

## PROBLEMS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

ONE of the difficulties which, sooner or later, overtake the worker for "good causes" might be described as a certain moral fatigue in being "right" all the time. It is not so much a matter of flagging conviction as it is a kind of self-questioning and a wondering about other kinds of being right—alternatives or values which he has hitherto ignored or given little attention. An uncharitable but by no means wholly inaccurate definition of the reformer would be to say that he is a man who finds it expedient to press half-truths as though they were whole truths. The urgency of the need he has determined to serve creates for him a special symmetry for the half-truth, and his feeling—his passion or compassion—gives a rounded wholeness to the mission he has undertaken. Feeling, unlike intellect, has this quality of wholeness. It polarizes a man's being into uncomplicated unity of purpose.

There are timeless truths, and truths of the moment. That "man does not live by bread alone," you could say, is a timeless truth. Yet there are epochs when an apparently conflicting truth of the moment seems to throw the timeless truth into shadow. It was no neglect of timeless truth, but Gandhi, who said: "For the poor the economic is the spiritual. . . . To a people famishing and idle, the only acceptable form in which God can dare appear is work and promise of food as wages. . . . To them God can only appear as bread."

What, then, was the difference between Gandhi and Marx? Hundreds of learned papers have argued this question in Indian journals of opinion, but basic to any answer, it seems to us, is the fact that Gandhi was driven to an emphasis on the material welfare of the Indian people, not by the idea that the economic circumstances of life are the basis of the good society, but from the desire to create conditions under which the Indian

masses would be able to think about ideals beyond physical survival. As Gandhi put it:

A starving man thinks first of satisfying his hunger before anything else. He will sell his liberty and all for the sake of getting a morsel of food. Such is the position of millions of the people in India. For them, liberty, God and all such words are merely letters put together without the slightest meaning. They jar upon them. If we want to give these people a sense of freedom we shall have to provide them with work which they can easily do in their desolate homes and which would give them at least the barest living. This can only be done by the spinning wheel. And when they have become self-reliant and are able to support themselves, we are in a position to talk about freedom, about Congress, etc. Those, therefore, who bring them work and means of getting a crust of bread will be their deliverers and will also be the people who will make them hunger for liberty.

It is possible, of course, to find in Marx passages which look to the reorganization of society for similar ends. The *Communist Manifesto* speaks of "an association in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all." The condition of the good life was to be obtained, however, by a revolutionary change in the property relations as they exist in bourgeois society. As Marx wrote in *Critique of Political Economy*: "With the change of the economic foundation, the entire immense superstructure is more or less rapidly transformed." Somehow, the regeneration of the individual was to follow automatically from the fulfillment of the revolutionary process. "Marx," said a Russian critic with whom Marx agreed, "treats the social movement as a process of natural history, governed by laws not only independent of human will, consciousness and intelligence, but rather on the contrary, determining that will, consciousness and intelligence."

You could say, perhaps, that while for Gandhi, God (or Truth) could appear to the poor only as bread, he had a very different idea of the truth that was needed by those who are already free of the pains and pressures of poverty. Marx, on the other hand, had only the one "truth"—the reconstruction of mankind by the revolutionary alteration of property relationships. He seemed wholly unaware of the possibility that the pertinence of his revolutionary truth of the moment might diminish with changed economic circumstances. There is plenty of evidence that it *has* diminished. In the last of his articles on present-day life and attitudes in the Soviet Union (*New York Times*, Feb. 5-9, 1962), Harrison Salisbury describes at some length the "lost" generation of youth that has appeared in Russia, to the despair of the Communist party. Of this group, the former Moscow correspondent of the *New York Times* says:

Some of the youngsters are hooligans and adolescent delinquents, the Soviet cousins of the shook-up generation of New York. Others are well-educated, cultured young people, sons and daughters of high party and Government officials. These are the counterparts of the beat generation of San Francisco or the existentialists of the Left Bank. . . . Nothing that the party has been able to devise wins back the loyalty or enthusiasm of the bored, nihilistic and disoriented generation.

"This is our greatest defeat," a middle-aged party man conceded. "The young people have deserted the cause. I do not know how we are going to get them back."

As you read along further, it becomes fairly obvious that, in turn, the half-truths of these rebels among Soviet young people are absolutely incomprehensible to the party functionaries and propagandists. A year or two ago, a Yugoslav sociologist made a similar report on life in Belgrade, and just the other day Bulgarian officials expressed dismay at the lack of appreciation of Communist ideals by the generation of youth now reaching maturity.

Among the sophisticated youth in Russia, to have read (in translation) J. D. Salinger's *Catcher*

*in the Rye* is practically a status symbol, Mr. Salisbury says, while Moscow cafes are the haunt of young girls who wear pony-tail hairdos, black cotton stockings and flat-heeled shoes. Speaking of the maturer members of this generation, Mr. Salisbury continues:

Truth—by this the Russian young person means sincerity and genuineness—is the great goal.

