

THE MEANINGS OF WORDS

SINCE the discussion of "What Can Be Done with Words" (in MANAS for Feb. 21) we have had some letters on the subject of communication. One of these was from Harry Zitzler, which was used in the March 28 issue. We now have another.

Here is a view of communication that might be of interest in connection with your recent articles on ideas-action-investigation-communication:

Realizing that, in your words, "Truth comes into being when a statement of fact is put into a form which gives it a clear relation to the growing body of knowledge . . . at a particular moment," I have the feeling that "general communication," publication, etc., can hope to do little more than stimulate individuals to make their own synthesis, and provide some rudimentary empirical data they can use in making their syntheses—in Blake's words, to offer them "a golden string."

The stimulant with the most general effect is probably the selection of "crucial" data. Since even this limited view of communication involves the grafting of new data onto the old stock, it is efficient only to the degree that the stock is known; real efficiency is likely only when the individual, possessing some motivation and an awareness of the communicator as a resource, "questions" him; or, in other words, makes it known which branch is ready for grafting.

By basing your articles on correspondence and publications you approximate this grafting-and-stimulus sort of communication; however I've noticed that, in trying to respond to articles that stimulated disagreement or questions, I've been unable to grasp a particular personality to which to direct my comments, and, following this, have returned to the article for closer analysis, to find alternate interpretations of particular words and concepts, with the result that my criticism, as well as my communication, became "contingent." If I attempted to continue on this basis, I would merely be writing an article (generalized communication, or an attempt to stimulate investigation), while it was my intention to contribute to the "feedback" that allows your article to be more communicative. I assume that the cause of

my difficulty in pinning your language down is at least partly the result of several editors talking with each other, and adopting more or less standard language, without having achieved complete agreement in their world views.

While there is no doubt some substance in this comment, our correspondent assumes a self-awareness on the part of the editors which hardly exists. There is an equal or greater likelihood that the same contributor to MANAS will himself vary the meanings of words, spontaneously, according to the framework of the discussion, sometimes making a word do more or wider service than it was called upon for at another time. All writers, we think, do this, except those who write precise texts which start out with definitions of terms. MANAS pretends to no such formal undertakings. Our theory of communication (if we have one) is that the intimation of directions and possibilities should be the main concern of a contributor to philosophical discussions. The idea is to strike sparks, not draw diagrams. All wayfarers in this more or less uncharted territory rely heavily on common human intuitions of meaning, except for the immediate point of inquiry, concerning which the investigation may become deliberately exploratory and precise. Since this reader has provided us with no examples of differing meanings for a single term, we may improvise a bit, taking the words "soul" and "self" as offering extensive possibilities.

The more immediate the intuition of meaning of a given word, the less need there is for definition. One might also say that, if the word belongs to the philosophical or religious vocabulary, the need for definition will vary with past usage and with its susceptibility to use in metaphysical systems. Self, for example, is a *stark* word. It starts with the naked reality of the feeling, "I am." At this point, it is hardly involved in theory. Self has empirical reality. If you begin

to question the idea of the self; if you ask about the difference between the self of a Christ and the self of a Judas; or if you try to distinguish between the self of an animal and that of a man, then you begin to qualify and wonder about the word's meaning; but if you restrict the term to the meaning of the self-conscious ground of experience, you reduce misunderstanding to a minimum.

But if you start using the word "soul," you can easily bewilder the reader. Of course, there are times when "soul" has just the right feeling-tone to convey the general idea of that part of man's nature which seeks the good and responds to the good, and it can be used for this purpose without definition or qualification. More than likely, however, the use of this word in any but the most general contexts will set vibrating a large network of associations in the mind of the reader. Some readers will not welcome the encounter, deciding that too many ghosts are called up by the term; others will feel friendly, thinking that the writer is hospitable to some brand of "spiritual" conceptions; while still others will wonder, perhaps with irritation, what the writer intends by using *that* word.

Accordingly, let us explore some of the meanings of the word "soul." Unlike self, soul really requires definition. For one thing, soul often appears in association with the word "immortal." This takes the discussion into farflung metaphysical regions. Then there is the question of whether the soul is a *substance*, whether the word represents an integral unit of being or is simply a term used to describe a category of behavior ("behaviors," some would say) related to the "better things." These accounts of the meaning of "soul" do not exclude one another, but one involves assumptions which the other ignores.

