

TO FILL THE VOID

IN Frederick Franck's *African Sketchbook* there is a chapter called "Lambaréné Revisited" in which the author (Dr. Franck installed the dental clinic at Lambaréné) tells of his conversations with Albert Schweitzer. Today, the *grand docteur* is eighty-six years old, but he still works hard and is now trying to bring his old hospital "up-to-date" and to enlarge its facilities. Dr. Franck's explanation of how the Lambaréné hospital has been overtaken by the technological advance of other institutions is both moving and interesting, but the account of one interchange in the talks between these two is difficult to put out of the mind:

He [Dr. Schweitzer] asked me with something at once hopeful and hopeless in his eyes, "Do you believe that the idea of Reverence for Life is gaining ground?" Reverence for Life. . . . I came from New York and had traveled all over exploding West Africa, across half a globe which seemed to be getting ready to destroy itself in a spasm of insane violence. Timidly I said, "I don't know. There has never been so much violence. And yet you sowed a seed. . . ."

Questions of this sort are in the hearts of many people, these days. It is so easy to see the signs of spreading disaster. A century ago it took a Heine or an Amiel to make dire predictions, or fifty years ago a Tolstoy; but now anyone—even one with little skill and less imagination—can become a convincing Jeremiah.

Two questions are really at issue. One is the large matter of "progress" and whether and how it is taking place. The other question is more immediate—whether it will be possible for the modern world to avoid the destruction of nuclear war. The question about progress is basically a philosophic or religious question, depending in part upon what we choose to take as the criterion for measuring it. If we skip the debate about the meaning of progress, going on to the processes by which it is obtained, we can probably say that two obvious factors are involved. First is the factor of

growth. Progress has little meaning except as an evolutionary concept. Even if we are doubtful about the degree of development achieved by human beings, we shall not deny that people normally strive for growth and want it. The other factor is made up of the historical and other environmental circumstances of human life. Great forward strides by human societies seem to be attended by special circumstances which, if they do not "cause" the development, at least contribute to it or help make it possible. For example, when Jayaprakash Narayan spoke recently of India's bloodless revolution, he said: "Only fourteen years ago, aided by forces of history, we liberated most of our country without taking arms against a foreign ruler." Those "forces of history" were complex, but it is safe to say that they included the concomitance of Gandhi's inspiration and leadership with the desperate situation of the British Empire in an exhausting war with Nazi Germany, the rising tide of nationalist emotion in India, and the fact that the Indian people had no arms, could not get them, being thereby obliged to conduct their struggle for freedom without them.

Probably a similar analysis could be made of what is commonly admitted to be the extraordinary "progress" achieved by the American people since winning their independence at the close of the eighteenth century. It is obvious, for example, that the conditions of colonial life contributed a temper of independence, self-reliance, and resourcefulness that armed the revolution with moral strength and got the new country off to a running start. How much of this development was authentic "growth" and how much a simple exploitation of environmental opportunity will have to remain unsettled, since resolution of such questions would require not only a full-dress metaphysical theory concerning

evolution, but also the capacity to subject the theory to elaborate tests.

In the present, however, the question of the progress of a single country is not at issue. In fact, that sort of question has become almost meaningless, for the reason that, ultimately, no country has any *unique* problems. The basic problem of every country is now the same: to avoid nuclear war. So it is not a *national* problem but a world or human problem. And it is rapidly becoming evident that it is not possible to equate a world problem with a national solution. This is of course the case for world government; or, to put it more accurately, the case for thinking about human welfare and progress in world instead of national terms.

Manifestly, for people generally to think in this way would *be* the progress we seek. Most of the practical obstacles to a world society, or to a collection of human communities which do not threaten one another with destruction, would soon dissolve and disappear if people formed the habit of thinking in this way. The rest would be a simple matter of technique—an area where the capacity of modern mankind remains wholly unquestioned.

So the question becomes: Why do people find it so difficult to think in terms of the *common* good?

Again, the question breaks into two. There is the internal question of why men do not have stronger feelings of brotherhood for one another—the issue of moral growth—and the external question of how the environment tends to limit the scope of human thinking about the good. If we had some scale of hypothetical growth with which to compare human behavior across the centuries, we could say something about the impulse to brotherhood and why it is not stronger. If modern man was persuaded, say, of the Gnostic doctrine of emanations and the Neoplatonic belief in the final Return to the One; and if, in addition to this, we had some idea of the length of this great cycle, then we might have a basis for

judgments about human progress and how we are doing. As it is, we have only the inward sense of moral ought to guide our opinions, and these can be quite misleading, especially when applied to other people. So we shall have to leave the first question unanswered and devote all our attention to the second.