Those who are more serious, those who have not given themselves up completely to aimless chasing of Western fads and fancies, seek out Western individuals and question them endlessly.

They have little hope of finding their ideals in the gray and hypocritical world in which they live. They hope that "the truth" may exist in the West. Those who try to respond to their feverish questions about life beyond the Soviet frontier can only hope that the West will not prove to be equally disappointing.

What does all this show? So far as we are concerned, it shows little more than the fact that a partial truth—the truth of the need for economic justice—may support a revolution, but it cannot support a prospering society which is lacking in more profound ideals.

Why are half-truths so popular, while whole truths, supposing one has them, find it so difficult to win support? The answer to this seems to be that the half-truths can be turned into formulas and thus made the basis of ideology and political organization. Whole truths, on the other hand, seen against a background of changing events, may assume paradoxical forms and require much wisdom on the part of those who would use them. Paradoxes are not of much use to a political organizer. Politics is too often a harlot who quickly betrays yesterday's alleged "idealism." Take for example Dwight Macdonald's summary of the transposition of political morality which occurred shortly after World War II in the United States:

The Right favors a relatively "soft peace," partly because it never believed in the war as an antifascist crusade, and partly because it hopes to make Germany a barrier to Russian advance; while the Left

insists on the collective responsibility of the German people and presses for vengeance. The CIO, like the British TUC, has put on record its belief in the war guilt of the German *people*. It is Rightists like President Hutchins, of the University of Chicago, and Senator Wheeler, who express indignation at the extremes to which the victors are going in Germany; the Rightist Republican Senator Wherry makes speeches about our policy of starving Europe which read like editorials from this magazine [Macdonald's *Politics*]. It is the liberal Senator Kilgore who defends the use of German slave labor, and it is Mrs. Roosevelt who praises Louis Nizer's racial tirade against Germans and minimizes the current starvation in Germany. The actual proposals for postwar Germany of the reactionary German-baiter, Vansittart, are positively humane compared with those of the New Dealer, Morgenthau (who recently joined the committee to feed the General Motors strikers), while the Leftist paper, *P.M.*, has far outstripped the Hearst press in its hate-the-Germans-and-Japs campaign. On the issue of peacetime conscription, it is the Right Republican Senator Taft who leads the fight against it, and the Republican floor leader in the House, Martin, who proposes an international agreement to abolish conscription everywhere, while the New Dealers, led by first Roosevelt and now Truman, line up behind the General Staff in favor of conscription. ("The Root Is Man," *Politics*, April, 1945.)

What this analysis seems to show is that there is sometimes a deep-seated virus of totalitarianism in the best of "liberals," given the provocation of an extreme situation like war, and that there are actually sparks of decency and some principled regard for human suffering and the right of civilians to remain civilians, if they so choose, in the breasts of conservative Republicans. This is not to suggest that the liberals have been sailing under false colors, but that their truths, however impressive, have never been the whole truth. In fact, it seems likely that no political truth is a "whole" truth, and that the anarchists, with their virtual rejection of politics, have at least fifty-one per cent of the whole truth, although they will never be able to make it work without more realistic consideration of the other forty-nine. The trouble with doing this, of course, is that it would make the anarchists lose their identity in seemingly

endless compromises of their slightly more than half-truth.

Who are the "good people"? The common assumption is that they are the ones who differentiate themselves from the rest by taking part in some overt activity which aims at human betterment. Usually, this activity is political, or at least organizational. What proportion of the population falls into this category? An extract from a statement by Elmo Roper, well-known pollster, included in a recent report published by the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions, may serve as a partial answer to this question:

. . . we have come to the conclusion that only about 10 per cent of the American people exhibit any noticeable degree of political activity. Some of them have never voted. Some have rarely voted. An amazing number of people vote only because they are a good friend of the man who is running for sheriff. Or perhaps they voted in the last election but didn't vote in the three elections before that. An astonishing number say they never speak up at a public meeting, town meeting, PTA meeting, or any kind of meeting, even if they feel strongly about something. And they are perfectly content to admit it; in fact they think it is a virtue. "I know how to keep my mouth shut," they say.

Well, 10 per cent of the American people can be called "politically active." Another 20 per cent can be described as "taking some part in political, civic, and social life." The other 70 per cent are what we would have to call "dormant."

When you consider that the ten per cent who are said to be "politically active" are practically all either Democrats or Republicans, the prospect gets a bit discouraging. But what we are quarreling with, more than with the quality of the political activity so designated, is the assumption that these people constitute the chief hope of the future. Why do the other ninety or seventy per cent refrain mostly or entirely from politics? The reasons are no doubt mixed, but they probably all fall into two general groups: (1) Personal indifference and ignorance, and (2) a lack of conviction that the half-truths of politics are important enough to require much attention.