We might start with the Christian idea of the soul, since this represents the historical beginning of modern thought on the subject, and then go back to Greek and Oriental conceptions, and

forward to the skeptical ideas of the present, but instead, for reasons of order, we should like to begin with a candidly metaphysical view, drawn more or less from W. Macneile Dixon's book, *The Human Situation*. The soul, in these terms, is a psychic embodiment of the self. It is a form of consciousness. It is a unit of being, having the capacity to reflect in itself ideas of other beings both similar and different from itself. By a process both mysterious and necessary, it differentiates itself from the universal ground of being and is launched upon a great cycle of development, growth, or evolution which involves identification with forms of matter. The material world is the field of the soul's experience. Agreeable to ancient theologies, the soul is the Son which goes forth, which *incarnates*. It has internal affinities by reason of its essential nature, and external affinities by reason of its various embodiments. The competition of these two classes of affinities produces what we call the moral struggle. The soul is the practical instrument by which the self comes to know itself. This is spiritual knowledge. It is also the instrument by which the self comes to know the not-self—or matter. This is science. But there is also, paradoxically, an aspect of self in all matter, since we all have our being in the same universe and use the same *stuff* of life. So the not-self is also the self. The self, as primary reality, does not grow or change, but awareness of self grows and changes in the soul. This is the soul's development or evolution. The sacred arts are the soul's portrayal of what is happening in the world and in the soul. The profane arts are secularized reflections of the sacred arts, with lesser ends.

The foregoing seems a brief and very incomplete outline of the idea of the soul which may be found in Hinduism, Buddhism, Platonism, Neoplatonism, Gnostic Christianity, and in resurgent forms of these ancient faiths, including the philosophy of Leibniz, in some measure that of Hegel, more plainly that of John McTaggart, and a few others. Among contemporaries, Dixon provides a fair encounter with this general view,

presented in a mood of inquiry and questioning rather than the spirit of "revelation."

Actually, it is hardly possible to understand the Christian idea of the soul without some familiarity with the "pagan" religious philosophy which came before, and from which Christianity borrowed so extensively. One interested in this question would do well to dip into the writings of the Alexandrian group of the ante-Nicene Fathers to see how the early Greek Christian thinkers modified and adapted the metaphysics in which they had been trained to the Christian forms of belief. The old distinctions between the Logoi were known to them; they understood the difference between the Manifest and the Unmanifest Deity, and Christ was still recognizable in their writings as a Principle rather than a Person. A MANAS reviewer once called attention to a book by Edith Hamilton in which the difference between Greek and the later Roman Christianity is made to serve as an explanation for the course of Western history. There is an important point here since we all, without going into details, or even knowing anything about the details, are able to recognize the fact that Christianity, as it spread over the Western world, became a religion of moving anecdotes—the agony of a single man's crucifixion, the pathos and innocence of the Virgin, the troubled history of the Children of Israel, and all the color and old-fashioned moralizing of the Bible stories. The drama of Christianity is the drama of certain alleged historical events. It is true, of course, that compassionate men and Christians with metaphysical inclinations have done their best to restore to these stories an element of universal meaning, but the more successful are these enterprises, the less Christian the result—or rather, the less distinction there is between Christianity and the earlier philosophical religions.

The point of bringing this up here is that a religion which is founded upon stories of particular happenings has little natural place in it for philosophical psychology, and hence gives

little help to one who asks about the "soul." The soul, we are told, was created by God. Thus the soul had a beginning, but may possibly have no end, having to choose between eternal bliss or eternal damnation. The life of the soul, in this religious tradition, is a moralist's chronicle, not a problem in either philosophy or evolution. The good souls go to Heaven, the bad ones to Hell. What is a good soul? It is a soul which behaves itself. But since this is difficult, a bad soul may become good by believing the correct account of its origin and hopes for a future life. This tolerant and friendly paternalism on the part of the universe does not dismay those for whom historical chronicles are a sufficient explanation of the enigmas of life, but there is manifestly nothing or almost nothing in the popular Christian tradition which can be refined into a rational metaphysic, so that, when the mind of the West began its first real steps toward maturity, the wide-open doors to skepticism and atheism were welcome avenues of escape.

After the iconoclastic labors of men like René Descartes and David Hume, there was practically nothing left of the idea of the soul in the Western intellectual tradition. Descartes was an early John B. Watson who allowed the soul a certain vicarious being dependent upon the more tangible processes of physiology, while Hume, finding himself unable to interview himself, concluded that he (or rather his soul or mind) did not exist. T. H. Huxley, who had a happy talent for analogy, proposed that if we compare man's physical being to a locomotive rolling along the track, his psychic existence (mind, soul, etc.) has no more independent existence than the squeak of the wheels! This is the doctrine of epiphenomenalism, in which our self-consciousness is no more than a kind of chimera of our physical life. A scholarly German wit once remarked, "It is well known that psychology long ago lost its soul, and may now be said to be losing its mind!" This was the state of affairs at, say, the end of the first quarter of the present century.

