VOLUME XVI, NO. 36
SEPTEMBER 4, 1963

PROBLEMS OF RECONCILIATION

RECONCILIATION has two general meanings in common usage. Reconciliation is an objective of peacemaking, when there is conflict between individuals, groups, or nations. Then there is the meaning of resolving the contradiction between opposing or unrelated ideas or idea-systems. Since the incommensurable factor of human feeling enters into both equations, acts and thoughts which have reconciling power are difficult to define. They emerge in living relationships among human beings, rather than as a result of rational analysis, yet there is always some kind of internal logic to be discerned, after reconciliation has been accomplished. And there can be no doubt that mutual understanding of one another's idea-systems makes an important contribution to the reconciliation of conflicts between peoples. The difficulty does not lie so much in an inability of people to understand as in an unwillingness to attempt it.

Here, we should like to examine three general conceptions of human good which have emerged in Western thought, and which tug in apparently contrary directions at the minds and feelings of people of good will.

These conceptions may be represented by the terms, *Justice, Peace,* and *Maturity.* Justice is a word which has significance in various contexts, but its most familiar meaning is in the frame of political philosophy. Corollaries of Justice in the Western, democratic political tradition are Liberty and Equality. Justice, that is, implies equal rights and the freedom to exercise them. Western man believes in these principles. A good example of this belief was supplied by the spontaneous sympathy felt, initially, by most people in the United States for the Castro revolution in Cuba.

Peace is by no means a peculiarly Western ideal. Indeed, a case could be made to show that Western peoples, at least in the past, have cared very little about peace, but after the great wars of the first half of the twentieth century, the longing for peace became so strong that a growing movement has been formed around this objective. The peace movement today pursues a vigorous educational campaign and is attempting to articulate basic principles of peacemaking for the modern world.

Maturity is the latest arrival among the ideals of Western man. As an objective, it is the most difficult to define, but, whatever it means, the overtones of significance in the idea attract the attention of practically everyone who is touched by contemporary thought. Perhaps you could say that the mature individual is one who is able to maintain his balance and security in imperfect situations. He somehow imposes the symmetry of his own inward balance on the distortions of circumstances, so that a noticeable goodness of life results. "Maturity" is plainly a very open-ended conception of the good. It has given fresh meanings to ethical inquiry and has largely washed the field of moral ideas clean of the slime of self-righteousness. No idea in the modern conceptual vocabulary gives so much promise of satisfying the long-denied human desire for a philosophy of individual aspiration. Even as the cliché it is rapidly becoming, maturity embodies meanings and implications that will probably expand indefinitely, to the substantial enrichment and broadening of Western culture.

The reason for assembling together these three ideas of Justice, Peace, and Maturity should be clear enough. They represent goals which are manifestly good and widely desired, yet they seem to dictate different and even opposed paths of action. A letter from a European reader will help to make this situation more specific:

I want to comment on a statement by Roy Finch, quoted in a Frontiers article in MANAS for June 5. [In this passage, part of an article contributed to the Spring 1963 *Dissent*, Mr. Finch maintained that many radical pacifists, in their enthusiasm for Castro's overthrow of the brutal Batista regime, failed to recognize, and became reluctant to admit, the totalitarian development of the Cuban revolution.] I think that Finch oversimplifies and forgets to mention one very important aspect of totalitarian rule: *Fear*.

Castro has turned totalitarian, no doubt. But I do not believe this came about as a consequence of inner deficiencies of his character or a lust for domination. He is under a terrible, never-ceasing menace and fear affects all that he does.

It is not only that Cuba is under continual threat of invasion from the continent. (Remember that President Kennedy not so long ago seized the banner of the Cuban emigrés and declared that he would not rest until it was planted on the island, again.) There is another factor of anxiety. Castro must know from past history how easy it is to overthrow democracies whenever there are powerful forces that have an interest in doing so.

Guatemala under Arbenz was a democracy, insofar as real democracies exist. He had given voting facilities to all citizens of the republic, while before (and after) his regime only literate people were permitted to vote—which meant that 80 per cent were excluded from the polls. But the Arbenz government did not suit the interests of United Fruit, which owned the most important economic assets in the country. So the government of Guatemala was overthrown by "volunteers" coming from two neighboring totalitarian countries, Nicaragua and Honduras, armed by the U.S.A., and that was the end of democracy in Guatemala. Its successors needed only to put in jail all the political people who had favored Arbenz, take suffrage away from the illiterate, and then hold a "free" election, to establish a new totalitarian regime.