These reasons are objectively similar, but they are not really the same. Actually, we don't really know much about all these people, except to say that there are moments in history which seem to bring together factors of personal and social decision, so that the great apolitical majority is able to see the relevance of a great political issue, and then move into active participation. The times of Lincoln, in the United States, and of Gandhi, in India, seem to have been such historic moments. Gandhi said of himself:

You will see that my influence, great as it may appear to outsiders, is strictly limited. I may have considerable influence to conduct a campaign for redress of popular grievances because people are ready and need a helper. But, I have no influence to direct people's energy in a channel in which they have no interest.

Gandhi was one of the few great reformers who understood the difference between the half-truths and the whole truths:

I have not conceived my mission to be that of a knight-errant wandering everywhere to deliver people from difficult situations. My humble occupation has been to show people how they solve their own difficulties. . . . My work will be finished if I succeed in carrying conviction to the human family, that every man or woman, however weak in body, is the guardian of his or her self-respect and liberty. This defence avails, though the whole world may be against the individual resister.

The most useful sort of worker for "good causes" is one who keeps himself sensitively alert to the invasion of the ideological element into the field of his labors, and who, when it comes, finds another way of working. By this means he reduces the problems of righteousness to a minimum.

## *Letter from* **AFRICA**

FREETOWN, SIERRA LEONE.—In introducing Sierra Leone, John Gunther's *Inside Africa* says: "First settlers (1787) were four hundred Africans rescued from slave ships by the British navy; with them came thirty white prostitutes from the slums of London. These together are the foundation of contemporary Freetown society."

There is in Freetown some tendency to question the detailed accuracy of these very Gunther-like comments. (Did the prostitutes come from London, or from Hull? ) But even to a newcomer the structure of the so-called Creole society of Sierra Leone is fascinating. It consists of about 30,000 persons who claim descent from the freed slaves, almost all of whom live in the Freetown peninsula, known as the "Colony" to distinguish it from the major inland area called the "Protectorate." Until independence in April, 1961, this Creole group exerted an absolute hegemony over the entire area, monopolizing trade, wealth, education, and acting as the colonial power's controlling instrument. I have been told that the new and primary strain in Sierra Leone life since Independence is the imminent collapse of this Creole dominance in the face of a nine-to-one numerical superiority in the Protectorate, the Bush, or the Provinces, as the back-country may be called. I have also been told in all seriousness that Ministers of the present Government are physically afraid to go out into the Provinces. I cannot say whether or not this is true.

Slavery was not legally abolished in Sierra Leone until 1928. It is said that the method of reform was prohibition of the inclusion of any financial provision in the so-called "ward" system, which is still in use. By this system, unwanted children in the provinces were sold to Creole families in the Colony as house-servants. They are now "offered," not sold, but they still have no rights, are required to do the work of family servants, and are said, typically, to be rewarded in

no way beyond the opportunity for minimum schooling and provision of minimum food and lodging. A recent study in Freetown, conducted by a graduate student of education at Fourah Bay College, revealed that over half the school-age children of Freetown were "wards."

The writer was warned years ago by Chester Bowles that he had not as yet succeeded in seeing Africa from the new and vital viewpoint which alone would permit an understanding of the events bursting into life. A stranger's early impression, here, is that Africans themselves, independence to the contrary notwithstanding, have been no more successful in shaping a new viewpoint of themselves. The degree to which Freetown society is moulded and colored by British reference-points and images is hardly credible. Freetown seems a mirror-image of what Sierra Leoneans have been led to believe is the accepted British way.

Fourah Bay College is an example. Established in 1827 by the Church Missionary Society as a secondary school, and the oldest institution of this sort in West Africa, it is just now attempting to grow up to its new name of the University College of Sierra Leone. Its 300 African students attend lectures in the tropic heat in traditional black academic gowns. Courses offered, methods followed, examinations set are those of its British affiliate, the University of Durham. Its terms of study are identical with those at Durham, bearing no apparent relation to the demands of the tropical seasons. *All* members of the teaching staff, English and African alike (so far as I can judge, they are about half and half), have their way paid once each year to Britain, the reason being that ancient colonial idea that they need annual refreshment from the tropic's harsh demands—even, apparently, if they were born and brought up in the tropics. The cost of education at this institution is said to approximate £1000 (\$2800), substantially in excess of the similar cost at Durham.

There is now discussion of a Medical School for Sierra Leone. It seems that the Prime Minister is determined to have one, though an advisory commission is likely to oppose the project. Of the undergraduate population, over half comes from Nigeria, with a trickle from Ghana and the Gambia. The *total* number of students of college entrance grade produced each year by Sierra Leone's thirty-seven nominal secondary schools is said to be no more than twenty. The ten-year-old graduate program in Education has grown only to twelve students. Who is to be trained for medicine? The field of medicine seems nonetheless to be inordinately attractive to Sierra Leoneans. The Prime Minister, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Principal of the College, and his wife are all eminent Sierra Leone ex-doctors, the latter two being pediatricians. I am told that seven of every ten children born in Sierra Leone die within the first year.

