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ON UNCERTAIN BUT PROMISING GROUND

WHERE is the life, the swelling pregnancy, of modern thought? What makes this question worth asking is the fact that the focus of serious inquiry, today, seems both qualitatively and directionally different from what it has been for at least a thousand years. It is not upon the bitterly contested decision concerning the One True Faith. It is not on some heart-warming political vision of tomorrow's Utopia. It has little part in the once ardent quest for proper scientific blueprints of the natural world, on which would be based the extrapolated design of the Good Society.

Actually, the best way to get an answer to this question, and the best way to show that the answer is likely to be correct, is to jump into the middle of this new region of investigation. Although it is a place of indecision and wondering, with no clearly marked boundaries, it is none the less emphatically real.

The thinking and writing we are talking about has to do with the nature of man and the way in which the realities of man's intellectual and psychic (and possibly "spiritual") constitution affect, confine, or determine everything else of importance in life. The backdrop or terrain of this inquiry is a kind of man-made synthesis of the fields of yesterday's physical, social, and psychological sciences. These latter fields, however, have only a second-degree reality in the new way of thinking. They are contextual, not decisive. They are contextual because a new factor has been added—man as a *causal* being. The old sciences, having been born in a world of thought which took its premises from the Newtonian World Machine, had no place in them for a primary causal intelligence. All the "causes" came from nature, and the project was to find out how these causes set the circumstances and shaped the actions of human beings. Underneath all this pretentious "objectivity" and practice of scientific method, of course, was the clandestine assumption that we—people, individuals—would somehow make fine use of the knowledge so obtained, but there was no explicit ground for this optimism, nor any theoretical explanation of how "decisions" could be made by wholly predestined beings. This assumption of freedom to choose was a common-sense reservation which limited the mechanistic philosophy, but very quietly, so as not to rock the methodological boat.

The new thought is bringing this assumption out into the open. In this sense it is the serious application of the scientific spirit to essentially human problems. It demands attention to the question: How can our thinking about the good of man be anything more than adolescent, juvenile, filled with inherited prejudice, and completely uncritical, so long as we ignore the complex reality of the *observer* and the *actor* in human situations?

Now the immediate effect of asking this question is to reduce the importance of the mechanistic frame of experience. The frame is not of course abolished, but it becomes the *setting* of human experience, instead of the entire apparatus of the human drama, complete with script, predestined last act, and the impersonal Svengalis of Scientific Determinism. You move from this view to the obvious assertion: The people in the play are *real*.

Let us look at two illustrations of this basic change in attitude toward man.

First there is the "discovery," hinted at by Carl Jung, and made explicit by Erich Fromm, that a point is reached in the life of every human being when he must take his destiny into his own hands. The idea of "his own hands" is important. It proposes that the individual is more than a crossroads of endless mechanistic chains. He is

himself and no other. He has now to explain himself in terms of himself. He has to choose what to be. He may understand what he has been in terms of "conditionings," but now, after all these shaping factors in his life stand exposed, there comes to him the confrontation of freedom. Now he must take the leap, perform the therapeutic jump, assume the stance and fill out the character of a self-determining being.

The fact that the idea of this confrontation emerges in the literature of psychoanalysis cannot be taken as a reason for setting it aside. The popularity, prevalence, and influence of psychoanalytical thinking is itself a variously expressed symptom of the changing attitude of human beings toward their problems and experience. The unpleasant image of the analyst burrowing into peoples' nasty secrets and upsetting their moral complacency is hardly an accurate portrayal of the historic significance of the great movement which began with Sigmund Freud. Extraordinary knowledge of the dynamics of human behavior is coming out of the researches of this movement, and the assumptions of the psychoanalysts are changing as their discoveries proceed. Increasingly, past psychological theory, like the scientific descriptions of the external universe, is becoming *contextual*, not controlling, in modern psychological science, which is rapidly passing from a study of determinist factors to a study of Man. Within twenty-five years, it may become difficult to distinguish between education, psychotherapy, and religion, except in detail and in technical aspects. (Readings in Jung's *Modern Man in Search of a Soul*, Ira Progoff's *The Death and Rebirth of Psychology*, and A. H. Maslow's *Toward a Psychology of Being* would be helpful in thinking about this trend. The necessity for the therapeutic "jump" is the climax of Erich Fromm's epoch-making *Saturday Review* article, "Man Is Not a Thing")

Our second illustration of the change in thinking is also derived from the literature of psychotherapy. It is the conclusion of Dr. William Glasser, reached after years spent in treating people whose psychological problems seem a direct consequence of a vicious environment during their childhood and youth. Dr. Glasser finds that, before any "healing" can begin, it is necessary to set aside this prejudicial past as no longer relevant. Unhappiness, he says, is the result of irresponsibility, not its cause. "The crux of our theory," he says, "is personal responsibility, which we equate with mental health—the more responsible the person, the healthier he is—the less responsible, the less healthy."