Thus far, our account recites a little of the interplay between science and religion, but says nothing about three important undergrounds which have contributed to the slowly emerging contemporary idea of the soul. One of these underground movements began in the eighteenth century with Anton Mesmer; it was spread across Europe by experimenters with Mesmerism, and later with hypnotism; it reached the United States by means of wandering practitioners of strange, unorthodox sciences—one traveling Mesmerist claimed to practice "Electro-Biology"—mingled with Swedenborgian apostles, contributed to the rise of Christian Science, and finally merged into the New Thought movement of Ralph Waldo Trine. Without attempting to characterize this broad current, we can say that it provided at least some evidence that the *psyche* has a real existence, with parts or aspects, and that there are phenomena belonging to the soul which can be studied by those who take an interest in such matters. Orthodox science and religion gave practically no attention to this area of human experience, so that it has no place in conventional histories of human thought, although a ponderable bearing on what men have thought and think about the soul.

The second great underground movement is now known as psychic research. Beginning with what can only be called a curiosity about the facts, if any, behind continually recurring "ghost stories," psychic research has now become an almost wholly respectable branch of science. It has its cultist fringe, its special pleaders, and its minor prophets, but the solid character of most of the experimental work done in this field during the past thirty-five years is now recognized by most intelligent people, with consequent reflection on the question of whether or not they should dust off the word "soul" and start using it again, and if so, what it may now mean. An obvious justification for raising this question lies in the fact that psychic happenings seem to be governed by an independent system of laws—independent, that is, of the laws of matter.

The third underground began as Freudian psychoanalysis, which is now no longer underground at all, but very much in the swim and on the surface of contemporary thought about man and his nature. No one questions the fact that there are psychic dynamics which need attention and study in their own terms, whatever the relationships of the psyche with the physical body. As psychotherapy gained the dignity and promise of a broad, non-sectarian practice in the healing arts, it acquired a constellation of meanings for the idea of the human intelligence which might easily justify the use of the term "soul," were it not for the spectral presence of dozens of forgotten or half-forgotten beliefs the word invokes. Yet it is a good word and may be hard to replace.

Increments of meaning from all these backgrounds are likely to inhabit any usage of the word soul. For this reason, it should be used sparingly, and ought in most cases to be framed at least by the mood of a particular discourse if not by more tangible evidence of the meaning intended.

One thing more. The Freudians found it necessary to have four or five words to give an adequate account of psychic dynamics: id, libido, ego, super-ego are some of them. Other psychologists have devised other terms answering to the generalizations concerning behavior, motivation, or identity which they have found it useful to formulate. The ancient Greeks made comparable if not similar divisions in human nature, the Hindus had their classification of the vehicles or *koshas* of man's being, and the Egyptians also made subdivisions. It is possible or rather likely that one word will not properly name the complex reality of man's inner being, and that eventually we shall have to learn to speak of several kinds of soul; but meanwhile, until our knowledge has grown to the point where this sort of vocabulary is necessary, we had best be vague rather than artificially precise. Having a lot of names for things we do not understand makes

learning pompous and the confusion of the ignorant a certainty. In this region, therefore, we settle for a safe imprecision and intuitive distinctions.

There is of course the practical certainty that MANAS writers sometimes use poorly chosen words. The foregoing is a statement of intent, a kind of "philosophy of communication" rather than a claim to achievement. Our argument in extenuation, not in defense, is that in regions where meanings are at best approximate or tentative, a healthy scatter of terms, used almost interchangeably, may make the best practice. Precisely defined terms are confinements, and when you do not know enough about a subject to confine its meanings, it is better to use words which brim or leak or flow. The reader will make his own meanings anyhow

REVIEW

SIGNIFICANT PUZZLES

AN unusual novel, *Journey not to End*, by Paul Herr (Signet, 1961) tells the story of a European resistance fighter who survived Belsen only to find he could not stomach the world to which he returned. One of the reasons was this:

I do not hate violence itself. Violence has always been a part of life; for some, almost a way of life. What I detest is *impersonal* violence. If I kill you because I hate you as an individual, I am still human, and although I have taken your life I have not denied your humanity. But if I do this without passion, because of an Order, because of your Number or your Category, we both become things.

The *Progressive* for March presents a collection of quotations under the editorial title, "Soldiers and Censors," compiled from the frantic efforts of Senator Strom Thurmond of South Carolina to become another McCarthy. Senator Thurmond, as most of our readers know, saw a great opportunity for himself in pressing the charge that military men's opinions were being "throttled" by the Kennedy administration. But when some leading military officials appeared before the Senate's investigating committee, the senator obtained some very unusual replies—replies which are of great credit to General Thomas D. White, retired Air Force Chief of Staff, and General David M. Shoup, commandant of the Marine Corps. Here we are interested in the attitude of Gen. Shoup:

I don't think you have to hate to be a good fighter. We fight any enemy the President designates. I have made more than 100 speeches, and I have never mentioned the word Communism. We don't teach our men to hate. Hate I consider an internal sin. And hate is closely associated with fear. I think fear breeds defeatism, and that is a disease we cannot afford in this country if we are going to maintain our position in the family of freedom-loving people.