One wonders what these apparently intelligent but deculturated human beings think of themselves and of the society in which they live. What does the Principal of Fourah Bay College think, to himself, of his requirement that staff members keeping an appointment in his office wear their black academic gowns? What do the members of the "Cecilians" choral society really think of their recent steaming-hot evening of singing a program of Bach and Handel, climaxed by an almost complete rendition of Mozart's *Requiem*?

The picture is of a society without roots. Inevitably, one questions the prospects. A more hopeful, and of course an immensely more informed view was recently expressed by Dr. Thomas Hodgkin, who has just assumed leadership of the School of African Studies at the University of Ghana. He says:

"What is hopeful about the [African] national movements is their unembarrassed eclecticism—their readiness to draw intelligently at the same time on the Western democratic (including within

this the Marxist) and on their own indigenous resources. . .

Other African societies may have had less confused origins than the Creole, and thus fewer problems. We shall look for positive signs of the synthesis suggested by Dr. Hodgkin, as a measure of basic African progress.

ROVING CORRESPONDENT

## *REVIEW*

### THE FLAVOR OF AFRICA

THERE are moments when we wish we were the New York *Times* Sunday magazine section, with facilities (and the space) to reproduce drawings and prints. Review of some books seems to require an illustration or two, and Frederick Franck's *African Sketchbook* (Holt, Rinehart and Winston, \$5.95 ) is an example. Dr. Franck, as many MANAS readers will remember, is the oral surgeon and dentist who in 1958 was invited to go to Lambaréné, the Gabon Republic, Africa, to set up a dental clinic in Albert Schweitzer's hospital. But Dr. Franck is also an artist who likes to draw and his arrangement with Dr. Schweitzer included enough free time to sketch the countryside and the people. As a MANAS reader, Dr. Franck also found time to send us interesting "Letters from Lambaréné," which appeared in the issues of July 30, 1958 and Aug. 19, 1959. Two other books have been born from this perennial African adventure of Dr. Franck (he periodically returns to Lambaréné to treat, teach dentistry, and draw)—*Days with Albert Schweitzer*, and *My Friend in Africa*, a delightful children's story.

*African Sketchbook*, which was published last year, has a text which accumulated around hundreds of drawings, giving the reader a double serving from Dr. Franck's *smorgasbord* of the flavors of Africa. The book presents scenes in ten regions of modern Africa—Dakar and Gambia, Sierra Leone, Ghana, Nigeria, the Sudan, the Belgian Congo, the Gabon Republic, Kenya, and Ethiopia.

At Gambia, Dr. Franck was entertained by John Carrol, who had the title of "Chief of the Dental Department, Bathurst, the Gambia." Dr. Franck had imagined him as a blond Englishman, but he turned out to be pure African, and the only dentist in the territory. Dr. Carrol was one of the "been-tos," as Africans who have "been to" school in England are derisively called by their nationalist-minded countrymen. A brief passage

about the small party given by Dr. Carrol for the author is suggestive of a recurring theme in Dr. Franck's book:

"Last week I was in one of our villages," he [Dr. Carrol] said, "and I arrived just at the time of prayer. These people are orthodox Moslems. But the Chief of the village got up to welcome me. 'Please,' I said, 'don't let me interrupt you. I can wait.' But the Chief said, 'Oh no, you come here so rarely and I am happy to see you. I can pray later, for you stay just a little while but Allah is there all the time'."

One of the doctors mentioned my work at the Schweitzer Hospital. "If you mention the word Schweitzer in West Africa"—Dr. Carrol smiled—"you might as well have dropped a bomb." I had not even realized that people knew the "*Grand Docteur*." All at once they started to speak about Schweitzer and his attitude of rejection toward the "blacks." "But he has worked for these people all his life," I objected. "Yes," they said, "but condescendingly. Has he not written that all men are brothers, but that we are like children, his younger brothers?"

"That was thirty-five years ago," I said, "and you must concede that Africa has evolved fantastically in those thirty-five years! He has helped innumerable people during his years in Lambaréné; why don't you attack those who did nothing? Why don't you attack your own doctors in all the big cities who think of nothing so much as their own advancement?" . . . Between mouthfuls, another young doctor, John Mahoney, whose father was one of the first Gambians to be knighted, kept kidding me about the "condescending Christian lily-white endeavor in Lambaréné." He had a face alive with intensity, intelligence, and wit.