Now this might be disposed of as moralistic old hat, except that, as a therapeutic and educational principle, it seems to *work.* What Dr. Glasser is saying is that the initiative of the good life must be returned to the individual. After everything has been said about the externally caused misfortunes of people and their "conditionings," the fact remains that their real life as human beings cannot begin until they assume responsibility for what they will now become.

Now if Dr. Glasser is right, tremendously important consequences flow from what he says. One obvious result is that we need, not one, but two, social doctrines in respect to "the responsibility of society." Dr. Glasser works in an institution for girls who have broken the law and who have psychological problems. What he says does not diminish the responsibility of society for the conditions which led these girls into lives of delinquency and emotional disorder; it will not do to use his experience as a confirmation of the tight-lipped conservative claim that the people who are submerged in the dregs of social failure deserve what happens to them because they lack "character." The distribution of strength of character in a population remains as much of a mystery, today, as it has been in the past, and only fools will argue that the economically fortunate and powerful have, on the whole, better characters than the poor and dispossessed. The argument for social responsibility remains as strong as ever; what must be questioned is the

theory that people with unfortunate backgrounds can be "conditioned" into having good lives. The hypothetical conditions of a "good life"' do not make a good life. Dr. Glasser's conclusion is that only healthy beings can have good lives, and healthy human beings accept the responsibility of behaving as causal agents. They become healthy by increasing their confidence in their power of self-determination.

There is more here than simple paradox. If you say that society should do all it can for the people—establish for them, so to say, the external frame of the good life—and then invite them to live it, you are not saying the same thing as saying that the good life, for individuals, is a life of growing responsibility. The difference is the difference between community-planners and educators, or between the social reformers and the *teachers.* Both are altruists with benevolent intentions, but one focuses on conditions, the other on learning situations in which the assumption of responsibility is the paramount consideration.

The problem, in social thought—and ultimately, political thought—is to avoid over-simplifying formulas which in practice turn out to have devastating effects. Let us say that the common tendency is for people to want a single, all-inclusive theory about human nature, to found their social thinking on. With one, primary theory, you can make a simple program and stick to it without equivocation. You can argue, for example, that environment makes the man and go after your revolution with a pure heart. You will drive out the bad people and set up the perfect environment, and then you can expect to have perfect men. To do this, you need overwhelming power, so you use any means you can think of to get the power, since nothing matters except the goal of the Perfect Environment. You have no time for worrying about individual responsibility and human growth—that will come later.

Or you take as your primary theory the idea that the strong, the intelligent, and therefore the righteous, should be in charge, and that people who can't or don't want to rise to positions of security and authority in the existing scheme are lacking in moral fibre. The good overcome obstacles, the weak succumb. You don't say this right out, because there are so many people who succumb, or don't rise very far; but your social convictions are founded on these ideas. Yet you cannot ignore the facts of a mass society, and so you make unsatisfactory concessions which blur the simplicity of your primary claim and make the situation vastly discouraging. Your declarations of principle begin to sound like anachronisms in the face of the continually spreading mechanisms of the welfare state, and you don't know what to do about this defiance of Natural Law.

Obviously, neither of these theories has any real future. Nor is there much future in some kind of mechanical compromise between the two, since their basic principles are in irreconcilable contradiction.

Obviously, again, the only resolution of the problem lies in people who are able to say to themselves: I am responsible for myself and for others; I must learn to make the best of my circumstances as a growing human being, and do what I can to keep the circumstances around other people from being prejudicial to their growth.

Now this is not an easy thing to say. In the first place, thoughts about Justice keep coming up. And it is right, of course, that they should. But then there is the question: How do you get justice? What *is* a just social order?

In answer, you have a choice between claiming infallibility for a blueprint of your own or someone else's design, and what Arthur Morgan (see MANAS for Sept. 2) called the American philosophy of government:

> This philosophy represents a certain modesty and humility in the American mind. We do not presume to answer the riddle of the social universe all at once. We are willing to feel our way tentatively in the faint morning twilight of human society, and to decide our course a few steps at a time.

What, then, about the next "few steps"? The crucial question, in the light of the new thinking about man, is whether or not these steps will provide areas for the assumption of individual responsibility. That is the most important thing of all. What we are saying is that a society which is bent on becoming better is a society that thinks of human growth *first.* To put this into political terms is difficult because we have not the habit of thinking about human growth. What we have to say about growth is mostly slogans derived from partisan doctrines brought forward from the past. We must ignore these doctrines if we are to be serious about growth. We need educators who are willing to think about these things and make sociopolitical recommendations as teachers, not as politicos.

This view of planning gives us a working, pragmatic definition of justice. Justice is what contributes, in a particular situation, to human growth.