The example of Spain remains in my mind, since I saw and suffered the Spanish Civil War and live in that country today. Spain had a constitutional republican regime. All the prerequisites of a free democracy were in existence. In really free elections (which I remember very well), the bloc of leftist parties won a two-thirds majority. A government was formed of two democratic parties, the Socialists and the Communists (although the Communists were few and occupied no position in the government). There was, at any rate, what Mr. Finch says is necessary if a totalitarian regime is to be avoided: a free press. The rightist and even fascist parties had their newspapers. Then, all of a sudden, the generals allied with the clergy and other reactionary forces. They started a rebellion to "liberate" the country. The Spanish people—alone of Europeans—resisted fanatically the onslaught of fascism, but in vain. Communism, very weak in Spain at the beginning of the Civil War, was made into a scarecrow, as elsewhere, and after nearly three years of struggle democracy was lost. It was lost, not because the republican regime became totalitarian, but because forces from the outside were determined to bring it down.

The Spanish Civil War offers a lesson for the Cuban situation. The Franco rebellion had little success at the beginning. The two big cities of Spain, Madrid and Barcelona, as well as all densely populated areas, remained loyal to the Republic. But a counter-government was established, led by Franco, and two great powers, Italy and Germany, recognized it as "the only legal government" and gave it all necessary help.

Consider the parallel: If the exiled Cubans in their first attempt to land had been able to establish a small base, three square miles, they would have formed a "government" there, and the United States, under the overwhelming influence of "big business," would have recognized that government, would have declared the Castro regime an "illegal, rebellious government," and could have supplied sufficient military power to quell the "Castro rebellion." Then Cuba would have had to wait for perhaps half a century to get the progress in schooling and housing, etc., that Castro has made possible. Look at Spain! It is now twenty-seven years since the world permitted the Spanish Republic to be overthrown, and I am afraid that a good many more years will elapse before a change can come.

Fear is the worst element in public life, today; be it justified or from imagined causes, the effect is the same. Spain again, is here a good example. There is not the shadow of democracy in this country. But since the totalitarian Franco regime has been able to please the big "democracies" of the world, Franco does not find his rule menaced by anybody. The result is that the Franco regime, in spite of the absence of democratic rights, and of a really free press, has become somewhat liberal. People are able to talk freely about its deficiencies. Having grown so strong, it doesn't mind!

Remove fear from the Communist world, and see how liberal it will become!

> Mr. Finch says: "The fusion of a whole people into oneness can only be a temporary occurrence in mundane terms." But if *fear* is continued, the totalitarian rigidity may last half a century.

Here, in a few paragraphs, are dozens of the issues and contradictions which beset the man who wants to be for both justice and peace. First, for example, are the problems of *fact.* For one thing, "argument" is never going to settle the question of Castro's character and his long-term intentions. Nor can it be said with much confidence what the United States will do, or might have done. There is probably substantial truth in much of our correspondent's letter but there is also considerable truth in a comment by Roger Hagan in the Council for Correspondence *Newsletter* some months ago. He remarked that what may have impressed the Soviets most in the Cuban incident was the fact that the United States did *not* overwhelm its irritating island neighbor with direct military force. Then, as for President Kennedy, it should be recalled that he was recently charged with betrayal by an anti-Castro Cuban leader. The account of what happened to the Arbenz regime may be accurate, if hardly complete. In 1954 MANAS reviewed a report on the achievements of the Arbenz government (in the July 14, 1954 issue) which gives a similar impression. However, in these days of mass media over-simplification and propaganda, only the most careful research can achieve even approximate accuracy.

But our correspondent's main point, which is that *fear* makes free governments impossible, is well taken. What puzzles us is that he should turn this point into a criticism of Roy Finch. Finch's position, it might be said, is solidly based upon the proposition that violence—even violence in behalf of social justice—is self-defeating. And the threat of violence is certainly the producer of fear.

The peace-maker of Roy Finch's persuasion holds that in the struggle to obtain justice—or to decide which social theory may be expected to produce a just society—the use of violence is soon overtaken by the law of diminishing returns. There is no longer any use in trying to settle issues of justice with violence, because of the massive evils (fear among them) which follow after. Finch was not disputing the "justice" of Castro's overthrow of Batista, nor even denying the good in Castro's humanistic intentions at the outset. Finch was maintaining that people dedicated to genuine peace will not contribute to this cause by ignoring the transformations in the Castro regime which resulted from its violent means. Nor would he for a moment deny that fear is the major cause of the attitudes of military intransigeance all over the world.

Finch and other pacifists who have renounced violence and the instruments of war do not lack in sympathy for those who struggle by whatever means are available for their just rights; the question is rather, what is now the true field of struggle for human progress? Finch's answer was well put in his *Dissent* article:

> What is the future of the peace movement? It depends on whether peace supporters can remain true to their principle of rejecting both American and Russian militarism equally to work for a dynamic third alternative. Any attempt to apologize for the military moves of either side weakens the peace cause. Pacifists cannot support a Castro who lines up in the Cold War (for whatever reasons), any more than they can support those who would use military means against him, and then expect to be believed when they say they are against *all* militarism. The revolution that is needed now is the revolution against war and militarism and both power blocs. It is imperative that somewhere in the world there be those who see beyond the present world conflict to forms and ways of life that will be superior to both alternatives in the Cold War and who, without compromise, will stand for this vision of the future. Anything less than this, any temporizing for the sake of expediency or of immediate gains, is a betrayal of the peace position and of the most urgent need of humanity.