At Sierra Leone, Dr. Franck stopped at the Government Rest House, built like an American motel:

Very unlike the Atlantic Hotel in Bathurst [Gambia is a British Protectorate, while Sierra Leone is free] with its invisible walls between black and white and white and white, here the races and classes mingle spontaneously. There was not a trace of servility in the Africans or of superiority in the whites. Wherever independence is near or already accomplished, a subtle change takes place in those whites who have decided to stay on. It seems as though they too feel liberated from their compulsory superiority and do their best to be liked by the Africans and to be accepted on a purely human level.

An African dentist "with a string of British degrees" showed Dr. Franck around Freetown (Sierra Leone's capital), and then—

The doctor showed me his native home on Savage Square a hovel without water, light, or sanitation, where his parents, his brothers, his sisters, his aunts and uncles took up every inch of space and there was never any privacy. I looked at the man at my side in his London-made suit, his sensitive wide African face smiling, a man who was so sensible and intelligent that I felt closer to him than to many people from my own home town. This can happen in one generation! In one generation human beings with their miraculous plasticity can pull themselves up from squalor and indignity to culture and sophistication. But also in one generation they can fall from the pinnacle of culture to the ritual mass murders of Auschwitz and Bergen-Belsen.

A Sierra Leone barrister discussed with Dr. Franck the ritual cannibalism which is still practiced here and there in Africa, but is usually taboo in conversation. A salve made from parts of the human body is supposed to have magical qualities and not many years ago a "devout" Baptist couple instigated the murder of a child in order to obtain a potent charm to help their son "pass his doctorate in London University!" With the story of this incident as a text, the conversation proceeded:

"But why are you people so disproportionately horrified about our sporadic ritual murders?" the barrister asked me. "I don't defend them of course, they are throwbacks to an earlier cultural stage. Our leopard societies are dying out and we certainly help them to do so. But every time I meet a European or an American he gets as fast as he can to this tantalizing subject of ritual murder. We have not the monopoly, you know." He drank his Scotch slowly. "I'd like to remind you," he said, "that the ritual murder, this need for anointment with borfima oil, is an expression of helplessness and anxiety. Didn't your Nazis dress up in barbaric uniforms and methodically go on a ritual murder spree, which lasted for years, on a scale no African witch doctor ever dreamt of? And they were not black primitives, illiterate peasants in backward villages, who make their magic ointments from a few unfortunates. The Nazis were lily-white gentlemen, scientifically manufacturing soap from millions of victims. And,

didn't you Americans," the dispassionate voice continued, "drop a little bomb some time ago 'in order to save the lives' of your clan brothers? Didn't you sacrifice a pathetic couple because they had sold tribal secrets to the rival clan, who as it happened had known the atomic secret long before? Also, it is not so long ago that Europeans would steal parts of the clothing or the hair of an executed man as a charm. . . . Leave us to uproot the remains of our ritual murder and we'll leave it to you to uproot yours."

There is pain, agony, excitement, and many forms of intoxication in Dr. Franck's portrait of Africa. He writes as a dispassionate, uninvolved observer, yet his book is instinct with a sense of justice and a deep sympathy, not just for Africans, but for all men. Tremendous energies are stirring in Africa, where a new God, not the Christian one which, as Dr. Franck says, the Africans never really accepted—but the cruel God of Progress has won the devotion of African youth. The author concludes, however, by saying that "Africans have in common a sudden realization that they are men, and they long for human dignity. And with it comes the absolute resolve to share in the resources of their countries, and to share fairly. And a hope to better themselves."

As for Dr. Franck's drawings, we asked an artist friend to say how they affected him, and he gave us this paragraph: "His sensitive insight into African life is caught not only in language but in his delicate line and wash sketches. An artist's true insight into reality typifies the sketches. Here, instead of a labored portrait, the detailed drawing, are quick, nervous renderings of the African landscape, the people of Africa as seen through the eyes of an artist. In words and line Franck shows an all too rare (in these days) empathy for the tragedy and hope that is Africa."



## COMMENTARY

### SOME DROPPED STITCHES

A FEATURE in the *Progressive* for last February, which we ought to have called attention to before, is James Wechsler's story, "The Hero of Hiroshima," reprinted from his column in the *New York Post*. The "hero" in question—perhaps he ought to be called an "anti-hero"—is Claude Eatherly, the navigator who gave the "go-ahead" signal for the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. We had read about Mr. (Major) Eatherly before, and printed a little about him in *MANAS*. Beset by remorse, he was, it seemed, a broken man, given to fits of drunkenness and occasional burglaries. He had not, he said, slept well in fifteen years, so overwhelmed was he by his feelings of guilt. Mr. Wechsler adds considerable dignity to the portrait of Mr. Eatherly. He found in a new Canadian magazine, *Exchange*, a series of letters Eatherly had written to Gunther Anders, an Austrian philosopher, in which he gave certain reasons for the behavior which landed him in a mental hospital in the United States. Following is an extract from a letter by Eatherly written in 1959:

The truth is that society simply cannot accept the fact of my guilt without at the same time recognizing its own far deeper guilt. But it is, of course, highly desirable that society should recognize this, which is why my . . . story is of such vital importance. Now I accept the fact that I am unlikely to bring about that recognition by getting into scrapes with the law as I have been doing to shatter the "hero" image of me by which society has sought to perpetuate its own complacency.

