 Beekman St., New York 38, N.Y., forty cents a copy, $4.00 a year). There are no bitter hatchet-jobs performed by radicals on each other in this magazine. The sharp cutting-edge of radical polemics is dulled. The big ideological goals have become uncertain, and are replaced by the more immediate ends of the civil rights struggle and the war against war. Threads of continuity connect the radical thinking of the present with the past; hard determination remains, but the spirit of violence is gone. Issues are being redefined. There is a conscious, manifest effort to resolve the historic contradictions between radical ends and means.

Let us look at two kinds of difficulties which confront the modern radical: (1) The problem of evaluation and support of the Cuban Revolution; and (2) the problem of Welfarism versus the Anti-State mood of Radical Pacifism.

First, the Cuban Revolution. Initially, it was difficult for anyone with liberal inclinations not to feel deep sympathy for the Cuban revolt. The late President Kennedy, for one, told Jean Daniel in an interview last fall, a few weeks before the assassination: "As far as the old regime goes, I agree with the first Cuban revolutionaries." He also remarked in this interview: "In a certain sense, it is as though Batista were the incarnation of some of the sins committed by the United States. Now we must pay for those sins." President Kennedy went on to say that "Castro has betrayed the promises of the Sierra Maestra and . . . has agreed to become a Soviet agent in Latin America," but our point, here, is that no informed human being could fail to rejoice that the infamous Batista regime was at last overthrown and that the Cuban people were now to have an opportunity to shape their own destiny.

The liberal dilemma in relation to Cuba is somewhat different from the radical pacifist dilemma. Liberals are divided on the question of whether, indeed, Castro *is* a pawn and agent of the Soviet Union. Castro, of course, says he is not, and many interpreters of the progress of the Cuban revolution insist that the "communism" of the small island off the Southeastern coast of the United States is a peculiarly local variety, by no means an offprint of instructions from Moscow. (People who want to inform themselves on this issue might begin by comparing the statements of Theodore Draper and Herbert Matthews, who take opposite views. Draper's position has been stated in the magazine, *Encounter,* and Matthews' latest discussion of the issues appears in a recent number of *Hispanic American Report,* published by the Institute of Hispanic Studies, Stanford University, Palo Alto, California.)

While the question of a Communist-dominated Cuba undoubtedly adds to the confusion, the problem of violence looms larger for most workers for peace. It is indeed difficult to apply Gandhian metaphysics to the Cuban revolution. It is not easy for people who, by strenuous soul-searching, have focused their moral determination and rested their hopes for constructive social change on methods of non-violent resistance, and attitudes of harmlessness, to reconcile themselves to the techniques of guerrilla warfare and to the executions which came after Castro's forces gained power. Unhappy computations, such as *hour much* violence in Cuba can a pacifist sympathizer tolerate, began to be heard. The moral incongruity of the question was itself hard to bear. This led to repetitions of accounts of the enormities of the Batista regime, creating another battlefield of the emotions. Pacifists felt the abstraction of their own position, in contrast to Batista's bloody atrocities. Historically, you might say, it was like trying to get the socio-political issues of the eighteenth century into the same moral arena with the problems of an advanced, twentieth-century technological society. It was as if the old question of how Gandhi would have dealt with *Hitler* had been set for pacifists in a region very close to home. Gandhi had an answer to this question, but the fact remains that, to make this answer, you have to *be* a Gandhi, you have to have done the thinking that Gandhi did and feel the feelings that Gandhi felt, and be willing to make the sacrifices that Gandhi was willing to make. Except under these conditions, the dialogue breaks down.

Gandhi, however, also had an answer to people who were not persuaded of the importance of non-violence. He said that a man ought to resist evil and injustice, preferably with non-violence, but in any event to resist. Now this, you could say, allows the Gandhian pacifist to refrain from judgment of people who fight in a just cause, but certain psychological difficulties remain. In general, the initiative of history now lies with the nuclear powers—nations which threaten to involve the entire world in the devastation of their quarrels, so that the rationalization of violence in behalf of "justice" becomes pretty academic. When a great modern state moves toward war, it acts by processes so impersonal, so remote from

ordinary righteous indignation, and so all-devouring in consequences, that the claim that the war will accomplish "justice" is plainly over-simplified nonsense. Pacifists see this and they order their thinking in anticipation of the "main event." Then comes this little, back-door revolution to harry their consistency and prick their consciences.