To say that the use of violence to obtain justice will not get the justice, or will corrupt it before it is obtained, is not to "condemn" those who use it for this purpose, nor to excuse others who use violence against them. The aim is rather

to move the drama of human longing for justice and freedom into another theater of action—non-violent action. What men of the West ought to recognize is that the first steps to be taken in this sort of revolution are probably the most difficult of all to understand and appreciate. Yet those steps must be taken, and the principle they embody must be kept clean and made plain. This principle is that *violence* is now the only important enemy.

There is a close relation, actually, between the peacemaker's principle of non-violence and the psychological basis of Maturity. Similarly, there are certain obstacles confronting any attempt to bring the ideal of maturity into a working relationship with the familiar means of the drive for justice. Somewhere along the line, the mature individual has given up his determination to "change" other people. He has learned that immaturity consists mainly in unrealistic demands upon other people, and in the relationships of dependency which these demands encourage. You don't find the mature individual focusing his emotional life in blame of others. On the whole, he is not a partisan. This does not mean that he is immune to the appeals of social philosophy, or oblivious to the evils of social injustice and exploitation, but that his state of mind does not permit him to fal1 into angry bitterness toward *people.*

As a result, a manifest incompatibility develops between the attitudes of maturity (or what, in psychological terms, we have come to speak of as "maturity") and the mood of militant social action in its traditional forms. There is an intuitive rejection of anger on the part of maturity. There is a logical withdrawal of maturity from participation in all blanket condemnations. Usually, the impulse to rectify is preceded by the impulse to investigate and to understand.

It follows that these qualities of maturity may have the effect of slowing down a program of action. Instead of crying out, "Don't shoot till you see the whites of their eyes!", maturity tends to counsel, "Don't shoot until you understand what is in their hearts!" Which, of course, would make it likely that you will not shoot at all.

What emerges from this consideration is the serious problem of deciding where and how you are going to work for general human betterment. If you want to become a part of the centuries-old struggle for political justice, there is the issue of means to be examined and the choice that must be made between them. But even if peace is given the highest priority, there remains the question raised in last week's Frontiers by Richard Gregg: Can there be peace before justice is established? Must not the peace-maker concern himself as much with the roots of conflict in injustice, as with the tragedy and wrong of the violence arising from conflict? Will the peace-maker's voice be heard if he is silent on the issue of justice? Finally, can the goals of maturity be related to the interests of both justice and peace?

The man who chooses a righteous partisanship will almost certainly be impatient with the pacifist and the seeker for the principles of a balanced life. He will argue that no man of honest intentions and humanitarian spirit can accept the "delays" of pacifist dispassion and refusal to "take sides" in a struggle which may bring violence and bloodshed. And the one whose life-energies are drawn to the search for constructive human relationships, moving toward the new psychological goals of education and maturity—he, also, will seem to have placed himself outside the swift-running "activist" current of "social progress."

But what are the questions which, on the other hand, should confront the worker for political justice and its accompanying principles? Take for example the demand—unquestionably justified—of labor for a fair division of the fruits of capital enterprise. The focus of this righteous campaign unfortunately neglects what may be even more basic defects in contemporary society. What of a union which wins wage increases and other valuable considerations for its members, yet

remains indifferent to the searching criticisms of sociologists and social psychologists concerning the entire industrial system? The worker on the assembly line is indeed "entitled" to a proper division of the fruits of the "always more economy," but after he gets it, will he be any happier, and more "satisfied," than those who are already "properly paid"? Or will he now become simply another maladjusted member of a mature, affluent society, instead of being on the way to becoming a mature individual?

What is at issue in these various dilemmas is the old question of a general philosophy of human development. Is there but one rule of behavior for all men? Do different individuals have different roles for human good and different contributions to make? Is there a hierarchy of callings to duty in behalf of the human community?

It should be obvious that different answers to these questions will be returned, for many years to come. In periods of crisis and during the turbulence of revolutionary emotions, there is a tendency for men to form groups and to insist upon only one answer. This is the fundamental objection to totalitarian politics, which insists that the political obligations are primary and must be fulfilled first.

The peace-maker proposes that while you can go through the motions of gaining political power and possibly winning the formal goals of justice, something deeply mutilating happens to the ideals when they are pursued by violence. And after the struggle is over, we find that, actually, it has only begun, since the angers of the conflict have bred other evils to take the place of the old ones.

And the psychologist has similar observations to offer. Human nature is such that it suffers serious distortions during the struggle for political power, especially when power is pursued with the devices of persuasion and thought-control made available by modern technology. The goals of maturity are not the goals of politics, as we understand and practice it in the West.