The problem of how to interpret or regulate the human demand for justice is a very ancient one. Jesus offered a solution that is not very popular these days. Forgive your unjust brother, he said, not seven times, but "seventy times seven." At Synanon, where stripling administrators dressed with a little brief authority often make mistakes, injustice sometimes gets rampant. Chuck Dederich's comment is: "So what? Often things in life are unjust, unfair. You have to accept them. Take the punches and grow strong from the experience." Regarding *systematic,* institutionalized injustice, which is another matter, Gandhi had another view. In answer to the question, "Do you not think that a class war is inevitable and interested classes must perish for the sake of a greater humanity?", he said:

> I never said that there should be cooperation between the exploiter and the exploited so long as exploitation and the will to exploit exists. Only I do not believe that the capitalists and the landlords are all exploiters by an inherent necessity, or that there is a basic or irreconcilable antagonism between their interests and those of the masses. All exploitation is based on cooperation, willing or forced of the exploited. However much we may detest admitting it, the fact remains that there would be no exploitation if people refused to obey the exploiter. . . . The idea of a class war does not appeal to me. In India a class war is not only not inevitable, but it is avoidable if we have understood the message of non-violence. Those who talk about class war as being inevitable have not understood the implications of non-violence or have understood them only skin-deep. . . . All that comes from the West on this subject is tarred with the brush of violence. I object to it because I have seen the wreckage which lies at the end of this road. The more thinking set even in the West today stand aghast at the abyss for which their system is heading. And I owe whatever influence I have in the West to my ceaseless endeavor to find a solution which promises an escape from the vicious circle of violence and exploitation. I have been a sympathetic student of the Western social order and I have discovered that underlying the fever that fills the soul of the West there is a restless search for truth. I value that spirit. Let us study our Eastern institutions in that spirit of scientific inquiry and we shall evolve a truer socialism and a truer communism than the world has yet dreamed of. It is surely wrong to presume that Western socialism or communism is the last word on the question of mass poverty. (*Selections from Gandhi,* Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad, India.)

There is still another way to look at the problem of justice—not a way that promises an early solution, but one that may give some emotional "distance" from the immediate struggle. We probably need this distance in order to choose the best forms of action. The practice of justice is hardly possible without maturity on the part of human beings. Maturity comes from seeing things whole and learning the art of the possible in human relations—not "politics," but its antecedent in responsible regard for the common welfare. Possibly we might call this kind of responsibility "Taoist" politics, which is the cultural educational activity practiced by wise and public-spirited men. This kind of administration is better understood when it is personified in a single man—someone, say, like a Numa, who tried to understand what the ancient Romans were capable of, and to create for them a social order under which they could

develop further—but paternalism of this sort does not fit the temper nor the unfolding possibilities of modern times. Yet the principle holds, the maturity is required—which turns the problem of justice into a study of the ethical potentialities of modern man, and of some idea of the rate at which these potentialities may be realized.

It is true enough that these seem unfamiliar and quite difficult pursuits—making a kind of ethical-psycho-therapeutic Operation Bootstrap. But so do all the other problems of modern man, such as the abolition of war, the reconciliation of the ideal of individual freedom with the environment of a technological-automated acquisitive society, and of enabling natural, organic, spontaneous ways of life to flower within a superstructure of competitiveness, super-salesmanship, and endlessly repeated hedonistic slogans. What is the use of saying that such ideals "won't work," when it is already abundantly plain that nothing else will?

So here we have, at root, a problem of Faith—something, in the nature of things, no one can give to anyone else. How is the problem of faith to be solved by our society? Fundamentally, it is a problem of faith in Man. The difficulty is that while we see that great and distinguished individuals seem to come by the needed faith, it is far from clear how they get it, and why convictions—beliefs, first principles, spiritual ideas—which are abstract and unreal for most men are to them vivid and guiding realities. It seems that faith or conviction—like justice—is also an evolution in the quality of human beings.

Well, how does this process of evolution or moral development start? If we take our cue from the new thinking about man, we find its champions adopting some scheme of psychological symmetries in human life that gives order to their studies. As foci for the organization of ideas, they often use the great myths of antiquity. Some kind of basic wisdom about man seems to reside in the myths—not because they are hallowed by time, but because they work as instruments in the understanding of the human situation. They *fit* as generalizations to give unity to what modern psychology is finding out. When a Henry Murray or a Joseph Campbell uses these synthesizing notions to convey his meaning, he has not " joined up" with some old religion, but made practical use of a keystone of ancient symbolism. Already it is possible to draw dozens of parallels between mythic meanings and modern psychological research—as shown, for example, by the works cited in last week's lead article in MANAS. This article was called "Theseus in the Labyrinth," and it illustrates certain measuring-rods of maturity which we are able to take out of the context of ancient religion and put to work today with surprisingly successful results. This does not make ancient religion "true," but it does illustrate the competence of human beings to divine something about themselves and the character of their strivings and to put what they find out into some scheme of popular instruction—for that, after all, is the function which was served by the myths.

Here, you could say, is effectively illustrated the fruitfulness of the gnostic-agnostic temper of this division of modern thought. It is functional, non-doctrinal philosophy practiced by therapy-and-education-oriented psychologists.