It is all very well to make some pat, intellectual formula for a solution. This kind of dealing forgets that people who seriously work against war *feel* the agony and the tragedy of what men do to one another with guns. This kind of pain is a part of the depths of their being. It is a part of the respect for all life that has become a principle of their philosophy. There are *no* expedient solutions for such problems.

How might a radical pacifist relate to such a situation? Various answers to this question are found in the pages of *Liberation.* Actually, at one time there was an extreme difference of opinion between two *Liberation* editors on the issue of the Cuban revolution, which eventually resulted in the withdrawal of one of them. However, the appropriate comment is not, "See, these pacifists can't even agree among themselves!" but rather, *"Of course* there are serious differences of opinion, the important thing to recognize is that these differences are sustained without recrimination and with mutual respect."

The mood of a current radical pacifist examination of Cuba is illustrated by an article by Dave Dellinger in *Liberation* for June-July. This article begins:

> There are people who believe in the Cuban Revolution on faith, because it is socialist, much as they (or their predecessors) believed in the Soviet Union all through the days of the Stalinist terror and hypocrisy. And of course there are others who believe just as dogmatically that the Cuban people cannot possibly be free or happy because they do not have a parliamentary system of government, a two-party system, and presidential elections.
>
> It seems more fruitful to examine the Cuban Revolution pragmatically. To what extent is it succeeding in overcoming the poverty, humiliation, and servitude which were the lot of most Cubans during sixty years of highly profitable United States domination? Is it encouraging the intellectual, religious, and political liberty of the people, or is it "merely" (as well-to-do Americans sometimes put it) improving their economic lot at the expense of their political freedom (freedom, by the way, which the people did not possess before the Revolution, when the United States was well satisfied with Cuba)? Now that Cuba has become a Marxist-Leninist country and a member of the Soviet bloc, is it being run or controlled by the Soviet Union? Does it appear to be succumbing to the centralized authoritarianism and stifling bureaucratism which continue to plague the European countries, even as they are being forced to yield ground slowly and erratically to the post-Stalin forces of liberalization and relaxation? (I am writing these words after eight days in Czechoslovakia.) Does the system work in Cuba or is it a chaos of disorganization inefficiency, and shortages? The answer to these questions is more important than the name given to the system or the forms and formulas under which it operates.

These are the opening paragraphs of a series on Cuba Dellinger is doing for *Liberation,* having recently completed a second visit there. We shall not quote a great deal more, but invite readers to look up these articles for themselves. The point to be established here is Dellinger's non-ideological, human approach. He seeks understanding of the lives of the Cuban people, of their feelings, their hopes, and of the measure in which the conditions brought by the revolution have given them opportunity for better lives.

You could say, therefore, that radical pacifist thinking in the present is thinking in terms of immediate human values. There is no need to approve the violence of the Cuban Revolution in order to recognize the good it has done and continues to do. Nor is there an inclination to soft-pedal or hide unpleasant facts. Dellinger concludes with observations which seem unmistakably correct

> The Revolution in Cuba is basically irreversible. Even if Cuba should suffer military defeat and American occupation the people would never forget the glorious years they have had, the discovery they

have made that human nature does not have to be selfish and cruel, and brotherhood an empty slogan frustrated by the economic and political realities of the system. But the real question remains. Who will take up the Cuban example and fashion a new life of brotherly relationships indigenous to their own culture and responsive to their own needs?

In Czechoslovakia an intelligent and humane Marxist told me that for him and many of his countrymen the Cuban Revolution is the most exciting development of the last twenty-five or thirty years. "It may transform the whole world, which has long since gone stale. For all its genuine idealism, socialism has been bogged down for years in a stifling bureaucracy. And although the Socialist countries have thrown off the worst aspects of Stalinist terror and Russian control, real freedom is still more of a hope than a reality. The stimulus of Cuba may speed up our liberation by years."