These two statements—one from a character in a novel, the other from an American commander—are certainly diametrically opposed in intention, but we suspect that an important

truth is pointed up by each. The best of "impersonal violence" comes by way of the dedication of a good police officer, and the best of "personal" violence occurs when an individual man steps in to take an initiative because his sense of justice has been truly outraged or because of his need to protect someone from harm. The worst of impersonal violence, as James Avery Joyce points out in his *Capital Punishment*, occurs when the state carries through the ritual of execution in the pretense of defending morality. The worst of personal violence occurs when a man who inwardly suspects that he is wrong closes the gap of an issue, not with reason but with the viciousness born of self-hate.

This is surely a time when, if there is to be a breakthrough to the attitude of nonviolence, it must begin with a respectful withdrawal from even the best in both traditions just discussed. Some excellent and simple passages in an otherwise mixed-up but interesting novel by Herbert Lobsnez, called *Vangel Griffin*, make some of the fundamental points stressed by nonviolent direct actionists. The scene is a street where violence is about to break out between young Falangists and university students in Spain. The protagonist refuses to believe that it is impossible for him, single-handed, to stop a conflict in which many lives may be lost. He appeals to the Falangist leader who is about to start the clash. "We're only a countermarch," he is told. The dialogue then continues:

"There's never been a march in all the world that didn't think it was a countermarch. Come with me to your friends and we'll persuade them to drop their clubs and empty their pockets of stones."

"If everyone dropped his club there'd be nobody left to defend us and we'd be at our enemy's mercy."

"You're already at your enemy's mercy, just as your enemy is at yours. But if you throw down your clubs, your enemy won't need his to defeat you."

"I don't trust my enemy. Let him throw down his own club first."

"Your enemy won't do it first, but maybe he will do it second. . . . Your enemy cannot hate you. He's

never seen your face. He's not one man with only one idea, but many men with hundreds of different ideas. When they see that you've dropped your club, won't they begin to wonder why they're still carrying theirs?"

"If I dropped my club, he'd use the one he has on me. What would there be to stop him?"

"If he raises his club after you have thrown yours away, every man in the world will tear off his clothes and protect you with his naked body. They will come from the ends of the earth to save you, because by saving you they are also protecting themselves."

"What guarantee have I got that they'd do so?"

"Guarantees are difficult," Vangel admitted, "but men have always been quick to adopt an effective means of defending what they own. Why do you think clubs were invented? I submit that the only effective way of defending what we own is to defend what everyone owns. And further, it is perhaps a sort of guarantee to remember that by dropping your club you have nothing to lose, for if you keep it in your hand, you are surely going to die."

"Señor, I beg you not to stop me. I know that I'm only a boy, but I still have a job to do."

"I'm not going to stop you," Vangel told him. "I'm only going to block your way."

"I don't understand you, señor." The boy was almost in tears. "Why must you tease me so? What's the difference between stopping me and only blocking my way?"

"I'm only going to stand so that you have to walk around me. The reason for that is that I want you to stop yourself."

"Aren't you going to hold me? It would be easy for you to do. You're older and stronger than I."

"I can't do that. I can only stand in front of you and try to make you think. You must see for yourself that it's wrong to march. If I used my strength to stop you, I would not be different from you."

"I can't understand you, señor." The boy was in a miserable state.

"It's because you've been perverted by your elders, who, in turn, were perverted by their own. It's a long chain of perversion that's existed since the beginning of time."

"Now that I can see their faces, I don't want to see them die. Please. Hold my arms and stop me. I'm afraid to stop myself."

"If I stopped you, I would save those faces before us, but others would die in their place. I don't want to stop this march only. I want to stop all men from marching forever, and therefore must let you stop yourself."

COMMENTARY NEW MORALS FOR OLD

THIS week's *Frontiers* article, by an Indian contributor, has special interests for the American reader. It is informing by being what seems a clear statement of the conceptions of Vinoba, and of the reasoning behind the great reform movement he is leading in India. But it is also puzzling—puzzling, at least, to the Western reader—because of its curious combination of the old and the new. The conception of the Good Society it presents is a version of the dream of every thoughtful anarchist, representing what may be the practical realization of people who put aside their acquisitiveness, who lose any desire to control the lives of others or to "use" other people as a means to their own ends. We will not call this ideal "utopian," although it has utopian aspects, because the proposal, as it is presented, depends upon the voluntary acts of free human beings to put it into effect. Such proposals ought not to be belittled by adjectives which have come to have a sneering meaning.

This is advanced thinking—good thinking, it seems to us.

On the other hand, the plea to the reader that this program is a way of avoiding "sin" seems curiously unrelated to the natural motives of the kind of people who may be expected to take the lead in the movement of this sort. The moralist's case for the good society—however good the society may appear in outline—is not the case that will win the needed support; not, at any rate, in the Western half of the world.