Well, we have done nothing, or almost nothing, to resolve these dilemmas. But it may be of some value to attempt to expose them to view.

REVIEW
THE PHILOSOPHY OF MARTIN LUTHER KING

IT is a policy of MANAS to avoid the rancors of political and religious controversy by affirming that constructive discourse takes place in terms of philosophical evaluation. We now discover that Martin Luther King, Jr., along with being many other things of moment, is a man of philosophical inclination, and it is this aspect of a controversial figure that emerges with clarity in his latest book, *Strength to Love* (Harper & Row, 1963). Hitherto, it must be confessed, we have been simply glad that King is around, erecting a standard to which the wise and honest can repair, in the face of partisan emotions of a scene which includes Ku Kluxers, Black Muslims, and other embattled groups. *Strength to Love* begins with the following paragraph:

> A French philosopher said, "No man is strong unless he bears within his character antitheses strongly marked." The strong man holds in a living blend strongly marked opposites. Not ordinarily do men achieve this balance of opposites. The idealists are not usually realistic, and the realists are not usually idealistic. The militant are not generally known to be passive, nor the passive to be militant. Seldom are the humble self-assertive, or the self-assertive humble. But life at its best is a creative synthesis of opposites in fruitful harmony. The philosopher Hegel said that truth is found neither in the thesis nor the antithesis, but in an emergent synthesis which reconciles the two. "Be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves." (Matthew 10: 16.)

Dr. King, it appears, is one of the few men of our time who have found a way to live the preachments of Henry David Thoreau. King's "non-violent" doctrine, on this view, is not so much an imitation of the *satyagraha* of Gandhi as a matriculation from the same school of thinking that Thoreau attended and shaped nearly a century earlier. The active philosopher, of course, soon realizes that he is bound by conviction to many paths of nonconformity. Dr. King writes:

> In his essay "Self-Reliance" Emerson wrote, "Whoso would be a man must be a nonconformist." The Apostle Paul reminds us that whoso would be a Christian must also be a nonconformist. Any Christian who blindly accepts the opinions of the majority and in fear and timidity follows a path of expediency and social approval is a mental and spiritual slave.

As confirmation of our belief that Dr. King is not primarily interested in conventional denominational religion, or separatist advancement for Negroes, but rather in a transformed religion for *man*, we note these criticisms of *status quo* thinking within all churches:

> Nowhere is the tragic tendency to conform more evident than in the church, an institution which has often served to crystallize, conserve, and even bless the patterns of majority opinion. The erstwhile sanction by the church of slavery, racial segregation, war, and economic exploitation is testimony to the fact that the church has hearkened more to the authority of the world than to the authority of God. Called to be the moral guardian of the community, the church at times has preserved that which is immoral and unethical. Called to combat social evils, it has remained silent behind stained-glass windows. Called to lead men on the highway of brotherhood and to summon them to rise above the narrow confines of race and class, it has enunciated and practiced racial exclusiveness.
>
> Gradually, the church became so entrenched in wealth and prestige that it began to dilute the strong demands of the gospel and to conform to the ways of the world. And ever since the church has been a weak and ineffectual trumpet making uncertain sounds.
>
> We preachers have also been tempted by the enticing cult of conformity. Seduced by the success symbols of the world, we have measured our achievements by the size of our parsonage. We have become showmen to please the whims and caprices of the people. We preach comforting sermons and avoid saying anything from our pulpits which might disturb the respectable views of the comfortable members of our congregations. Have we ministers of Jesus Christ sacrificed truth on the altar of self-interest and, like Pilate, yielded our convictions to the demands of the crowd?

Passages in the section, "Pilgrimage to Nonviolence," show how the spirit of philosophy has sustained King in the midst of personal trials:

> I am no doctrinaire pacifist, but I have tried to embrace a realistic pacifism which finds the pacifist position as the lesser evil in the circumstances. I do not claim to be free from the moral dilemmas that the Christian nonpacifist confronts, but I am convinced that the church cannot be silent while mankind faces the threat of nuclear annihilation. If the church is true to her mission, she must call for an end to the arms race. . . .
>
> It is possible for one to be self-centered in his self-sacrifice. So I am always reluctant to refer to my personal sacrifices. But I feel somewhat justified in mentioning them in this essay because of the influence they have had upon my thought.
>
> Due to my involvement in the struggle for the freedom of my people, I have known very few quiet days in the last few years. I have been imprisoned in Alabama and Georgia jails twelve times. My home has been bombed twice. A day seldom passes that my family and I are not the recipients of threats of death. I have been the victim of a near-fatal stabbing. So in a real sense I have been battered by the storms of persecution. I must admit that at times I have felt that I could no longer bear such a heavy burden, and have been tempted to retreat to a more quiet and serene life. But every time such a temptation appeared, something came to strengthen and sustain my determination. I have learned now that the Master's burden is light precisely when we take his yoke upon us.
>
> My personal trials have also taught me the value of unmerited suffering. As my sufferings mounted I soon realized that there were two ways in which I could respond to my situation—either to react with bitterness or seek to transform the suffering into a creative force. I decided to follow the latter course.