As I listened to this man speak, I wondered how many Americans are equally open to the message of Cuba. Are we too frightened by the words "Communist" and "Marxist-Leninist" to study the Cuban Revolution dispassionately, and perhaps introduce some of its concepts into the mainstream of American political discussion? Are we convinced that the backward-looking refugees and the State Department know, and are able to tell the truth about what is actually happening in Cuba, so that there is no need to upset the travel ban? Are we so satisfied, basically, with the American Way of Life, its affluence, its "free press," "democracy," and "Free World" alliances that we feel we don't need to find out for ourselves about the experiment the Cubans are engaged in?

When you think of the number of people in America who, because of troublesome moral questions, prefer not to know anything intimate or revealing about the quality of life of the Cuban people, today, and who are quite satisfied with the ideological generalizations they have adopted on the subject, you realize the enormous importance of this challenge of radical pacifist thinking and reporting.

The second problem listed for discussion is the extreme contradiction in almost any solution for the technological unemployment being caused by automation, in relation to the hope for a decentralized society in which the power of the State gives way to comparatively small, politically independent, and economically self-sufficient communities consistent with the Gandhian ideal. How, in a Bellamy-type, *Looking-Backward* sort of state, will it be possible to get communities like that? The probable effect of any kind of "total" organization along familiar lines is put in a few words by Marshall A. Dimock: "Spirit, vitality, creativity, freedom, and dynamism are threatened with every new layer of organization made necessary by large size. In simple, face-to-face relationships, people are human and natural in their behavior, but with every successive move toward hierarchy and remoteness, the system tends to become impersonal, power-motivated, and rule-ridden." How is the vast, and for us extremely complicated, paternalism of the Bellamy state to be made the vehicle of free human development? How can it be possible to create an enormous social institution which will resemble "nature" to the extent that the hardy virtues of pioneers can blossom in relationships with it? What about the skills of ingenious craftsmen, artisans, and practitioners of the fine arts? Are the labors of these people to be "organized" according to formulas made up by benevolent economists? How will planners who start out with Bellamy's dream in mind avoid ending up with some kind of Walden II?

But against this you have to set the brute facts of automation. "The human being," as Ralph Helstein says, "has been pushed out of the productive process." And as he adds: "In other words, the notion that a job is required to qualify and certify a person for income becomes obsolete."

Now there are two ways to try to correct this situation. One way—the way being used—is to *tell* people that they are going to have to change their thinking, and to give them sound, pragmatic reasons. This is the easy way—the way chosen by the Puritans to get people into Heaven, according to the Puritan theory of salvation. You tell them that the labor ethic was all right as long as it

would work—as it worked in a scarcity economy—but that now, in an economy of abundance, you can no longer measure the merit of a man by how hard he labors to produce the things he needs. Now we must have another criterion of human excellence. And how will we get that new criterion? Why, from the necessities of the New Economic Dispensation, of course.

The other way—the difficult way—of meeting this problem is to recognize that the labor ethic (which is not unrelated to the "Protestant ethic" as examined by Weber and Tawney) was never the *whole* truth, nor even its most important part. The labor ethic was strictly from hunger. It developed among men who, as La Boetie said of Ulysses, chose their language "to meet the emergency rather than the truth." Theories of getting fed, clothed, and housed have *never* made an adequate philosophy of life for human beings, even though, during hard times, this certainly seems quite enough to think about. Our problem has been that when the hard times go, the philosophy stays, and we are stuck with it.

But men don't change their philosophies because economists and planners explain facts to them from mounts of statistical prophecy. *They change their philosophies from longings of the heart.*

It is just as Baldwin says. Liberal intelligence, understanding of "the general welfare," thoughtful "good will"—these things are good, but not enough. Changes of philosophy do not come from the sermons of social planners, nor do they come from men in some kind of flight from impending economic debacle. Such changes come from the spontaneous perceptions in human beings that they ought to be doing something better than they are doing—pursuing ends which have widening meanings for life.