Are there special circumstances which are now affecting the thought of men about their lives and about the hope of human good? The most decisive element of change in our present circumstances is the dying out of the moral dynamics of the modern nation-state. One may speak, as Kathleen Gough does, of "The Decline of the State and the Coming of World Society," in a current pamphlet of this title, but this seems a little premature. The State *is* declining, but before us today are only some of the symptoms of the decline, and not the actual disintegration. There can be little doubt, however, that the disintegration will come, and sooner, perhaps, than we think. What Miss Gough shows in her pamphlet is the *reductio ad absurdum* of the *logic* of the national state. When the logic goes, the moral support of the intelligent segment of the population soon follows, with the result that the structure of the state institution is maintained by nothing more than unthinking habit and the absence of a well-understood alternative.

The Decline of the State begins with historical background to suggest that the State has two major functions: (1) To organize control of work, and (2) to organize war. This seems about right. Neither function, she proposes, makes much sense, today. As to the control of work:

With the invention of cybernation and the discovery of nuclear power, the governments of the industrial states lose the intrinsic need to coerce people with respect to work. This is because, more and more, if we will let them, machines will do the work of men. In a pamphlet on Cybernation, Donald Michaels has recently described how automation and computers can already be used to do almost all of the tasks connected with making and rolling steel, coal mining, manufacturing engine blocks, and sorting and grading everything from oranges to bank checks.

It is true, there will probably always be *some* work. Machines must be built and organized and people trained to operate and control them. But it will not be work in the sense in which men have thought of it ever since the state arose. We all know already, moreover, that as automation advances more and more people have become "out of work" in the traditional sense. And we know that countless millions of others annually enter useless, unnecessary or positively harmful work only because society is still so organized that they may not claim food and shelter unless they do *something* to earn wages from the owning and ruling groups who still control the means of production. It seems clear that if the productive forces of industrial society were rationally organized and fully expanded, to serve real human wants, plenty would be available for all, while much less work would be done, and much less force, if indeed any force at all would need to be exerted to induce people to work. Indeed, for the first time since the rise of the state, we are entering a technological period when it should be possible for all men to work only for pleasure; for the joy of exploring the universe and serving their fellow creatures. (*The Decline of the State*, Correspondence Publishing Co., 7737 Mack Ave., Detroit, Mich. Single copies 25 cents.)

Here is certainly promised a change in the function of the coercive agencies of the state, but whether it will lead to a relaxation of controls, as Miss Gough hopes, is an open question. The compulsions to conformity grow with the measure of "rationalization" attained in industry, and one wonders if the high priests of cybernation (that is what Mr. Michaels makes them sound like—high priests) will feel that it is safe to turn people loose to the "joy of exploring the universe," when you consider that people in tune with the universe are often at odds with the social arrangements of man. But even a change in the role of the state is likely to produce fresh opportunities for freedom, for when changes come men are provoked to think about them. Meanwhile, the decline of meaning in the second function of the state—that of making war—seems quite sufficient to justify her argument:

The state has already lost any rational grounds for forcing people to make war. With atomic power, war can protect nobody, least of all the weak, the women and the children in whose names wars have

traditionally been fought. Not only can war win nothing for anybody; it threatens humanity with extinction. If anyone doubts this, Bertrand Russell's book, *Has Man a Future?* may persuade him.

Further, it seems that both in the West and in Russia we have reached a stage where in order to maintain themselves in power (*i.e.*, to maintain the state, with its structure of a small ruling class governing other men, and competing with other ruling classes) the governments must force men to do unnecessary work to make armaments to fight wars which will destroy everyone. This is the ultimate internal contradiction of the state once it has passed beyond the appropriate level of productivity and into the age of atomic power: the primary reason it has to go on existing is to force men to work to kill everybody. One of the first things that a student learns in the study of anthropology is that the "prime function of culture is to make life secure and enduring for the human species." When a culture has ceased to do this, it is in my view not only dead; it is rotting.