Wanting to build a good society is a positive emotion—an expression of the primary nature of human beings. This want is a spontaneous response to deep longings of people who have worn out other sorts of longings, or found them inadequate for the kind of fulfillment they now are determined to seek. Modern man, in the best sense of this expression, has reached a point where he will respond to good and evil only at

first hand. "Sin" is a second-hand notion. It represents what someone else has said about good and evil.

We are not suggesting that men do not learn from others about good and evil. It is possible to acquire a great deal of understanding from others, so long as those others have good sense not to try to make up our minds for us—tell us what is *sinful* and what is not.

People who have been through the scientific revolution and have come out at the other end are seldom affected except negatively by the pre-scientific moralist's vocabulary. This vocabulary leans too heavily on formal religious traditions. The forward-looking people in the West have a hunger for moral ideas, but they want them to be founded on spontaneous feelings and upon the ethical implications of those feelings, plus whatever elaborations they may choose to add out of their own findings in the world of philosophic religion, past and present.

CHILDREN

. . . and Ourselves

NON-POLITICAL YOUTHS ABROAD

AMONG the many worth-while projects in "peace education" undertaken by the American Friends Service Committee, none should be of more current interest than a report compiled by fourteen youths who traveled through Europe—and into Communist zones—during the summer of 1960. From all indications, the general temper and mood of people in East Berlin and in Czechoslovakia have not undergone much change since that time, so that the experiences of these young people remain extremely pertinent, especially in psychological terms.

Before the group of high school students ventured into East Berlin, they were confronted by many dire prophecies as to the hopelessness of intelligible conversation with any members of Communist youth groups. They *did*, of course, run into rigidities of party-line thinking—but they also found an area which showed that communication in basically human terms was quite possible. We quote from the concluding paragraph of the contribution by a youth from Phoenix, Arizona:

I feel that much was accomplished at this conference, but what we did achieve was not necessarily of a political nature, but one of understanding on a much different plane. We realized that we were people as they. We began to understand their position in a Communist society, we learned of their problems and ways of life. We gained an insight into the very basis of the problems and differences between us and our different systems. The manner in which we attempt to gain an understanding of people and their countries is one on the individual level. This is antithetical to the method most frequently used, the political method. While the political method deals with the mass of people involved in entire states, our approach was to the person as an individual, not to be manipulated or pushed, but to be understood as a human being. When we spoke with the FDJ [East Germans] we did not speak entirely in terms of opposing doctrine, but also in terms of individual questions concerning

facets of their lives, and their ideas. It was the individual to whom we spoke, not the party. This is where today's politicians in the Western countries are making a tremendous mistake. They ignore people as individuals and deal with governments and ideologies and this allows drift to occur, drift from the will of the people. If this drift is allowed to continue, you have, no longer a democracy or a free state, but an oligarchy or a landed aristocracy. The individual would no longer be important except as a tool of the ruling few.

In Czechoslovakia, where external pressures were considerably less than in East Berlin, the Friends group was able to further its understanding of the immense differences in outlook which separate dedicated Communists from dedicated "defenders of democracy." A student from New York concludes her portion of the report on Czechoslovakia with a plea for understanding:

Slowly it became clear to us that freedom as a general concept meant something different than it does to us. Particularly this is true because national and historical differences usually lead to varied interpretations of social concepts. The main reason is because of their interpretation of freedom in the light of socio-economic history. According to their thinking, in any society freedom must mean that for the class in power to act in its own interest. In other words, in a slave society the slave owner had the freedom to capture prisoners of war and use them as slave labor. Under capitalism, the total social milieu is free in so far as it serves to preserve, promote and develop capitalism, i.e., the interest of the capitalist class. As such under socialism freedom means that the working class, being in power, must consolidate all social forces to work in its interests. In effect, this means that all constitutional liberties in Czechoslovakia are based on this concept.

Separate yet intimately related to constitutional or theoretical aspects of freedom is the question of intellectual atmosphere. By this is meant the extent to which their concept of freedom has found expression in the creative and intellectual aspect of Czechoslovakian life. One of the most satisfying explanations given to us was by an American economist now living in Prague for the last eleven years. In the last five years he said that the intellectual atmosphere had improved considerably. Five years ago it had been rather difficult to have free

and full discussion. Unreasonable restrictions apparently had existed as far as free expression within constitutional limits was concerned. Fear to speak honestly existed, particularly from the point of view of some intellectuals. We heard of cases where young people were having difficulties in pursuing their studies because of the past records of their parents. He stated that at the present the situation had considerably improved although not necessarily to a "normal" state. He felt that as economic security was realized the situation would stabilize much further.