Economic means and ends will become easy to arrange—to improvise, in one way or another—once men no longer delude themselves with the idea that they are all-important. It won't work to say to people: Now you must turn into an artsy-craftsy person, get to understand "creativity," and begin to believe in "education" and all that, because your faith in the old economic philosophy is breaking down. However you dress it up, this is still an acquisitive, mechanistic approach to the life of human beings.

Well, what ought the just-minded and public-spirited managers of the Triple Revolution do? We don't mean to minimize their intelligence or their courage, nor to low-rate the importance of their predictions. They need help, that's all. For example, Mr. Theobald might get off telegrams to Walter Weisskopf in the economics department of Roosevelt University (see MANAS for Aug. 21, 1963), and to E. F. Schumacher, economic adviser to the British National Coal Board (see MANAS for Feb. 20 and April 17, 1963). Both these men are economists who insist that economic thinking must take its premises from primary human values. Then, the Triple Revolutionaries might try to involve A. H. Maslow, Carl Rogers, and Gordon Allport in a consideration of the psychological necessities of any conceivable "good society."

The obvious need is to learn how to equate planning with growth situations instead of with some economic utopia—to keep the socio-economic solutions flexible and fluidic enough for their free development as by-products of an inventiveness born from a more important enterprise. Here, the principle laid down by Lyman Bryson in *The Next America* and Alfred Reynolds in *Pilate's Question*—the principle of restricting government to the management of "things," not people—has obvious application.

This is the radical pacifist revision of Marx. To the dictum that the Root is Man, is added the saving proposition, Man is not a Thing.

REVIEW
"THE SYMBOLIC AND THE REAL"

IRA PROGOFF'S volume of this title (Julian Press, 1963; $6.00) continues the inquiry begun in his best known work, *The Death and Rebirth of Psychology.* The "rebirth" of psychology, in our time, involves some of the essential concerns of religion, and these come into sharp focus in *The Symbolic and the Real.* Dr. Progoff observes that "the second generation of psychoanalysts after Freud have found themselves steadily drawn into acting out a quasi-spiritual role, but without having tools of knowledge or techniques equal to the task."

As a Jungian, Dr. Progoff believes that modern man, like the man of every age, is "in search of a soul." It is a quest for transcendental symbols. But the forms we study as theology or religious doctrine are matters of history rather than psychology. Living "symbolic beliefs" are not now ready to hand. Dr. Progoff writes:

> It is true that even in addition to the Biblical and Christian context of reality, there are several other sets of symbolic belief available to modern persons. These may take the form of special religious doctrines, Eastern or Western in origin, or secular faiths and ideologies of many kinds. But each of these presents a special version of truth made to measure for a particular predisposition. They seem not to be adequate for a world which has been shown, both by science and by the dangers of history, a vision of truth beyond provincial opinions. To carry out the work of reconstructing persons, modern man requires a new context of belief based upon a symbol so elemental that it touches the depth beyond all subjectivity, and so encompassing that it gives meaning to all without rejecting any.
>
> A symbol of that scope cannot be constructed deliberately by an act of intellect. It requires the support of a profound and continuing experience. It involves not a set of beliefs consciously held but an *atmosphere,* a quality of *feeling* about the nature of reality. To state, for example, that the psyche is the directive principle of the human being by which man touches the universe and discovers the ever-enlarging meaning of his existence, is in itself only a descriptive statement. To conceive of the psyche and to describe it is an act of intellect. To this degree it is an act of partial being; but to involve oneself in the cycles and struggles by which the meanings of human existence unfold through the psyche, is an act of total being. It is an act of participation in the wholeness of life, and by means of it the individual enters a larger dimension of reality.