According to Wechsler, the extracts from Eatherly's letters printed in *Exchange* are only fragments of his correspondence with Anders, who is writing a book, *Morals of the Atomic Age*. One hopes this book will contain a fuller representation of these letters.

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Pursuing the policy of its new editor, Robert Fuoss, to print "controversial" material, the

*Saturday Evening Post* last Feb. 10 ran a story, "Our Right Not to Believe," by Robert Bendiner. This writer starts out by reproving Richard Nixon who, during his campaign against John Kennedy, in what he apparently thought was a burst of tolerance and generosity, said that religion could be an issue in a political campaign only if "one of the candidates for the Presidency had *no* religious belief."

Mr. Bendiner defends the rights of freethinkers and agnostics under the Constitution by pointing out that the Supreme Court recently vindicated Roy R. Torcaso as qualified to be a notary public in the state of Maryland, despite the fact that he refused to sign "a declaration of belief in God." The high court found this requirement for public office in Maryland unconstitutional because it invaded "freedom of belief and religion." Many state laws, it is believed, were nullified by this decision. But there remains widely in force a form of the oath of office no unbeliever can conscientiously repeat. "Eleven states call for official oaths ending with the phrase 'So help me God,' and congressional statutes require the same words for Federal jobholders—*except for the President of the United States*. His oath of office is prescribed in Article II of the Constitution itself, and in it, significantly, there is no reference to a Supreme Being."

Mr. Bendiner makes this fact an occasion for reminding his readers of the rationalist temper of the Founding Fathers:

The prevailing spirit among them was that of deism. Forerunners of modern Unitarianism, the deists were selective concerning the Bible—insofar as they accepted it at all—and they believed a Supreme Being to be vaguely inherent in Nature but very different from the personal God of the Scriptures. They thought that in any case men had to determine for themselves a basis for rational morality, and they had little use for theology or the ceremonials of organized religion.

On the current tendency to demand religious conformity of political candidates and of office-

holders, Mr. Bendiner finds appropriate comment in Jefferson and Thomas Paine:

. . . to exact a hollow profession of belief, Jefferson said serves "only to beget habits of hypocrisy and meanness. . . ." And he has been proved right. Few political reporters would be at a loss to name men who, on entering public life, have suddenly felt the urge to appear in church for the first time since childhood. Paine understood the problem well, and his advice is as pertinent now as it ever was: ". . . it is necessary to the happiness of man that he be mentally faithful to himself. Infidelity does not consist in believing or disbelieving, it consists in professing to believe what he does not believe." That is where the dry rot begins. In short, it is not the avowed agnostic who threatens the health of a society, nor the devout believer. It is the religious communicant who does not mean what he says, who uses religion to maintain his status or advance his career; and who, having in reality little or no faith himself, demands it all the more loudly of others.

The Department in the *Post* which gave space to Mr. Bendiner's contribution is called "Speaking Out." Not being regular *Post* readers, we didn't check the letter columns for the response to this bit of editorial daring, but we hope that the *Post's* editor had a little encouragement.

# CHILDREN

## . . . and Ourselves

### NOTES

AT the request of a MANAS reader, the newly-formed "Arthur Morgan School" near Burnsville, N.C., has sent us a descriptive brochure. Arthur Morgan's educational philosophy—or perhaps we should say his insistence that educational philosophy be implemented by active cooperative effort—has permeated numerous small communities throughout the world, reaching as far as India. The Arthur Morgan School is an exceptional junior high, a subsidiary of Celo Health Education Corporation, of Burnsville, and is scheduled to open on Sept. 8, 1962. Although the first year's enrollment will be limited to twelve boarding and six day-school students, the aims of the school should be of general interest.

The founders of this grass-roots effort in education have felt that their objectives are best described by words used by Dr. Morgan in a prospectus for the Moraine Park School at Dayton, Ohio:

The aims should be, not first of all to impart knowledge, but to open the boys' eyes and minds; to arouse interest, aspiration and determination; to develop accuracy of observation and of judgment. We should aim at vital orderliness, not dead conformity; at self-reliance, self-discipline, self-control; providing enough routine to develop patience, power of adjustment, and habits of social team work. We should try to develop the habit of searching out what is the burden of the world's wisdom and judgment in reference to the main issues of life; a live knowledge of history, literature and biography; the habit of questioning and examining accepted beliefs, whether in the field of common knowledge, or in science, business, morals, or in other fields. A boy should be encouraged to work out for himself tentative working standards of economic, moral and spiritual values, of his attitude toward industry, social life, his use of time and resources, toward the live issues of the day, and toward life itself.