It seems reasonable to say that if the modern world is ever to get a religion that it can *use*—that will include psycho-spiritual dynamics, far-reaching social implications, and ethical imperatives that rest, not on any sort of dogma, but on intensified personal experience—it will be gradually developed by these and related means.

Other sources, it seems apparent, lie in the various forms of mystical religion. Mysticism, like modern culture, is filled with deeply puzzling paradoxes. This is a way of suggesting, perhaps, that the gross contradictions of advanced Western civilization are the massive social projections of the inner conflicts which mysticism sets out to solve. It is a way of returning the problem to individuals, where all our troubles begin.

Interestingly enough, the little book by Folkert Wilken, *New Forms of Ownership in Industry*, quoted in last week's Review, has a brief aside on the author's idea of employer-worker ownership which is in harmony with this suggestion. Prof. Wilken says:

> Both sides in industry must fully understand the necessity for such a reconstitution of their enterprises and recognize it as the only way of solving the social question. In their social settlement with one another, the employer acts as a single individual responsible for the whole enterprise, while the workers act as a group reaching beyond the frontiers of the single enterprise and knowing itself to be part of the wider workers' community.
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> This is an extremely differentiated sociological situation. It reproduces the antagonism between East and West in the microcosm of the enterprise, where it can be decided and harmonized in an exemplary manner. What is involved in thus evening out these antagonisms?
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> It requires a level of consciousness raised above thinking only in terms of private advantage. This does not mean creating ideal human beings, but it does mean awakening the social sense which exists in every human being and creating a desire to realize it in economic life.

"Mysticism," as such, has for generations meant to the liberal intelligence and social reformer little more than an escape from the *real* problems of human affairs. But in mysticism, as in certain other resources of the human heritage, are to be found those saving conceptions of man's nature and possibility on which great faith must be based.

The problem is not so much to be able to say what is truly "just" in the economic and political relations of people, as it is to learn how to recognize and create authentic growth-situations where people learn responsibility and decision-making, and by this means grow both mature and free. And the sources of this kind of faith in one another lie in each man's inner consciousness. We shall never find out how strong we are as human beings until we begin to test our capacity for self-inspiration. All the good ideas for the reform and betterment of our social institutions rest upon an implicit faith in this capacity. As we move from reliance on machines and methods and ideologies to reliance on *men*, the "systems" will become secondary, and be seen as the expedient devices they always have been in fact. This is one conclusion that may be drawn from the new thinking about man.

REVIEW
VIETNAM AND BLESSED IGNORANCE

IN company with, probably, most Americans, this Department is filled with feelings of bewilderment, impotence, and chagrin by the recent events in South Vietnam. The reader of the newspapers is expected to accept the incredible proposition that the future of a free life for the people of the United States—and possibly the world—depends upon a successful outcome for the military operations of the South Vietnamese government. The containment of the Communist movement toward world domination is held to be at stake; and we are told by "area specialists" that unless the United States continues to help the South Vietnamese to resist guerrilla penetration of their country, the entirety of Southeast Asia may be lost for the Free World.

Against these contentions of geopolitical "realism" stand a stubborn civilian common sense and the voices of two or three senators. Common sense declares the futility of mixing in a political contest some 8,000 miles away from our shores, in aid of an obviously unpopular government which is wholly dependent upon the financial and military support of an outside power—ourselves. Senator Ernest Gruening of Alaska said on March 10; "This is a fight that is not our fight into which we should not have gotten in the first place. The time to get out is now before further loss of American lives." In substantial agreement are Senators Ellender (Louisiana) and Wayne Morse (Oregon).

What is the "right" of this quarrel? As with other issues of the Cold War, the answer to this question depends upon possession of facts not generally available, unless you are willing to decide on the basis of sweeping moral emotion. And even after you get what are presumed to be "the facts," there is still the problem—which a great many people seem unwilling to face—of whether moral considerations can be allowed to control in matters of foreign policy. In situations of this sort our ignorance of the facts gains a kind of sanctity, since it permits the rhetoric of slogans to take the place of conscientious decision.

For readers who wish to inform themselves further about Vietnam, we have two reading suggestions. A ten-cent pamphlet by Helen Lamb (at one time a research analyst for the U.S. Foreign Administration, author of *Economic Development of India*, and a teacher at Black Mountain, Bennington, and Sarah Lawrence) describes at some length the background of history and the role of the United States in Vietnam affairs. The pamphlet is available from Basic Pamphlets, Box 42, Cathedral Station, New York 25, N.Y. The other suggestion is a four-page leaflet, *Memo on Vietnam*, a statement prepared for the War Resisters League by David McReynolds and A. J. Muste. (Available from the WRL, 5 Beekman Street, New York 38, also ten cents.) The latter paper makes this brief summary:

> In [the] context of "containing" China, the French withdrawal from Indo-China in 1954, following defeat by the Communist-led Viet-Minh under the leadership of Ho Chi-Minh, meant that a huge "hole" had suddenly appeared through which Chinese influence might flow into Southeast Asia. The U.S. became involved almost immediately. We had previously supplied some three billion dollars of military aid to the French for their Indo China war, and Richard Nixon had urged direct U.S. involvement to prevent the triumph of the Viet Minh (an idea vetoed by Eisenhower). With the French out, Cardinal Spellman and others prevailed upon Ngo Dinh Diem, a devout Catholic living in the United States, to return to South Vietnam to head the government. In October 1955, he took control from the discredited Bao Dai and the war ended with the signing of the Geneva Accords. Under these there were to be internationally supervised free elections in *both* South and North Vietnam by July 1956, leading to a unified all-Vietnamese government.
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> The United States did not sign the Geneva Accords but had pledged not to violate them. Urged on by the U.S., however, Diem flatly refused to arrange for the free elections: everyone close to Vietnamese affairs knew that Ho Chi Minh, a

national hero, would easily win in both North and South Vietnam.

Initially Diem had some success in establishing control over South Vietnam. There were significant land reforms and he achieved at least some popular support. But increasing repression of the Buddhists, growing corruption in government, refusal of Diem to conduct the free elections, all led to a resurgence of guerrilla war by what we know as the Vietcong. Like the Viet Minh before, it is not simply a Communist force, as Americans have been told, but the organizational focus for most of the resistance groups. The Communists are active within the Vietcong and give it its political direction, but they are a minority.

Against this armed rebellion, and in direct violation of the Geneva Accords, the U.S. began a vigorous military support of the Diem regime. For a time the violation was thinly disguised by calling the troops "advisors" and claiming that the military supplies were merely permitted "replacements" for existing supplies. But the fiction has long since worn off. Despite the repeated American assertions that "masses" of war material are "pouring in" from North Vietnam, the hard fact remains that the *only* power which has intervened in any significant way in South Vietnam is the United States. On March 6 of this year, Pulitzer-Prize-winning reporter David Halberstam of the New York *Times* reported, "The war is largely a conflict of southerners fought on southern land. No capture of North Vietnamese in the South has come to light and it is generally believed that most Vietcong weapons have been seized from the South Vietnamese forces." A later report in the *Times* by a member of the U.S. military force there indicated that 75% of all weapons seized are of American manufacture, and clearly had been captured earlier by the Vietcong from government troops. The remaining 25% of captured weapons were largely home-made rifles. We are in the ironic situation where we both violate solemn international agreements by supplying weapons to the South Vietnamese government, and are the major source of supply, albeit indirectly, to the Vietcong itself!

The account continues, detailing the events since the "execution" of Diem last year, up to the recent actions of the regime headed by General Khanh. Then comes the following observation:

Because this paper aims at political analysis as distinct from moral denunciation, we will avoid documenting at length the outrageous nature of the American war in Vietnam. But it is important for Americans not to lose sight of this aspect, which is *central* to any discussion of Vietnam. The documentary evidence from non-Communist sources, including the New York *Times*, the New York *Herald Tribune*, the Washington *Post*, etc., is overwhelmingly clear. We have either used or caused to be used torture on prisoners, both military and civilian napalm bombing and machine-gunning and artillery shelling of villages on the chance they *might* contain elements of the Vietcong; and mass detention of the peasantry in the "strategic hamlets" which amount to little more than concentration camps, complete with guards and barbed wire and even special moats. (Here, too, there is irony. In a number of instances the Vietcong had willingly sent women, children, and the elderly into the "strategic hamlets" where, despite the lack of freedom, they would at least be safe from government napalm bombing and would have enough to eat. This has freed the men of the Vietcong for greater concentration on the war. As one U.S. military advisor bitterly commented after this tactic had become obvious, "all we are doing is baby-sitting for the Vietcong.")

Earlier, we asked what might be the "right" of the argument about American presence in Vietnam. Well, if you take the facts and moral values as presented in this paper, there can hardly be any hesitation in agreeing with Senator Gruening. He said: "Let us get out of Vietnam on as good terms as possible—but let us get out."

But what makes as much difficulty for Americans as finding out "the facts" is the expectation of reaching a position of hard righteousness. In the great majority of issues—especially those having to do with the corporate actions of nations—a really righteous position is not even possible. But since we like to *feel* righteous, we have acquired the habit of substituting the certainty of ideological dogma. It follows that, along with getting as many "facts" as we can, and trying to face the embarrassments of moral decision, we need to gain a greater tolerance of our own uncertainty. We need to recognize that uncertainty is nothing to be ashamed of, but a basic part of the human condition.