Dr. Progoff undertakes to describe the liberation of the psyche from the petty and personal, examining various ways of moving toward "self-actualization" and "autonomy." Employing the word "dialogue" in the sense of Martin Buber in *I and Thou,* he suggests that a true "program for personal growth" must involve understanding relationship with another human being with whom the "inner life" can be explored and stimulated. By this he means "regular and disciplined meetings in a structured context where the pattern and direction of the individual's life can be examined objectively, interpreted, evaluated, and drawn forward." A variety of techniques are suggested:

> The continuity of dreams is worked with, the transient dreams that reflect everyday life and the lasting dreams of major import that are brought up from the deep foundations of human existence. A perspective of the inner development of the person is gradually put together so that the individual can feel not only the impediments of his past but the latent potentials striving toward fulfillment in his future. Gaining this perspective he can recognize and affirm the unborn possibilities of his life, and he can make room for their growth even while they are still invisible seeds.

Dr. Progoff, we are sure, recognizes the disadvantages of describing "techniques" for growth of the inner self, but it is the actual awakening with which he seems mostly concerned. His idea of keeping a "psychological notebook" has nothing to do with diary-writing capacities, but is one means by which thoughts and impressions may be recorded and underscored for emphasis.

In a discussion of "Psyche-evoking for our Time," Dr. Progoff's development of the idea of psychological death and rebirth parallels the

general conception of Herbert Fingarette's *The Self in Transformation*. The reference-point for Progoff is the philosophy of Socrates. In the *Meno,* Socrates undertakes to prove that a man "knows" the principles of mathematics—and many other things—even though he has never been taught:

From this Socrates deduced that teaching is not a matter of something being placed in one person by another, but is a question of eliciting something that is already present, although only implicitly and latently, at hidden depths of the individual's mind.

> "What we call learning"' Socrates said by way of summary, "is only a process of recollection." This recollection, however, is not of events that have taken place in earlier years of the individual's life. . . . The boy had not studied the subject, and yet he was able to demonstrate a significant insight into it. To us in modem times there are several different ways in which such an event can be understood, but to Socrates it was self-evident that the boy's capacity was the result of an experience he had had in a previous lifetime.
>
> Socrates' goal as a goad was to stir men up so that the traces of knowledge garnered through the timeless journey of the soul could come alive again. He sought to open a way for the true wisdom of which the oracle had spoken. His goal was to touch the depths in men, to evoke what was hidden and unremembered there, in order that it might serve as an inward source of truth.

A closing paragraph provides an adequate summary of the book's central theme:

> In our day to hallow it ["the transcendent quality of the divine"] in the old way is neither necessary nor possible. We are called upon, rather, to learn to enter the dimension of depth in our individual experience freely and by the light of modern knowledge. The quality of the sacred will then become part of our existence, not as an object of worship but as an endless truth ever unfolding in our lives. With it we shall open a path by which fresh and continuing experiences of spirit breaking through the psyche will become increasingly familiar to modern man. Increasingly the modern person will feel at home on the dimension of spirit having found his way there integrally via the depths of his psyche. He will have forged out of his personal experience a new awareness of what spiritual reality is, not as an object of dogma but as the place of meeting in the depth of man where meaning unfolds.

COMMENTARY
THE POLITICS OF FEAR

IT is something of a trial—even when it comes from anxious friends—to receive warning that the "Communist menace" is a serious matter and must be vigilantly exposed. Not one of these people, we suspect, has ever met any Communists—they are very hard to find. The Communist is someone nobody knows, becoming thereby an almost supernaturally dangerous abstraction. One wonders how France and Italy survive at all—both with Communist parties numbering millions of people.

And then we ask ourselves—do they ever *read* our paper? The review, for example, of Sargant's book, *The Battle for the Mind,* which is a serious work on the Pavlovian origins of the techniques of brainwashing? Instead, they send us material that must have been written as a weak, second try by the authors of the *Protocols of Zion,* suggesting that the Communists are not human at all, but some kind of demons from Mars. This is really the most discouraging aspect of such warnings. Hope of human solidarity, of understanding among peoples, is apparently regarded as a subversive emotion. There is no effort to understand, historically, the emergence of the vast revolutionary phenomenon of alienation and revolt—no willingness to look at contemporary problems as normal human beings. Nor is there any intelligible policy which might flow from these warnings. Carried to a logical conclusion, the message is that we had better kill off all the Communists there are, and pretty soon. The fact that this can't be done is totally ignored. And the possibility that it ought not to be done, even if it were possible, is also ignored. Such material is written to excite, frighten, and enrage the reader—never to make him think, but to make him distrust anyone who tries to think.