To which the Arthur Morgan School adds:

Implicit in these aims are two others which we at Celo should like to state explicitly: (1) to give each child a new experience of the old religious sense that life is one; and (2) that he (or she) and how he lives matters.

Teachers who are MANAS readers will, we are sure, feel a response akin to yearning as they consider the untrammelled opportunities of this "experiment." Here is the environment in which the small staff and initial student body will work:

Our physical setting is by choice a primitive one of impressive natural beauty. Located in the South Toe River Valley, between the Black Mountains and the Blue Ridge, almost surrounded by Government forests, we have an immense outdoor laboratory as well as an unspoiled wilderness for hiking and camping, and a clean mountain river for swimming. Living is simple and vigorous and close to nature.

Our plant, too, is primitive. Despite electricity, running water and telephone, our buildings are distinctly rural and will still be in development when school starts. We are mindful of Gandhi's admonition that a school should be built by the students, and should never be finished.

The staff of the School has evidently been influenced by some of the inspiring applications of Quaker philosophy, but there is no sectarian emphasis. There is also a strong Gandhian tone, and one is reminded of the new sort of educational center the Indian leader founded at Sevagram. Following is some of the thinking of the founders of the Arthur Morgan School:

We believe that education, at its best, is not preparation for life, but life itself. Consequently, we aim to develop our school life as a community with students sharing responsibility as well as work. We will not only have our daily chores to do, but will share management of our resources, see how close we can come to being self-supporting, plan our growth and development. We will also have occasions to participate in the life of the larger community.

This junior high period is one in which basic work habits are still being formed and youngsters are seriously questioning life's values. We are convinced that students in public schools spend far more time on academic work than is necessary for what they learn. With effective motivation and leadership the same ground can be covered in a fraction of the time, leaving

time both for recreation and for doing productive work which normal teenagers both desire and need. Our academic work will be related to and grow out of our real-life activities, and to the resources we find around us.

Further information on the school—or in respect to projected summer activities, including a work camp, a family camp, and a children's camp—may be obtained by addressing Arthur Morgan School, R.D. 5, Box 79, Burnsville, N.C.

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A reprint of an article by Gustav Albrecht, "A Survey of Teacher Opinion in California," which appeared in the December 1960 *Phi Delta Kappan*, presents evidence that many high school and junior college teachers are willing to go on record for needed improvements. Following is a summary of some of the findings of this survey:

The majority of high-school and junior college teachers believe that the number of education courses required for the credential should be reduced, that alternate routes to the credential through internship or experience should be established, that credentials should be in specific subject fields, that distinguished scholars with administrative experience should be allowed to hold administrative posts though lacking the administrative credential, and that attendance at teachers' institutes should be voluntary rather than compulsory.

Most high-school teachers favor a comprehensive examination on fundamentals in the senior year, believe that some college level courses should be offered for bright students in the high school, favor ability grouping of students in academic classes, find that extracurricular activities interfere somewhat or seriously with class work, and would be willing to do additional teaching if relieved of clerical work and other non-teaching duties which they estimate now consume 18 per cent of their time. Most high-school teachers have a voice in the selector of textbooks and believe the best books are being used. High-school teachers feel that about half of the pupils were adequately prepared in the lower grades in the three R's, while junior college teachers estimated only about a third to be adequately prepared.

Obviously, no one should generalize expansively on the "apathy" of the present-day

teacher. As reported by Mr. Albrecht, a majority of teachers favors a reduction of red tape, an enrichment of administrative potential and manifests a deepening concern for that awakening of the mind in students which is far more important than units, grades, or degrees.

## *FRONTIERS*

### American Disenchantment

Two extracts from a letter by John Steinbeck to Adlai Stevenson (Manchester *Guardian*, Jan. 28, 1960) provide a basis for criticism of the American ethos and cultus:

Mainly, Adlai, I am troubled by the cynical immorality of my country. I do not think it can survive on this basis, and unless some kind of catastrophe strikes us we are lost. . . .

A strange species we are. We can stand anything God and Nature can throw at us save only plenty. If I wanted to destroy a nation I would give it too much, and I would have it on its knees, miserable, greedy, sick.

Mr. Steinbeck clearly feels that a catastrophe may save character, whereas slow erosion is truly deadly, because unnoticed. The word "materialism" has been used in many different ways, but there is little doubt of the common psychological tendency among the *nouveau riche* to carelessly waste their newly acquired resources. And the United States has, of all countries in the world, the largest collection of *nouveau riche* attitudes and reactive forms of behavior. Aristocratic custodians of wealth may often have been of little account as persons, or they may have been tyrannical, but the aristocracy often possessed an inherited sense of discipline in the conservation of wealth and resources.