Dr. King does not, in any of these chapters, speak primarily to the Negro. He neither exhorts the dark-skinned man nor pleads with the white, but rather seeks rapport with the ennobling qualities all men are potentially capable of manifesting. One of the most powerful communications in *Strength to Love* comes by way of an "imaginary letter from the pen of the Apostle Paul," which reads in part:

> American Christians, I must say to you what I wrote to the Roman Christians years ago: "Be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind." You have a dual citizenry. You live both in time and eternity.
>
> When the church is true to its nature, it knows neither division nor disunity. I am told that within American Protestantism there are more than two hundred and fifty denominations. The tragedy is not merely that you have such a multiplicity of denominations, but that many groups claim to possess absolute truth. God transcends our denominations. If you are to be true witnesses for Christ, you must come to know this America.
>
> So, Americans, I must urge you to be rid of every aspect of segregation. Segregation is a blatant denial of the unity which we have in Christ. It substitutes an "I-it" relationship for the "I-thou" relationship, and relegates persons to the status of things. It scars the soul and degrades the personality. It inflicts the segregated with a false sense of inferiority, while confirming the segregator in a false estimate of his own superiority. It destroys community and makes brotherhood impossible. The underlying philosophy of Christianity is diametrically opposed to the underlying philosophy of racial segregation.

Plainly the evidence that Martin Luther King, Jr., is a philosopher is easy to gather and difficult to challenge. We are not always sure, today, of what America can be unequivocally proud, but one can hardly fail to take pride in the fact that Dr. King has been able to reach a large and intelligent audience in the United States—an audience well aware that the measure of a man is found in his ideation, not his pigmentation.

COMMENTARY
A FREE LIFE

DURING AUGUST there was an exhibition of the work of Emil Nolde at the Pasadena Art Museum. Nolde was a German who died in 1956 at the age of eighty-eight. He lived most of his life on the North Sea, in the town of Nolde. Born Emil Hansen, he took the name of his town, and like other country folk the world over, he cherished his native land. When the Nazis rose to power, Nolde hoped as an artist to contribute to the "new Germany." But when the executors of Hitler's taste scoffingly arranged an exhibit of "Degenerate Art" in Munich in 1937, twenty-seven of Nolde's paintings were included.

The old painter could not understand. He wrote letters. He petitioned the authorities. He appealed to Baldur von Schirach. In fine, he made himself a considerable nuisance to the German government. Finally, he was ordered by Nazi decree to keep silent, and to paint no more. So Nolde painted in secret little watercolors which he called "Unpainted Pictures." Some of these were shown in a little room annexed to the main gallery in the Pasadena Museum.

We do not defend Nolde's political blindness, nor describe his chauvinism in order to excuse it. But having seen his paintings, and having felt, once more, the awe and the wonder that come over you when you stand in the presence of great works of art, we are bound to say that the concepts of political justice and the rules for creating the good society and for keeping it going take little account of the precious qualities of such men. In our anxiety about freedom, we fail to understand the riches of a life that was wonderfully free.

Then there is the story of the little boy (in this week's "Children") with "old and defeated" eyes. Political truth doesn't seem to apply to children. There is a *here and now* reality about artists and children—and about everyone else, for that matter—which politics and liberal principles do not touch. We need more thinking about the quality of the life we live—about this "way" that we insist must be kept "free."

You walk through a museum slowly, see, drink in, absorb the color, the inward vistas of feeling, the nuances of emotion caught in posture and gesture—feel the vocabulary of the sea in torment, the forms of the firmament in wild rage, and then in peace; you look out of a painter's eyes and touch the sensuous texture of sorrow with his hands, and then you know you can ask little more of any human being, and of most you will ask much less.

And you know that this kind of life cannot be put off until tomorrow. It is not an item in the plans of the Utopians. What the artist did was alive, still lives, because he made it *now*. He could not wait. There is no ideology for acts of creation. There is no program for the spirit of man. There is simply the living of life like a man.

These, of course, are only half-truths. But perhaps, because they are stirred up from the shock of wonder at the visual record of a human life—the wonder of how a man's work can outreach all that is commonplace in ordinary existence—they hold something of the limitless promise in individuals, some vital fraction more of truth than of omission and error.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves

A RARE CHILDREN S BOOK

WE are indebted to a reader for the suggestion of a book by Hungarian-born Gregory Marton, *The Boy and his Blizzard* (Harper & Row, 1962; $3.50). This is a pared-to-essentials story which will be appreciated by some children as well as all adults, for it contains drama, pathos, tragedy, and is suffused with genuine warmth of heart.