The thinking of these young people continues in similar vein as this rather extraordinary document unfolds. Some comment on Erich Fromm's *May Man Prevail?* in a sermon by Dr. Walter Kring, of a Unitarian Church in New York, applies here, since it is necessary to attempt to transcend ideological barriers, and this is what the group of traveling youths clearly realized. Dr. Kring remarked:

Perhaps the most penetrating section of the book [Fromm's *May Man Prevail?*] is his attempt to explain the paradox of what the Russians say they believe and what they actually do believe. One must understand the meaning of ideologies. An ideology is a system of ideas. The author feels that "In the history of the last four thousand years the great spiritual leaders of mankind—Lao-tze, Buddha, Isaiah, Zoroaster, Jesus, and many others—have articulated the deepest longings of man . . . They penetrated the crust of custom indifference, and fear by which most people protect themselves from authentic experience, and found followers who awakened from half-slumber to follow them in their ideas." These ideas however, began to lose their strength after a very short period. "While people in the first flush of bloom *experienced* what they thought, they slowly began to have purely cerebral, alienated thoughts, *instead* of authentic experiences." When this first period of enthusiasm evaporates people are no longer capable of really understanding the original ideas. So "The priests and kings who came after the prophets made use of this need [of people to have ideals]. They appropriated the ideals, systematized them, transformed them into a ritual, and used them to control and to manipulate the majority. Thus the *ideal* was transformed into an ideology. The words remain the same, yet they have become rituals and are no longer living words. The idea . . . ceases to be the living, authentic experience of man, and becomes instead an idol outside of him

which he worships, to which he submits, and which he also uses in order to cover up and rationalize his most irrational and immoral acts." This ideology also serves to bind people together and it serves to justify all irrationality that exists within a society.

These ideas are administered by bureaucracies that control their meaning. Therefore, the manipulation of ideologies becomes one of the most important ways for the control of people through the control of their thoughts.

Fromm feels that the ideas of Karl Marx were transformed into ideologies, and a new bureaucracy took over. . . . Fromm asks how this phenomenon can be understood. He feels that the best way to understand this apparent schizophrenic part of the Russian personality is to look at our own culture. If we examine ourselves carefully we might understand if the Russians are outright liars. We might find, he suggests, that we are doing the same kind of thing *without being aware of it*. "Most people in the West believe in God, hence in God's principles of love, charity, justice, truth, humility" he says, "yet these ideas have little influence on our behavior. Most of us are motivated by the wish for greater material comfort, security, and prestige. While people *believe* in God, they are not *concerned* with God, that is, they do not worry or lose sleep over religious or spiritual problems. Yet we pride ourselves in being 'God-fearing' and call the Russians 'godless.' "

FRONTIERS

What Does Vinoba Preach?

"MAN is innately good even as he is by nature healthy." Man ever yearns for good. He wishes to be good to others and wishes others to be good to himself. But in the course of his journey through life he is ever confronted with novel situations and unfamiliar persons. Then even the good man gets puzzled and panicky; he loses his balance and stoops to shady methods. Gradually this dereliction becomes a habit, betraying itself even when there is no occasion for panic. And he transmits the habit of guilt to others even as a sick person transmits his disease. So the misbelief gains ground that crime and wickedness are innate to man.

It ought not to be impossible or difficult to reclaim spoilt human nature to its original purity. Has not Vinobaji been doing the same thing before our very eyes? God has created men in such large numbers, not to fight with each other but in order that their life is enriched by mutual cooperation. The endeavour of each benefits the whole community. The school-boy needs the association of at least a score of classmates for his own progress. Competition indeed exists between man and man, but he really seeks, enjoys and benefits by the competition. Why, otherwise, would we arrange and spend for swimming and running competitions and cricket matches? *It is true that life is a struggle, but it is truer still that it is a social gathering.*

Men's interdependence is daily increasing and with it is also increasing his prowess to do either good or evil to his kind. The world is also getting more and more crowded, so that men must become more gentle, alert and accommodating than ever, if they are to pull together. Scrambling for precedence may serve in rural areas, but in Bombay "Q's" are indispensable. The greatest problem of the present age is that with the progress of science, transport, industry, commerce, etc., and with closer and closer human

intercourse, the disparities within the human family are also being more and more aggravated. Men are divided into rich and poor, advanced and backward, creditors and debtors, landlords and tenants, employers and labourers, the chosen and the outcast, by puzzling plenty and enervating penury, and the gulf is ever widening. People find themselves baffled, cribbed and confined in whatever direction they turn. They are rejected and repelled, thwarted and helpless. They feel uneasy and forlorn. They find themselves swearing at others and being sworn at by others. They feel embittered without knowing why and how. People sin against each other in many respects, with the result that our so-called society is a big concourse of men regarding each other with distrust, fear, jealousy, and hatred. Exploitation and extortion have been the law of life in society. Each individual is arrayed against all the rest, and one group against other groups, this group hostility serving for the time being as a cohesive force among individuals, tempering their private hostilities. And the irony of the situation is that all this exploitation and extortion goes on with the most pious of intentions with neither the agents nor the victims aware of how they have been behaving towards each other. Many sins are wrought for want of thought rather than want of heart. Extortion and generosity are practiced simultaneously, a pinch of generosity hiding a pile of extortion. It is largely due to confused thinking.