Last year, in his column, John Crosby quoted Edward Durell Stone, a noted architect (New York *Herald Tribune*, Sept. 12, 1961). Stone evaluates the kind of "materialism" which has blunted our perception of artistic as well as spiritual needs:

We need guardians of the physical destiny of this country. With the exception of Washington, our cities have been built expediently and without plans. Top-level guidance is necessary. Older countries have Ministers of Culture to guide their physical and artistic destinies. We urgently need a Cabinet official charged with the responsibility of educating and guiding us, just as the Secretary of Agriculture

provides guidance for the farmer in the preservation and cultivation of the land.

In the lower echelon, a counterpart should exist in each state capital, and in each principal city. We should think of our country as a beautiful heritage for future generations. Our buildings should be thought of not as temporary, expedient money-makers, but as permanent improvements. . . . It may well be that our current dissatisfaction and this yearning for quality in our environment are a herald of a cultural renaissance.

Perhaps the great Lincoln Center development in New York City, the National Cultural Center to be built in Washington, the attempts to bring trees and flowers to our asphalt jungles are all hopeful signs. It may be that we are beginning to realize that our cities, our buildings and our homes are our permanent cultural heritage, and that we will in time negate the accusation of standardization and materialism which has, with just cause, been leveled against us.

So much for self-imposed alienation at one level of aesthetics. There are other evidences of the lack of sensitivity. In a paper previously quoted in MANAS, the psychologists, Joelson and Perrucci, observe:

The large size and the high complexity of our society are factors which are, at least partially, responsible for alienation from knowledge. Another factor is our one-sided stress on the quantitative sciences. We hear more about the number, height, volume and weight of things than about their shape, color, odor and emotional impact. The accounts we receive, with the exception of fictional and poetic ones, are more likely to characterize a river, for example, by location, by length, by width, by depth, by strength of current, by number of bridges, or by commercial significance than by metaphors such as "*rauschender Freund*," (murmuring friend) which is the characterization in Schubert's song "*Die Schoene Muellern*." (Science is alienating only for the superficial reader of scientific digests, but not for the person with creative interest in science.)

Thus far my examples illustrated mainly the split between Man and *Umwelt*, i.e., between personal experience and the world of objects. But characteristics of our society are also responsible for the split between Man and *Mitwelt* as well as *Eigenwelt*, i.e., between Man and his fellow men as well as himself.

The wasting and despoiling of our natural resources, as Justice Douglas tirelessly points out, is both a cause and a result of disenchantment and alienation. A *New York Times* (Feb. 4) review of *Wilderness: America's living heritage* has this paragraph (by Wallace Stegner):

Something will have gone out of us as a people if we ever let the remaining wilderness be destroyed, if we permit the vast virgin forests to be turned into comic books and plastic cigarette cases; if we drive the few remaining members of the wild species into zoos or to extinction; if we pollute the last clear air and dirty the last clean streams and push our paved roads through the last of the silence, so that never again will Americans be free in their own country from the noise, the exhausts, the stinks of human and automotive waste. And so that never again can we have the chance to see ourselves single, separate, vertical and individual in the world, part of the environment of trees and rocks and soil, brother to other animals, part of the natural world and competent to belong in it. Without any remaining wilderness we are committed to a headlong drive into our technical termite-life, the Brave New World of a completely man-controlled environment. We need wilderness preserved—as much of it as is still left, and as many kinds—because it was the challenge against which our character as a people was formed. The reminder and the reassurance that it is still there is good for our spiritual health even if we never once in ten years set foot in it. It is good for us when we are young, because of the incomparable sanity it can bring briefly, as vacation and rest, into our insane lives. It is important to us when we are old simply because it is there—important, that is, simply as idea.

Mr. Stegner's closing sentence seems of special interest, since, as words are usually employed, "ideas" have here a greater importance than "ideals." Ideals often become sectarian and partisan—stylized images of an earlier inspiration—but *ideas* are crucial in the sense that they suggest exploration and future discovery. So many formulations of American "ideals" have become empty repetitions, while at the same time a genuine respect for freshly provocative *ideas* is notably lacking.

One can of course go behind the word "ideas" to a realization that the germinal essence of

constructive ideation is an "attitude." If this is so, there is only one antidote to the things that make for disenchantment in a culture—an attitude which reaches beyond national and cultural chauvinism. Macneile Dixon in his *Human Situation* expresses the thought with the aesthetic overtones it deserves:

Before we can attain to that final harmony between the universe and ourselves, to which we look forward as the consummation of existence, how much we have to learn about both! In respect of our true natures, of what in truth we are and are capable of becoming, to what heights in knowledge, wisdom, power, the soul can climb, of all this science and philosophy have so far hardly yet spoken. Nor can any boundary be set, any "Thus far and no farther" to the expansion of the mind.