This boy has no name, but he *is* an individual—very much an individual, even though destined to die of starvation and exposure. His parents lived and died, far too soon, in occupied Hungary. He is one of many dispossessed, dreaming of making his way to Austria as soon as he can gather strength and find the opportunity. The winter is hard; the food scarce:

> He was a young boy, mere thirteen, and he had gone three days now without having a meal. There was nothing unusual about that, and the boy carried his misfortune with no loss of true pride.
>
> Everything about him was young and fragile except his eyes, which looked old and defeated. When he walked he moved with the swiftness of a forest beast, when cornered he became rough and harsh-spoken.

The boy cadges a few meals from a gruff-speaking but vulnerable proprietor of a state-controlled restaurant. Here he shares a bowl of goulash with another object of reluctant charity—a young woman, heavy with child. The boy adopts this new mother, takes her to a deserted hut for shelter against the winter's cold. And here, during the first full conversation between the two, is something of the mood that makes this book memorable:

> Now the boy paused, then he spoke out:
>
> "Are you alone?"
>
> "I am with you," the woman said quietly.
>
> "You are now. But will you be alone the day after tomorrow?"
>
> "I shall be if you leave me."
>
> The boy put the rabbit down. It crawled instinctively to the woman's warm body. She dragged it under the blanket.
>
> "Why do you ask, little boy?"
>
> "I thought you had a man who would be waiting for you."
>
> "If I had a man he would be near me. But I have only you, little boy."
>
> I am glad, the boy thought. Shifting the weight of his body from one of his legs to the other, he paused hesitatingly. Should he ask the question that puzzled him so much?
>
> "Is he dead? '
>
> "Is who dead?"
>
> "Your husband."
>
> The woman placed her left hand under the chin of the rabbit. For a moment she stared at its agile little nose. Then she said bravely:
>
> "I am not married."
>
> Silence fell between them. They could clearly hear the sound that the rabbit was making trying to dig itself into the straw.
>
> It's a good thing we have the rabbit, the boy thought. We can fix our gaze upon its funny little head and do not have to look into each other's eyes. Of course, the shame is on me, for it is I who have asked that question. The woman is honest therefore she answered it. I do not know much about these things; all I know is that people look down upon women whose children are born without a man to give them a name. That this is unjust and stupid even I can see. But people do not see it that way, and the woman might think that I was just one of those people.
>
> I must think of something.
>
> He lifted his eyes off the rabbit and looked up. His glance met the woman's searching stare. Without thinking he said in a low voice:
>
> "My Mama wasn't married either."
>
> Now, what made me say this shameful lie? he thought, as he felt his heart throbbing in his throat. His body began to shiver under the shock-waves of his blood that beat strongly and fast, and he felt sobs break through his gasping breath.

"I must finish my business," he blurted out curtly.

The boy does not want to lose this new friend, nor the life of the little adopted sister awaiting birth. He contracts pneumonia while trying to catch a giant carp through a hole he has cut in the ice of the river, but a stern courage keeps him struggling to provide, to protect.

He has never had a pet in his life, and while he catches the helpless rabbit—a creature, like himself, also searching for warmth in the face of the oncoming blizzard—he wishes to care for the rabbit too. But the boy finally realizes that he must sacrifice the rabbit if the woman and child are to live:

> Well, it must be done, he thought. I hoped I did not have to kill him. I hoped so much. But what can I do? What can a man do alone? Do what he must do. Kill if he has to.
>
> He stood up and went out carrying the rabbit by his long ears. The cold air bounced upon him like a bird of prey. It penetrated his nostrils and thrust up to his brain.
>
> His thin legs trembled with great weakness and his whole body shuddered involuntarily. How does one kill a friend one loves? he asked himself as he leaned against the rough timber wall holding the rabbit by his ears. Does one offer an apology? I do not know. Perhaps, one should make an excuse. But what would it matter? Nothing.
>
> He put the rabbit down and hoped that it would run away. The rabbit crawled back to the boy's feet, trying to shield himself from the strong breeze.
>
> "What do you seek, little one?" the boy asked him gently.
>
> Protection, he thought, that I promised you. But you won't find it here. You will never find it at a man's feet. Man has treachery in his heart and he cannot help it.
>
> Yes, you won't find it, he thought as he lifted up the rabbit from the deep snow. You'll find death. You'll feel your warm blood leak out slowly, painting the virgin white snow crimson. Then the chillness of death will embrace you, and my face will be the last thing you see.
>
> My face, the boy thought sadly. How will it look? Only the rabbit will know and he'll take his secret with him. How did the soldiers' faces look? He tried to remember. They looked neither sad nor angry. They looked busy and professional. But they hanged their enemies. I shall kill a friend.
>
> Oh, Lord, he sighed again, how does a man kill a friend?
>
> But no answer came to him and the boy knew why. I have been living alone for too long, he said to himself. It is hard to live without the presence or aid of a friend, and I have always lived, toiled and had fear alone. The blizzard is my only friend for which I have been waiting for so long . . . But tomorrow, when it comes, it will want to kill me, not knowing that I am its friend.
>
> Perhaps, the boy thought, that is the secret of smooth killing. Perhaps that is why in war people kill each other without much fuss. They just don't know whom they are shooting at.