To this account of the "function of culture" we should like to add a further aspect, or to increase the scope of "secure and enduring." The one thing that every human being requires of the cultural aspect of his life is a sense of *meaning*. To provide this sense of meaning is surely the prime function of human institutions, and the state is doomed for its defiance of this rule. There is practically no room left at all for dreams of the good life in the present policies of the nation-state, and only people determined not to think about these questions can fail to realize that the circumstances Miss Gough and others have described have produced an almost total vacuum of meaning. This conclusion is what gives such implicit persuasiveness to the position of the British Committee of One Hundred, of which Miss Gough writes:

The British Committee of 100 has gone furthest in clearly and explicitly indicting the state. In February 1962 six members who had attempted to immobilize the Wethersfield NATO base were tried on a charge of "endangering the safety and security of the British state." The charge was just; their efforts have indeed the logical end of completely destroying the nation-state as an institution. But in their defense they were able to show effectively that retention of the nation-state in Britain, with its apparatus of modern

weapons, threatens the lives of all of the British people, and in addition makes them accomplices in genocide. "If I do not break the law (of the nation-state)," said Pat Pottle, "I am a criminal, for I am consenting to these plans of the government to murder millions of innocent people." After the trial a public rally was held in Trafalgar Square, at which Bertrand Russell, together with philosophers and scientists of other nations, indicted the British and American states for "endangering the safety and security of humanity." Since that date Russell has made clear in a public speech to the London dock workers that in this battle against the nation-state and its power of total annihilation, every man, woman, and child has a moral duty to act against the state in ways appropriate to his or her position in society. The duty of dock workers is to refuse to handle armaments cargoes; of philosophers, however aged, to write their convictions, preach to the people, and go to prison or suffer death for subversion.

While not many scholars and scientists have been as outspoken as Bertrand Russell and Linus Pauling, there is certainly no "united front" of such people behind the policies of the Western nation-states. Recently the *Saturday Evening Post*—hardly an organ of radical opinion—printed the devastating reply of eight distinguished American scientists to Dr. Edward Teller's contentions concerning the need for more nuclear testing. It is impossible that, in time, the vacuum of meaning behind the present policies of the great nations will not be widely felt. The paralysis and ambivalence already noticeable in articulate segments of the population will surely spread, bringing finally withdrawal of moral support from these policies of the state, and raising the terrible question of *identity* for millions of people. What is the institution that will mean life, hope, and future for them?

This, we submit, is a situation that is on the side of Dr. Schweitzer's hope "that the idea of Reverence for Life is gaining ground." It is a force of history which makes for decision. If allegiance to the projects and designs of the nation-state becomes a form of insanity, to what other allegiance can men of good will direct the energy of their hearts?

Why not to mankind? Why not to the life of all and the good of all?

This is of course extreme simplification. Institutions do not blow away in the night and the patterns of culture are not altered in a decade or two. It is nonetheless a fact that human beings cannot live in a moral vacuum. *Breaks* with the past do occur. Given high inspiration and a strong revulsion for customary ways of behavior, people do change their way of life. And there are many more signs of release from old conceptions of "reality" and "progress" than these few notes on alienation from the military project for "survival" can convey. Along with the "revolution of rising expectations" there is a wave of "rising sympathies" for other peoples in other lands. We have quoted before this passage by Czeslaw Milosz (which appeared in the *Listener* for Feb. 18, 1960), but its pertinence here seems to justify another repetition. He writes of the prospects for the future:

Will the sixties be really different from the apocalyptic years we left behind?

I promised to speak about resources which help some of us to live. First, comes a feeling of wonder at the extraordinary achievements of our contemporaries, accomplished in the midst of such chaos and cruelty that Gibbon's chronicles of Rome seem to us pale. By achievements I mean less science and theology than certain peculiar applications of them which enlarge our humanistic possibilities. There has never been such curiosity about the whole past of Man on the Earth, nor so many signs of exploring civilizations in their sinuous growth. We enter a sesame of our heritage, not limited to one continent. And this is accessible to the many, not only to some specialists. For instance, there has never been so great an interest in the art and music of the past. A price has to be paid, and recorded music or reproductions of paintings have their reverse side in cheap "mass culture." There is also a danger of syncretism. Yet a new dimension of history, understood as a whole, appears in all its interdependences. We deplore the dying out of local customs and local traditions, but perhaps the rootlessness of modern man is not so great, if through individual effort he can, so to say, return home and be in contact with all the people of various races and

religions who have suffered, thought, and created before him.