That confusion deserves to be corrected. Usury is sinful, generosity is meritorious. Recovery of interest is a sin of commission; refusal to write off the principal will at the worst be a sin of omission. It is important to bear this distinction in mind while dealing with social matters.

When Vinoba preaches Bhoodan, Gramdan, Sampattidan, etc., people listen reverently but feel that these things are too high for them. "They are otherworldly," they feel. But even their worldly wisdom and the urgencies of social justice require

the cessation of exploitation and legalized extortion. And if that much is conceded, our purpose is largely accomplished. We can very well leave the rest to the play of mutual confidence and goodwill will be generated in abundance through the voluntary abstinence from the forms of extortion so long in universal vogue. Mankind is war-weary and eager to realize the ideal of world peace and of a society based on non-violence. But the cold wars on the higher levels cannot be resolved unless and until the cold war that is continuously and universally waging between neighbours is first resolved. We vainly look to Kennedy and Khrushchev to bring peace to the world. Let us realize our own primary share of the responsibility. We are no less heroes in the world strife than Kennedy and Khrushchev are!

Private ownership in land has historically been the first instrument of the domination and exploitation of man by man. The owner of all land is obviously the Creator. But he had no locks and keys to guard his estate, so men seized the open lands and established their own ownership through sheer force. This did not happen all at once but in slow, progressive steps, so that neither the agent nor the spectators were aware how the change came about. Gradually man developed agriculture. Then the family had to settle down. He was naturally attached to the land into which he poured his life-blood and acquired a claim over it. But he reserved much larger areas than he could immediately cultivate, because his family was growing and his multiplying progeny would require all the land he could seize and reserve. Man's acquisitive instinct found a free play in the seizure of land. As a matter of fact, his usurpation was against all the rest of his fellows, but they did not resent it, because there was enough land left for their occupation also. Land has been seized and held just as colonies were seized and held by brave European settlers. It is the outcome of man's predatory instinct.

It happened somewhat like this: When the railway train reaches the platform, the passengers rush into it and occupy whole benches, spread out their beds and, stretching themselves, at once go fast asleep! (Persons with means do not personally participate in the scramble, but employ paid combatants.) The first few occupy benches, the next ones occupy seats, those that follow have to remain in the lobbies or even crowd in front of the latrine. Each one, however, reconciles himself with the position assigned to him by Lady Fortune. Then, when it is only a few minutes until the train will start, a big crowd of pilgrims enters the platform and advances in the direction of the compartment. Now the crisis creates the Hero! A public-spirited insider rushes to hold the door against the invaders. The invasion is successfully repelled and the Hero is acclaimed as King by all the peace-loving passengers inside. The King promulgates an ordinance to the effect that each passenger is to hold the space he occupies and that none should encroach on another's holding. In due course a Record of Rights is compiled. The sleeping passengers are now enabled to wake up and even to open their respective tiffin-boxes.

Our present villages are just such railway compartments where each one's interests conflict with those of all the rest. Each one holds to his space at the cost of all others. The compartment holds a crowd, not a community. In a community, the members have to be knit together by ties of justice, cooperation and neighbourliness. Our village folk must rectify the cold-war implied in the private ownership of land if they are to form a real community. Land ought to belong to the community and should be so shared as to satisfy equally the needs of all.

Land Distribution in Gramdan is, in essence, an acceptance and implementation of the principle that private ownership in land is usurpation supported by brute force. Gramdan is abdication of the usurped throne. It is correction of the wrong committed so far. All of us have been equal participants in that wrong, the "landed" as

well as the "landless," and we have now to atone for it. We resolve severally and collectively to rectify past wrongs and resolve also not to repeat them henceforth. All the land within the village will belong to the community, meaning, thereby, not only to those who have been living in the village, but also to those who may choose to come there in the future. It will be presumed that they came because there is greater crowding elsewhere. Certain conditions may be laid down to test their need and bonafides, but, these tests being satisfied, they will be entitled to accommodation no less than the older residents. How precisely to accommodate all the claimants is a matter for the residents themselves to decide. They may cultivate the land collectively or make equitable distribution, the several farmers cooperating with each other for such matters as they choose. Some artisans may even go without land if they are assured of maintenance out of their respective trades. It is all a matter of convenience and not of principle. All distribution of land will, however, be tentative and subject to periodic or occasional revision. There need be no difficulty in such revisions, because those who will have to part with their land will be entitled to compensation in the form of rent or price.