The boy has been waiting for the blizzard. He considers it his "friend," because, in the confusion which attends its blinding fury, he hopes to struggle unnoticed into Austria. A small boy who calls a blizzard his friend! What a symbol of what man does to man and child; and of the way in which even the small and nearly helpless can be indomitable in attitude! Physically, the blizzard is too much for the boy. But the reader feels that here is one of those for whom nothing is too much—ever:

> His friend the blizzard grew stronger as if it meant to show the boundless energy it collected, rolling across the Great Hungarian Plain. The boy hunched his back against its wild strength. For a short while he managed to stay on his feet, but then collapsed suddenly and lay listless as though a great hand had fallen upon him.
>
> It is over, he thought. What can I do now? Nothing.
>
> So he just watched the grand drama his friend the blizzard played for him. He watched the snow being churned into restless foam, then into giant whirlpools that spiralled high up and met their dull parents, the clouds, drawing floating objects into their centres which looked like the gaping mouths of insane women. He heard the sharp shrill of the air as it was hopelessly boxed up between heaven and earth

and tried to escape its own mounting weight, shrieking with piercing cry in its terror. Then he buried his head in the snow and pressed his ears to the ground and heard it moan in a low and gentle whinny.

"The whole world is suffering," he whispered in fear mingled with admiration. There was a great temptation to leave his head lying on the soil and doze off, muffled up within the snow.

"Don't be silly," he reprimanded himself severely. "Don't be silly and go on. If you can't walk, then crawl."

He started to move on his hands and knees, dragging his body along the frozen clods, slowly and painfully, as a worm. His head felt giddy and unsteady and he let it drop and let it dangle between his arms, unable to support it any more. . . .

The snow covered his head up, and the boy closed his eyes peacefully under its gentle weight. He dreamed of colours: of pale yellow and violet; of grayish-green and purple. Then the reflecting rays blended promiscuously into a new colour that he had never seen before. Yet, before he could absorb the beauty of his dream—the boy had died.

The end of life? Or the sort of life that never ends? Any concluding generalities about this book would, we think, be an intrusion.

FRONTIERS

Letter from a Friend (II)

[We have taken a phrase from the beginning of this article and reversed its meaning to get a title, and have added the numerals "II" to recall another "Letter from a Friend" which was printed in MANAS for April 13, 1955. Ordinarily, we do not print the letters which speak well of MANAS; it seems a better use of editors' and readers' time to print the critical ones and see what fresh conclusions can be drawn. There was a special reason for printing the letter received in 1955, and there is a special reason for printing this one: That Mrs. Goldring's communication happens to be a defense of MANAS is of small importance, it seems to us, compared to the rich, reflective quality in her thought. This letter, in short, appears because of its independent value as a contribution. It came, we should add, as a reply to the letter of a reader which was printed in MANAS for July 24.—Editors.]

YES, perhaps MANAS is monotonous at times, and goody-goody, over-simplified and restrained. But for me MANAS is a good friend—a letter from a good friend; and each week when it arrives, I enjoy the conversation we have; I enjoy finding my own thoughts carried on much further than I could have ever done alone; I enjoy the sense of being at home, of understanding and being understood. Do I *do* anything about it? No, I have not joined any of the Peace groups or any other groups, but I have read more violent publications, the *National Guardian* for example, and have not been moved to joining, so I do not think MANAS editors should change their style. I would just probably stop reading it. There is so little left that one can read without feeling pressured. The Hard sell. And it makes no difference that what they are selling may be good, or important.

And then, there are so many good and important things, and each person has another terribly urgent message for you. At a party the other evening I heard people singing beautiful Spanish songs from Cuba—soul-stirring songs they sang with passion—and I remembered the same spirit some years ago, with other songs, also in Spanish, but from Spain herself in the ordeal of civil war. And now some people are singing in English, "We shall overcome," and "How many roads must a man walk down, Before you call him amen? . . ."

When a person is ready to join and act, I think MANAS must be helpful, clarifying issues and keeping things in perspective. But immediate action is not the only criterion. I recently heard someone evaluating films in terms of the fundamental changes in attitude they evoked: After seeing a few rare films, *La Noche,* for example, one is moved to ask oneself, how about me? Is that what my life adds up to? Antonioni roots us out of automatic acceptance of a world of zombie feelings. Or *Livia,* wherein Visconti leaves us totally disgusted with the romantic, aristocratic world so that we reject it completely. Your critical correspondent writes, "You must change your life, or the profoundest analysis is sterile. . . ." Does anyone believe that words of "fire, passion, even noble rage" alone can "bite deep" enough to "plunge the reader into crisis"? Rarely, I would think, if ever, except when someone is looking for those words; and when he is, the mildest will suffice, if they are clear and true.