It is bitterly disappointing, at first, to find that there are so many people who believe what they read in the papers. Then you realize that this results from the spontaneous trust many people feel for those whom they regard as their instructors. But in this case the trust is being betrayed by irresponsible publishers and writers. It is not a matter of ignoring Machiavellianism in Communist politics, nor of keeping secret Lenin's revolt against bourgeois morality. It is a matter of propagating the devil theory of history, every day, in every way, in the public prints. The spread of this theory can only lead to the blind, mutual destruction by human beings of one another. This is the future such publishers are building for us all. Decent people have no business nourishing such publishers with their support. If it's excitement they want, they would do better to buy the *Police Gazette,* which has far more candid, if limited intentions.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves
THE QUICK AND THE DEAD

[This extract from a KPFK commentary by Hallock Hoffman (April 26) seems a good example of how one may make sense out of the title of this Department.]

WHEN I was struggling to become a good flight instructor in the Army's training program, the chief instructor of our flying school remarked: "Never answer questions before the student asks them." It took me many hours in the air, and many students—who suffered from my inexperience—to discover how right the chief instructor was.

A student pilot is seeking to learn to manage a fairly complicated piece of machinery under conditions of some stress. He is beset by a bombardment of new perceptions, his instructor may be telling him to push this or pull that, look there, or here—while he is still trying to understand how to start looking.

After I had begun to heed the advice of the chief instructor, I discovered that students could learn more rapidly if I stopped trying to teach them. If I could put them into the situations one had to know answers to, the student would always discover the questions. After he had asked the question, the answer meant something to him. He could use the information—he knew where it fitted into his growing system of knowledge.

I found out that it is impossible to teach anyone to fly, but almost anyone can learn to fly. Most students selected by the Air Force's physical and psychological testers could learn easily to fly. But the rate at which students flunked out of the flight training program for failure to learn quickly enough continued to be high. Though the students were flunked, the failure was usually the fault of the instructors, who kept answering unasked questions, who distracted the students so much that they never had a chance to learn.

I began to learn how to be a good instructor only after I became head of the instructors' school, which forced me to stop thinking about how to explain what a pilot does when he flies an airplane, and start thinking about what an instructor does when he helps someone learn to fly one. Perhaps one never really learns how to do something complicated like flying an airplane until one tries to teach others; one never learns how to teach others until one tries to teach teachers.

Or, to turn the advice of the chief instructor around, one never learns until he has to try to answer questions. The questions from my students, after I had learned to listen to them, forced me to become conscious of how I flew the airplane; I became a better pilot by trying to answer those questions. The questions from the student instructors made me a better instructor. If I had spent a year or so in teaching instructors of instructors, I would finally have learned how to instruct instructors.

The questions one hears are disturbing. If I were to divide mankind into two categories, I would say that some are quick and some are dead. The quick are people who can hear questions. The dead are people who know answers. The quick are learning, because the questions disturb them and make them look again and again at their own systems of thinking about the world they live in. The dead do not want to hear questions, because they prefer the comfort of a tidy, well-explained world.

The questions one hears are always disturbing, which is only to say that the questions one hears are the questions that can cause learning to begin. Men are curious; as Aristotle said, men want to know. Children prove this observation about human nature: they are always asking questions. One reason the children's questions are tiring for us adults is that it is hard to hear what the children are asking. It is so much easier to answer the question we want to hear that we must listen attentively to figure out what the child is trying to learn. Listening to a child requires paying enough attention to discover what his question would be if he were able to put into words the ignorance or uncertainty that lies behind what he says.