What Milosz writes here may be taken as a keynote of many similar expressions. The state and the gross objectives for which it stands have been slowly wasting away, in moral terms, for many more years than the decade during which these questions have been matters for public discussion. More profound feelings of allegiance have been developing throughout this period, and may now burst into life. In the nineteenth century, great and distinguished men worked as empire builders and shapers of national destiny. For at least a generation in this century, such men have been choosing other fields. They have been responding to the challenge of the social and psychological sciences and shaping a tradition of knowledge which reaches beyond the partisanship of the nation-state. This is an age, it may be, of both death and rebirth, and while the agony of the break-up of brittle forms may now impress us more than the signs of hope, the very rigidity of what is passing is itself reassuring evidence that it *will pass*. People everywhere do have a natural reverence for life. Men are not willingly against one another. And there are plainly forces of history at work to produce—or open the way for—channels of expression for these deep, strong, and good human feelings.

REVIEW

CAPITAL PUNISHMENT & NUCLEAR FISSION

OUR collection on capital punishment has grown impressively since reviewing of Playfair and Sington's *The Offenders* (March 2, 1958). In certain respects *The Offenders* is still the most useful work on this subject, while Arthur Koestler's *Reflections on Hanging* is especially valuable for those who wish to document arguments for the abolition of the death penalty. The wide circulation of two paper-backs, Koestler and Rolph's *Hanged by the Neck* and Leslie Hale's *Hanged in Error* (MANAS, Feb. 21 and March 7), points to the intensification of public interest and concern. It seems likely, however, that *Capital Punishment—A World View* by James A. Joyce (Nelson, 1961) will be of the greatest interest to MANAS readers. An international lawyer and sociologist who has worked with the United Nations, Mr. Joyce establishes an integral relationship between war-making and the execution of criminals as "last resort" policies.

The author's explanation of his intent is the best introduction to the book:

One of the purposes of this book is to attempt to show why and how the legalized taking of human life by the State, in the name of social defense, has nowadays become politics of the first importance and an issue of earthwide proportions.

This book, in short, rejects the tacit assumption, which has been characteristic of most writing in this field, that Capital Punishment is purely a social or "domestic" matter and has nothing to do with politics, in the broad sense, or with international relations. Indeed, the following chapters, limited in scope though they necessarily are, broaden out from the lonely figure of the Californian "red-light bandit," struggling against a receding hope on Death Row, to the far-distant horizons of the ever-expanding United Nations itself.

To some readers it might seem strange to set an apparently narrow penological question within the vast framework of a political organization like the United Nations. But such an approach is not so bizarre as it might have seemed a few years back. Nowadays, that specious label called "deterrence," which has always been attached to the death penalty

for individuals, has been accepted as the *raison d'être* for that threat of a planetary Buchenwald which our nuclear-minded politicians are assuring us is the most efficient method of safeguarding national security and preserving world peace.

In this context, the traditional theory and practice of judicial killing by the State—to make the rest of us feel safe—takes on a disturbingly new relevance. When the human race is facing imminent incineration by its own hand, as it is today, the only question which really matters is whether we can snatch a long enough reprieve from our self-appointed executioners to enable us to abolish the collective death penalty which reliance upon nuclear weapons has imposed upon every living creature on this planet.

Mr. Joyce points out that entrenched authority tends to rely, in the final analysis, upon threat of violence. This can lead to a reign of terror, as in the French Revolution, in Hitler's Reich or in Stalin's Russia—or it may simply express itself in terms of a neurotic patriotism which connects all national difficulties with the existence of a supposedly deadly enemy. The psychological connection of war preparation with the retention of the death penalty is attracting the attention of the United Nations for the following reasons:

Firstly, the U.N. is increasingly involved in the definition and protection of *human rights*; secondly, the prevention and treatment of crime, as such, have been a definite part of the U.N.'s social program from the start, and its Social Defense Section has already been responsible for promoting and coordinating some valuable penological reform measures; thirdly, the basic principles of the U.N. Charter are so obviously aimed at stopping men from killing other men that judicial murder, carried out by states against their own citizens, could not long be ignored in working out the legal implications of the U.N.'s basic philosophy. Running through the heated discussions on New York's East River—whatever may be the subject under debate—is the constant refrain: How can we replace the *lex talionis*, an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, by a higher law, so that the human race can survive at all?

How much longer will governments continue to send spokesmen to international conferences to argue that the death penalty (or *apartheid*, for that matter) is merely a matter of domestic concern? May not the

time be coming sooner than many people think when the best-laid schemes of the Big Three may well be circumvented by the concerted wisdom of the enlightened many, who have moved out in front at the U.N. along with history—and have time on their side?