But that is only the alpha, not the omega, of Gramdan. Gramdan is not limited to land alone. It is the abolition of exploitation in all its forms and the creation of an egalitarian society, offering equal opportunity to all, within the small compact area of the village. Equitable distribution of land will eliminate exploitation only so far as private ownership in land is concerned. Our quarrel is not with ownership but with exploitation, which is only a euphemism for highway robbery. All gain without personal labour, *i.e.*, at the cost of another's labour, is robbery and such robbery is being committed in various forms and disguises in broad day light and under respectable names. It behooves us to drive off the robber from each resort. There is no use in driving him away from one field to thrive in others.

The feudal landlord usurps, by sheer force, an immense tract of land. He then divides the land into, say, a hundred sizeable plots and very kindly (!) lets them out to as many tenants for return of half of the seasonal produce. The tenant earns only a few maunds of grain after the year-long toil of his whole family, while the landlord amasses tons without moving a finger. But that is not all. The tenant exhausts the last grain of his meagre store by the time the sowing operations of the next season are over and is then faced with starvation till the next harvest. He has perforce to approach his landlord for a loan of grain. He is in dire need and must submit to whatever conditions the creditor lays down. The tenant's difficulty is the landlord's opportunity. What could be more sinful than making an opportunity of a neighbour's difficulty? In this particular case the sin is made worse because the tenant's difficulty is of the landlord's own making. And yet the "Sahokar" is the kindest and most respectable gentleman of the realm! But a good deal could also be said in condemnation of the other party. The borrower is often foolish, imprudent, a lazy spendthrift, sometimes a drunkard and a gambler. But that does not justify the greed of the usurer. We may admit that the latter has probably been an industrious man leading a simple and frugal life. Perhaps he has had to deny himself even the barest comforts in order to lend a portion of his hard earned produce to another. So, "Shall he not expect to be rewarded with interest on his advance?" No; the only legitimate objects of saving are (1) insurance against future want, famine or adversity, or even acquisition of a right to have a holiday whenever one chooses, or (2) capital-formation designed to facilitate and increase future production. It is not piling up of private property through interest, rent, cornering, profiteering and other forms of loot.

Saving is indeed innocent and permissible, even commendable where production and consumption are limited to an individual. It was certainly wise on the part of Robinson Crusoe to store food against future want. So far as

production is on family basis, the savings should belong to the family; and so they generally do. But in these days production is mostly social, requiring the cooperation in numberless ways of numberless persons from all parts of the world. Under the circumstances, while the individual and even a family are entitled to share the produce in common with all others for their current needs, all that is left must belong to the community. From this standpoint, private property amounts to theft. Thus it is not right but might that prevails. This is not congenial to human social life.

Man has continually been trying to discover himself and has ever been making fresh conquests over his own unsocial and predatory instincts. He is a school-boy requiring continual schooling, but he is also a promising lad who has been making progress and is becoming increasingly "civil-ized." Gramdan is one such forward step in the civilization of man. Gramdan is the subdual of man's unsocial tendencies, which prompt him to self-seeking at the cost of his fellows. Our Gramdan village will be just such an "Ashram." There all the dealings between neighbours are closely governed by the Gramsabha in which all the villagers, male and female, fully participate. The Gramsabha is the embodiment of each citizen's higher, *i.e.*, social, self, so that Gramraj is a synonym of Swa-raj (Self-rule). The Gramdan village need not actually be a joint family. It can consist of a number of separate families, with their separate belongings, separate houses and kitchens, and even separate plots of land, but the separation will be subject to certain general canons of equity. The land will be equally and equitably distributed and redistributed, among all who need it. In their leisure the farmers also practice some useful craft like pottery, carpentry, smithy, weaving, sewing, flaying, tanning and shoe-making, bamboo-work and sundry other crafts, primarily to satisfy the needs of neighbors and secondarily for export of the surplus. The decisions of the Village Assembly are taken and implemented with the consent of all, implementation being held up in case the least of the fraternity be opposed to it.

The dissenter in his turn will then naturally be anxious to let the majority have their will. There will thus be secured unity of hearts even in the face of difference of opinion.

Our remedy for the abolition of exploitation is ridiculously simple. One uniform policy is applied to all sorts of economic dealings between man and man. It sees no distinction between rich and poor, low incomes and high incomes, heavy industries and small industries, etc. It supplies an easy solution of many of the airings of present-day society. The urge behind our proposals is a better human life, a better world, the rectification of wrongs in general, not retaliation against the wrongs done to a particular class or group. This is not a revolution of the labourers or the farmers, although the scheme is revolutionary. It categorically repudiates the forcible possession of land and prohibits the perpetual exploitation of the poor by the rich. But it discriminates between just and unjust claims, fully respecting the former and repudiating only the latter.

If these rules are accepted and observed, most of the present inequality between individuals, communities and nations will vanish, and with it will vanish most of the existing causes of conflict. We shall thus make considerable highway towards the establishment of a non-violent society.

Poona, India

NOSHIR BILPODIWALA