There is a story about James Watt, the inventor of the steam engine. When James was still very small, he came into the kitchen where his mother

was having a cup of tea with a neighbor. "Mother," said young James, "why does the tea-kettle steam?" His mother answered as best she could. "But *why* does it steam?" he asked again. Again she tried to answer. Seven times James asked the question, and seven times his mother tried to frame an answer that satisfied him.

When James left the kitchen, the neighbor exclaimed, "How can you be so patient? You answered that same question seven times."

"No," said Mrs. Watt, "I didn't answer it, or James would not have kept on asking."

If this story is true, James' mother was not—like many of us—teaching her son to stop his questioning.

Hearing and attending to the questions is the hard part. We do not like to be disturbed, but learning depends on finding the disturbing questions. R. C. Collingwood, in an essay about the work of the historian, says that everything written is always written to answer some question. When the question is not stated, it is nonetheless in the author's mind. What is read is not understood, says Collingwood, unless the question that disturbed the author enough to make him write has been discovered.

Men are curious; they want to know. As long as they are living, they are like children: their acts, whether they are aware of it or not, are tentative and exploratory. We are always testing the environment, as the student pilot tests his muscles and the plane's controls, to find out how we and our environment respond. The human brain is, among other things, a store of partially proved hypotheses about what will work. There may be some unambiguous and certain propositions about human reality, but they are surely few. Most human problems involve more than one possible and workable solution, but our human curiosity is often matched by our animal demand for certainty, and we are always trying to fix reality in some mold so that it will stay put.

It must be some deep ingrained respect for the ambiguity of experience that makes us draw back from simple programs of government like those of the Nazis. Whenever anyone announces that he has learned all there is to know, we know he is telling us a lie. It may be this healthy human expectation that tomorrow will bring new questions and perhaps better answers that makes most Americans so negative about the idea of government planning in the United States. "Planning" sounds like what an architect does when he makes the blueprints for a house, and we all know that a point is reached in building a house when the builder must commit himself—when the plan may no longer be changed. The house, whether the plan is good or bad, is built; the plan turns into wood and bricks, and we have to live within its confines.

But plans for the actions of people cannot be of the same character. We ought to have a different word for them. There are moments of commitment, certainly; but usually they can be reversed. The irreversible experiences of men are birth and death—there are few others. It is the *becom*ing quality of life, the almost infinite possibilities contained within it, the unpredictability and surprise about ourselves, that make the Schweitzer-Gandhi principle of "reverence for life" so appealing. Men can kill each other, and that is final for the dead.

We are living in a time of high excitement. Everything is changing. In the last 7,000 years man has made over the world, transforming his natural animal environment to one that is, for most of us in this industrialized and urbanized land, almost wholly man-made. In a time of universal revolution—not only political revolution, but revolution in every field of inquiry and every sort of endeavor—the distinction between the quick and the dead is immediately disclosed. The continent is in motion. The sky is filled with commerce. The parliament of man is nearly arrived. But the possibilities include as always death, and the choice becomes more final as the power to make it becomes greater.

The United States was to be the land of the free where the doubts of the brave led to learning. When we fulfill that vision of ourselves, we are a light to the world. The choice is open to us still. We have only to find the right questions.

HALLOCK HOFFMAN

Santa Barbara, Calif.

FRONTIERS

Voluntary Enterprise—Costly but Free

ONE of the disturbing things about the present is that really effective critics of our civilization can draw big audiences but stimulate practically no action. For example, Erich Fromm, whose books probably sell better than those of any other writer on psychological subjects, and who is said to be the most popular lecturer in the United States (he lives in Mexico, but makes a four-month lecture tour here every year), seems to make no impression at all on the political thinkers of our time. Politicians are supposed to be practical people, and when a man like Dr. Fromm devotes nearly half his time to understanding the human failure behind the political process—and describes what seem, from any point of view, some of the prime causes of the disorder in American life—you would think they would pay some attention. But they simply don't hear; and they don't hear the scores of other critics who are saying much the same thing. The reason, of course, is that they can't win elections with this kind of knowledge.