COMMENTARY
THE POLITICS OF HEALTH

IN a recent Pendle Hill pamphlet (A *Therapist's View of Personal Goals*), Carl Rogers sums up the "social implications" of his philosophy of mental health. It is interesting to consider how Americans who decided to adopt this philosophy might think about the problems of Vietnam, discussed in this week's Review. Dr. Rogers begins this final portion of his pamphlet:

> Let me turn for a moment to some of the social implications of the path of life I have attempted to describe. . . . Suppose we speculate for a moment as to how we, as a nation, might present ourselves in our foreign diplomacy if we were openly, knowingly, and acceptingly being what we truly are. I do not know precisely what we are, but I suspect that if we were trying to express ourselves as we are, then our communications with foreign countries would contain elements of this sort.
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> We, as a nation, are slowly realizing our enormous strength and power and responsibility which go with that strength.
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> We are moving, somewhat ignorantly and clumsily, toward accepting a position of responsible leadership.
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> We make many mistakes. We are often inconsistent.
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> We are far from perfect.
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> We are deeply frightened by the strength of Communism a view of life different from our own.
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> We feel extremely competitive toward Communism, and we are angry and humiliated when the Russians surpass us in any field.
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> We have some very selfish interests, such as oil in the Middle East.
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> On the other hand, we have no desire to hold dominion over other peoples.
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> We have complex and contradictory feelings toward the freedom and independence and self-determination of individuals and countries; we desire these and are proud of the past support we have given to such tendencies, and yet we are often frightened by what they may mean.
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> We tend to value and respect the dignity and worth of each individual, yet when we are frightened we move away from this direction.

The proposals of the "World without War" Conference, summarized in Frontiers, would have a much greater chance of being adopted, if more of the American people could throw off the intolerable burden of being absolutely "right," and begin making the simple admissions Dr. Rogers lists. Conscientious citizens such as those who put together the proposals (the signers include Roger Baldwin, Michael Harrington, Arthur E. Morgan, Walter P. Reuther, Elmo Roper, Harold Taylor, David Riesman, Norman Thomas, Stringfellow Barr, Henry Steele Commager, Jerome D. Frank, Hallock Hoffman, Alexander Mieklejohn, Walter Millis, Gardner Murphy, and Bayard Rustin) do not have much difficulty in formulating such intelligent recommendations—the problem lies in gaining popular assent. It is beginning to be obvious that the politics of moral intelligence cannot do without help from the psychology of moral intelligence, put so well by Dr. Rogers in his Pendle Hill pamphlet, and by Dr. Murray in his *Daedalus* paper, quoted at the end of Frontiers.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves

"MENTAL TESTING" vs EDUCATION

ON occasion one feels reluctant to join the many articulate critics of our understaffed, over-crowded, institutions of learning; under such conditions, no matter what concept of education prevails, it becomes easy to find shortcomings in both theory and practice. Yet criticism of the general tendency to "test" the mind and to classify its possessor is always beneficial, since it raises questions of philosophic concern. For instance, students endowed with creative imagination take more time with multiple choice examinations and often make "errors" only because they see a wider scope of possibilities than that anticipated by the testmakers; and they dislike all of the prefabricated answers, only one of which is supposed to be "correct."

Great Britain is now beginning to recover from an educational trauma induced in 1944 by the infamous "Eleven-Plus" exam. The aim of this device was to channel children into state secondary schools according to their ability, and youngsters between ten-and-a-half and eleven-and-a-half were judged ready to be pigeon-holed. By 1963, voices of protest had reached substantial proportions and were buttressed by psychiatric evidence of the emotional tension engendered by the prospect of "final classification" so early in life. An examination lasting one morning could hardly evaluate anyone's capacity, especially that of a frightened pre-teenager made doubly nervous by the anxiety of parents and teachers. In March of this year, the London County Council joined school officials in Essex, Leicestershire and Manchester in deciding to drop the one-shot test.

The American equivalent of this now-repudiated British system seems to be the College Board examinations, and, while these are less oppressive in effect, some of the same objections apply. Thorough criticism of these tests appeared in the summer (1963) number of the *Columbia University Forum*, contributed by Donald Barr, executive director of the Joint Program for Technical Education at Columbia. Now on leave to work for the National Science Foundation in developing science courses for gifted students, Dr. Barr begins:

> The multiple choice test dominates American education. We have no sudden-death examinations like the Eleven-Plus in England, but we have hundreds of slow-death examinations that dispose of talent in our schools. In any of our "better" schools, the child's IQ, computed from his score on a multiple choice test and entered on his permanent record, covertly adjusts the pressures of expectation that are exerted on him in classroom after classroom. Scores of aptitude tests shunt him from "track" to "track." His achievement is measured on seven-hour "batteries" of "educational development" tests. His personality is inventoried, his hopes are classified, and even his little storehouse of prurient anxieties, secure from his own conscious attention, is broken and entered by ingenious multiple choice tests. We even have—God help us!—multiple choice editions of projective tests. Imagine: you sit in your office with a box of Rorschach cards and multiple choice blanks; the failing student arrives, hagridden by indefinable discomforts, his body in a perpetual cringe, his eyes flickering incessantly to yours as he tries and tries to turn his ears back in; you offer him the printed blank, he wipes his palms politely on the belly of his shirt and takes it; and inflating his lungs a little extra, he confronts the hairy deft of the first ink blot and the list of available things to "see" in it:
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> "A military insignia." "An insect." "A cloud." "A part of a body." "A flower."
>
> (The blank is actually cleverer than that—the poor wretch is given three lists of ten private visions each, and must check off one vision in each list.) What if he "sees" a part of a body in the blot, but it is only a Van Dyke beard? Or what if he is *really* in trouble and would just like to say to you—truthfully—"Geez, sir, this looks like an ink blot to me"?
>
> The Pintner, the Miller, the Kuder, the Strong, the Otis Quick-Scoring, the Henmon-Nelson, the PEAT, the SCAT, the Iowa Tests of Educational Development, the Sequential Tests of Educational Progress, the California Tests of Mental Maturity, the Differential Aptitude tests . . . tests, tests, tests, (referred to by their users as "instruments") diagnosing, predicting, prejudicing, predestining—

and the overwhelming majority of them using the multiple choice device.

Dr. Barr illustrates the philosophical and psychological effects of the technological approach to intelligence:

> Let us consider for a moment a world in which a biological and theological mutation had taken place, and all children were born as identical twins, and of each pair only one twin had a soul: one brother wayward and profound, the other letter-perfect and unfatigued, and the two all but impossible to tell apart at a glance, always sitting side by side in school or at the office. . . . Let us now ask ourselves which brother would be more likely to get the better marks in school, or the quicker promotion at the office.
>
> Let us consider the "America" of such a world: Does anyone really doubt that even in our own America, teachers and employers normally—and by "normally" I mean "except during those small acts of love, those little random outbreaks of disguised religion, by which we reassure ourselves that we are still alive"—favor precision over personality? They admire, they *like*, the smooth celerity of the uncaring. In the twinned "America"—assuming the same technology as we have—would it be possible, most of the time, for the pupil to tell whether his teacher (or the bureaucrat his employer) was a soured or an unsoured twin?
>
> The fact is most of us "normally" admire soullessness not only in others but in ourselves, either we do not value our souls very highly, or else we suppose—idiots!—that a soul can stay alive without being *used;* most of us want to be replaced by machines. Just now the newspapers are full of stories about labor unions fighting desperately against "change in work rules," which is another way of saying that workers are resisting automation. But let us be clear: it is not jobs they are fighting to keep, but wages. In certain reserved areas of the personality which are rooted in the prehuman—in connubial matters for instance—most men would not accept featherbedding, but in other matters, I am afraid they will.
>
> When we have to choose between performing a task that calls human qualities into play (for instance, the task of recognizing and encouraging, among the welter of immature talents—the cognitive, formal, esthetic, social, sexual, and spiritual talents of pubescent boys and girls—those which are most likely to enrich our intellectual culture) and performing a task with an electro-mechanical device or a data-processing system (in this instance selecting from a large student population those with the greatest aptitude for data-processing), we persistently choose the latter task over the former.
>
> The instance I have just mentioned parenthetically is the clearest, most disheartening one I know. It is clear because it centers on one simple device, the multiple choice test. It is disheartening because it involves the mechanizing of the most beautiful and most subtly bold of all human enterprises, the education of the young.

FRONTIERS

"World Without War" Conference Proposals

COORDINATION of volunteer efforts toward world peace is presently being achieved by several groups of growing influence. For example, "Voluntary Organizations and a World Without War Conference" (218 E. 18th St., New York) has produced a "next steps" proposal which formulates an educative program respecting foreign policy.

Among points covered by the document are: negotiations or general and complete disarmament under effective controls; new approaches to relations with Communist China; the repeal of the Connally Reservation; the support of UN peace-keeping forces; and the need to deal with the economic consequences of a reduction in military expenditures. Also: economic support to under-developed areas; increased opposition to colonialism and *apartheid;* support of the human rights conventions in the UN; and measures to reduce international tensions in Latin America and other critical areas.

This paper is currently circulating at all hospitable levels of the Democratic and Republican parties, and will be presented to candidates for Congress and members of the incumbent administration, with request for reply. It will be circulated widely this fall, primarily through voluntary organizations, and will be used as a basis for discussions and debates sponsored by churches, labor unions, public affairs organizations, and peace groups.

This effort puts on record the view that too many major issues are being neglected by default, that the American people and the government have made commitments which are lapsing through inattention, and that vigorous discussion is an absolute necessity.