When "you wonder, *what* will move men to act in the way that they must learn to act, before it is too late?", I wonder why we are in such a hurry for action, how we can even phrase it this way. If there were less action and more thinking, less doing and more feeling, wouldn't we all feel better? It seems to me that most of the evil and trouble in the world has arisen in the wake of exhortations to do something or other. People only see the immediate "good" they aim at; they do not take into account the side-effects. Whether it is new medicines, insect sprays, salvation, housing reforms, industrialization in its largest or most intimate impact on our daily lives—everything we experience in the name of progress has a price. I am not yearning for a return to any idyllic past, which, aside from the fact that it is irretrievable, had its own share of

waste and agony, but it seems to me that the process whereby we have arrived at this none too idyllic present teaches us something about the future. When that past was still the present, what forces molded what is best in our world today? Who helped that present unfold into this future in a way that at least has kept us alive, and our ideals alive? And what people and forces gave us the bombs and the bombers?

I am living at the moment in a country which is terribly "backward," industrially, in comparison with my home. Mexico is extravagantly inefficient, and according to her own writers (Octavio Paz and Samuel Ramos, for example), psychologically immature and neurotic. Mexico is poor, lacking in giant irrigation projects. Mexico is superstitious and education and medicine are only beginning to filter through the countryside. But this very disorganization leaves room for something hard to explain but cruelly lacking in our cleverly organized U.S.A. Perhaps a phrase of James Baldwin's (speaking of New York City) will give a clue to this quality: "Its citizens seemed to have lost entirely any sense of their right to renew themselves." "It was not possible . . . as it had been in Paris . . . to take a long and peaceful walk at any hour of the day or night. . . . It was a city without oases. . . ." Well, these oases, providing intangible as well as physical *space*—emotional as well as geographic—are what I think the human animal needs, at every age. And organized religion and organized industrial society tend to deprive people of this, and of the belief in their right to it as well as the knowledge of their need for it. Mexicans may tend to act violently and immaturely in many moments of life when Americans would be cool and responsible, but Mexicans have not made bombs and have not tried to colonize and proselytize. Maybe it is better to act out the hostility and foolishness in us at a level where it is not too harmful, rather than make everything neat and tidy from the bottom up, until it explodes at the top?

MANAS is perhaps one of these "oases" for me. In many ways it influences me "in life situations": In terms of my children, who are four, nineteen, and twenty, so that whether you are writing on the Franconia or the Summerhill level, it fits us; and in terms of the various peace actions, which are not mentioned in the publications most people we know here read. But it is not a question of "denounce the culture and wait for the next issue" (that sounds a bit like confession, doesn't it?). The very act of reading articles like those in MANAS is in itself a step from a mechanized, heedless existence. Reading and thinking—if not over-intellectualized as an escape from true recognition—are part of emotional apprehension and the assimilation of new attitudes as we grow. And if MANAS has its own "argot," well, maybe it should try to shake itself free of clichés. But I do not think it should consider changing its basic approach.

One of the things that I value in MANAS is the information about people I probably would never otherwise hear about, who are working at interesting and valuable projects, in education, peace movements, civil rights, and so on. I think that this is apt to have the deepest effect on me—not reading what these people have written, but learning about how they are living. When I was in California two years ago I went to see the college you had written about in "Children"—Emerson College, at Pacific Grove. I'd like to know how it is getting along, or what happened. . . .

In fact, I don't think it is a question of "denounce the culture" at all. It is much more a question of—create your own kind of world in the area where the only world you have is the one you create, or by default, allow to be imposed upon you. This is made up of so many little decisions and acts and thoughts and words—and certainly MANAS, along with certain people and books, is, for me, a mood of inquiry, a source of information, a sounding board, a part of life that helps make life more aware and more alive.

Of course every so often an issue will arrive that for some reason bores me (or maybe I'm avoiding it because it raises some issue that is too painful for me?), and once I remember that after reading some essays of Russell's I found the style of MANAS hopelessly awkward and unclear. But nobody can be at his best all the time. And probably the issue that didn't appeal to me made a great deal of sense to a lot of other people.

So that while the July 24 critic and his wife have a point, I believe that to a certain extent we do "profit by reading the truth," not as harangue, but as part of the daily bread of life. They find MANAS lacking because they seem to want it to be a sort of firecracker.

About the only "direct action" reading MANAS has led me to do has been to show it to other people and to ask that it be sent to various friends. Writing this letter is the second such act.

ALICE GOLDRING

Mexico City