Last spring, *Look* (May 5) published an interview (by Chandler Brossard) with Dr. Fromm, giving a capsule version of the psychoanalyst's cultural diagnosis:

> Dr. Fromm's political-social views stem largely from humanistic concepts, since he is not too interested in politics per se. His essential interest is in how man treats himself and his fellow man. Out of love and respect for the human being, Fromm maintains, comes progress; out of "self-contempt projected onto the world scene, rationalized under nationalistic slogans, you get darkness and brutality and untimely death."
>
> In talking to Dr. Fromm, one gets the impression—and it is an exhilarating one, tinged with awe—that he has dedicated his life to rolling back the darkness of man's history. "I feel that the only thing that will save civilization . . . is a renaissance of spirit—a rebirth of the belief in man himself, in his essential creativeness." He deplores culturally imposed departmentalization of modern man. "His mind has become separated from his body, his passion from desire, his beliefs from the beliefs of the market place. He is no longer a creature of integrity and creativity. He has become a thing, to the world, to himself. How has it happened that he has turned his passion from people to things, from the organic to gadgets that do not think nor feel nor really exist? . . ."
>
> In general, Dr. Fromm feels that modern man has been failed by the very institutions that were originally constructed to buoy and better him. His thoughts on these are provocative:
>
> EDUCATION: "By and large, the things taught children are useless and quite alien to their personal reality. It is a tragedy that our society puts so much value on data rather than insight, behavior rather than personal integrity. . . ."
>
> GOVERNMENT: "Hypocrisy and deceit and maneuvering by cynical second-rate minds and hearts. No wonder that so few people trust their official leaders."
>
> RELIGION: "What at one time was a dynamic structure mediating between man and his destiny and interpersonal responsibilities, has become mere mechanical ritual that dwarfs men rather than strengthens them."

This account of Dr. Fromm's thought is no doubt journalistically oversimplified, but if, on the whole, he is right, then it becomes perfectly obvious why the observers and scholars who study how democratic institutions are working, these days, file such gloomy reports. It doesn't matter much whether you say that, alas, the virtue has gone out of us, since the good old days, or wisely declare we have just as much virtue as we used to, but that technology's release of human beings from the treadmill of hard work is showing us up; what matters is whether or not we can find any way of changing our lives.

It has already been noted that these defects are inaccessible to political action. You can make laws about money and land and things, and about the relations of people to money and land and things, but you can't make laws about people's relations with themselves and how they think. You can't cure them of self-contempt by introducing a bill in Congress. The fact of the

matter is that we don't have any recognized means of putting these insights to work.

We have a Synanon on the beach in Santa Monica, struggling to salvage and reconstruct the flotsam thrown up by the centrifugal forces of socio-cultural decay, but if California officialdom could figure out a way to put an end to this extraordinarily successful attempt to evolve healthy human beings out of beat dope fiends, tired hoodlums, and wayward girls, it would do so at once. We have a few experimental colleges and secondary schools where devoted teachers are wearing themselves out trying to create for young people an environment in which they may learn to behave like human beings; and there are doubtless other such attempts in existence, or in formation, which we haven't heard about.

But we need *hundreds* of such voluntary enterprises—centers of deep human arousal, places of study and learning, magnets to attract the people in whom new hungers are being born. Something like this happened in Europe toward the end of the Middle Ages—with the Brothers and Sisters of the Common Lot, the Friends of God, and other lay groups that fertilized the mind of the times and seeded it with the inspiration that brought on the Reformation. Again, centuries later, the Enlightenment was born from a grass roots awakening of people who hungered to know. Clubs and societies for self-education sprang up in northern Europe fifty years before the great Revolution which, for all its horror and bloodshed, brought freedom and renewal.

Our problems are different. Of course. We don't need or want a bloody revolution. Of course. But we do need some kind of "reformation," and today, as in the past, it will have to be born from the living activity of the people who feel the need. We can't just sit around and wait for the Bourbons and the Tories to wake up and get some sense. They never do and they never will.