The U.S. Department of State in its 1963 *Report to the Citizens* listed five goals of American Foreign Policy, which embody, in effect, President Kennedy's views of the ways in which the United States must "strive tirelessly to end the arms race" and "to assist in the gradual emergence of a genuine world community, based on cooperation and law," and to finally attain "general and complete disarmament." The present document comments on the need for active, organized support to implement such aims:

> These goals are supported by major sectors of American society, but they are also under serious and sustained attack in many parts of the country. In many communities any attempt to work for agreement on disarmament, aid to underdeveloped nations, or strengthening the World Court meets with immediate attack. Sincere, but misguided, men believe that even discussion of these matters weakens American security. They are convinced that the Communist world is monolithic and unchanging, and that acceptance of these goals would betray American values.
>
> It is right that such views be heard in the public dialogue but we must resist all efforts to circumscribe or distort that discussion. We must reject and counter attempts to deflect us from a thorough examination of the issues. We assert our liberty and democracy through actual exercise of these values, and we must accept out duty as citizens to think through and present our views to Congress and the Executive. This is meaningful patriotism.
>
> Since we are concerned with human beings, not abstractions such as target cities and statistical death estimates, we must reject ways of thinking which lead to fear, confusion, hatred, and violence. We are dealing with nations undergoing vast changes in their social, economic, and political life (however monolithic they try to be), nations sharing with us a common interest in survival. These are not matters which can be resolved by either victory or surrender.
>
> Those who would stifle debate are wrong again in not recognizing that there is no contradiction between a keen awareness of the problems posed by the totalitarian aspects of Communist states and a commitment to the constructive goals above. It is our task to develop those policies which will force shifts in this totalitarian power, shifts which can be pursued to make our own goals realizable and secure.
>
> To accomplish our own national and human goals, we must find ways to lessen world tension and reach political settlements; to promote communication and cooperation with all nations,

including those who differ from us ideologically; to develop international institutions working toward a system of world order; to build foundations for real community in a world deeply divided but nevertheless interdependent, to use fully the world's manpower and resources in a concerted attack on man's still unmet needs for food, shelter, education, and health.

The Conference strongly urges Congress to enact the "Plan for Peace" resolution (Senate Concurrent Resolution 64) and proposes impartial discussion of so-called "Communist" issues presently fogged by a great deal of fear and prejudice. For example:

> The isolation of mainland China is a continuing source of international tension and an obstacle in the path of world disarmament with effective peace-keeping machinery. There is little hope of ending this isolation without a change in the attitudes of the People's Republic. Two courses of action are being urged, with increasing support, to facilitate such change. One calls for the withdrawal of U.S. opposition to the admission of the People's Republic to the U.N., on the ground that the U.N. should be an all-inclusive international body. Those opposed to this course maintain that China, by advocating subversive intervention in the affairs of other nations, does not accept the U.N. Charter and hence cannot be admitted to membership. The other course calls for U.S. recognition of the People's Republic, on the basis that such recognition does not indicate approval of the regime but merely that it has effective control over its territory. Those opposed cite the continued anti-U.S. propaganda emanating from the People's Republic, the fact that diplomatic recognition would be construed as a major victory for Communism, and that it would also provide a base for espionage and subversion.
>
> We urge that these positions be discussed openly and thoroughly in every American community. In the meanwhile, as a first step, we urge that the People's Republic of China be brought into the Geneva disarmament discussions; that an invitation to send representatives be extended by the chief delegates of the U.S. and U.S.S.R., the two co-chairmen of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament. Responsible participation by the People's Republic in disarmament negotiations may thus be facilitated without posing the more complex problems.

The Conference maintains that it is impossible to build a genuine world community without acknowledging the right to membership of nations of all ideological persuasions. Therefore:

> We urge that the trend toward a political accommodation with the Soviet Union, which became visible in 1963, be pursued by our government and supported by Congress. While great ideological differences remain between the two countries, a large area of common interests exists. The nuclear test ban, establishment of the "hot line" between Washington and Moscow, and the agreement to ban nuclear weapons in orbit should be followed by other measures to lessen the threat of war, lower tensions, and build mutually satisfactory relations in trade, science, and culture with the countries of the Communist bloc. Among such measures could be agreement to prevent surprise attack and to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons to other countries, settlement of outstanding differences such as the German question, and the removal of barriers to nonmilitary trade. We encourage full exploration of all offers of conciliation and mediation, in order "to narrow the areas of conflict with the Communist bloc."

A paper by Henry Murray, printed in *Daedalus* (Summer, 1961), has a passage which makes a suitable conclusion to the foregoing material:

> Stop defining the current situation as a religious or ideological war. So far as possible, stop using the word "Communism": stop proclaiming that our policy is to "fight Communism" wherever it exists. "Communism" is a word with a religious significance and potency, symbol of a mystique, to which millions of people are devoted as their tested remedy of ancient ills. Expressions of implacable hatred of Communism can only serve to increase the fanatical energy and drive—and hence the achievements—of its supporters. So long as we provide veritable ground for the magnification of the image of our nation as the dragon enemy of their whole system, the morale and present degree of productivity of the peoples of the USSR and China will certainly persist or mount. Under ordinary circumstances, the basic problem of a socialist economy is how to maintain the motivation of the workers, but if fate happens to present them with the challenge of a menacing competitor or opponent, the problem ceases to exist. Moral: lessen the menace.