Mr. Joyce's "world view" of capital punishment involves a history of legal murder from the time when the Roman emperor Claudius condemned 19,000 to death at one time, through Catholic and Protestant burnings at the stake, the Salem witchcraft days, up to the present. Under the heading, "The Cult of Terror," Mr. Joyce argues that there is no essential difference in human motivation between propagandizing readiness for atomic war, the piling of faggots around a stake, and the erection of a guillotine or gas chamber. Increasingly, however, the ranks of those who oppose violence and revenge count some of the world's most forceful and impressive minds, nor do such individuals hesitate to make their opinions known, even when the issues are as obscure as they were in the Chessman case. Mr. Joyce explains why so many well-known men came out strongly against Chessman's death:

Practically every writer of note in every country expressed himself forcibly, either in letters to various U.S. authorities or in the daily press or magazines of his own country, condemning the unseemly process of law which had brought Chessman ("who never killed anyone but himself") to his death. From the heart of Africa, a great humanitarian, Albert Schweitzer joined with Far Eastern statesmen and Indian philosophers and Western novelists, like Aldous Huxley and J. B. Priestley, together with a whole school of French writers and other Continentals, who took up the theme where Camus left off in his *Réflexions sur la Guillotine*. Leaders of all the major professions—law and medicine, education and acting—decried in a dozen languages this unhuman racking of one man who had brilliantly defied a ramshackle assortment of prosecutors and beaten his opponents by strictly *legal* means, one after another, until the final blow fell on him. Thus, the Chessman case presented the outside world with a full-length working model of what years of hate hysteria, press irresponsibility, and political jobbery had imposed on the American system.

The keynote of tomorrow's sane civilization was sounded by Albert Camus in his essay, *Neither Victims nor Executioners*, when he said: "People like myself want not a world in which murder no longer exists (we are not so crazy as that!) but rather one in which murder is not legitimate." Mr. Joyce's conclusion (Appendix B) contains both the challenge and the promise represented by all those who work for the abolition of either capital punishment or war, showing how the destinies of both are intertwined:

This "true problem" would not be, perhaps, so difficult to grasp and set in the world perspective today if we could recognize one simple fact. And it is this: whereas the present abolitionist campaign has necessarily to develop inside each nation-state, with its present commitments to defense and war on the international level, the *individual* citizen [can] take an absolutist personal stand, . . . even if most of the world today is not ready to accept his logic. Many have travelled the same path before him, and he must keep the path open for those who will come after him.

In the present book, therefore, we have had no difficulty in calling to the aid of the modern abolitionist the Socrates and the Tolstoys of earlier times. They were not held up by a failure of formal logic in their defense of the right to life. Nor were de Sellon and Victor Hugo. Neither recognized a dividing line separating war and peace; both wrote and preached and organized public education against the death penalty for men *and* for nations.

So it is today with the Jerome Franks, the Albert Schweitzers, the Lewis Mumfords, the Robert Junods, and the Mervyn Joneses. This growing cloud of witnesses of our own time have reacted to the crisis of conscience posed by Professor Graven by taking an unequivocal personal stand, inside their own national societies, against those doctrines and policies of organized violence, anywhere and everywhere, of which Capital Punishment is a symbolic but crucial part.

Rather than *accept* "a world bristling with arms where brother kills brother," Camus himself answered so distinctly "we should avoid bloodshed and misery, as far as possible, *so that we give a chance for survival to later generations better equipped than we are.*"

COMMENTARY
THE "DECISION-MAKERS"—AGAIN

LAST week's Review gave attention to the "Memo to the Peace Movement" by Anatol Rapoport and David Singer (*Nation*, March 24), the main point of which was that peace workers have an obligation to recognize the severe "constraints" under which national policy-makers and decision-makers operate. This is good counsel, but there is another side to the question. While a decent regard for the dilemmas of the decision-maker is no doubt in order, it remains a fact that the major undertaking of the peace-maker is to help create a society in which a narrow choice between evils is no longer accepted as inevitable for "those who see themselves responsible for the nation's security."

Marjorie Swann's letter to the U.S. Attorney in Nebraska (see *Frontiers*) illustrates this view of the role of the "decision-makers." "I would urge that both of you," she wrote to the Judge and the District Attorney, "seriously consider resigning your positions if you find yourselves to be in the untenable position of upholding laws which contribute to the murder of millions of fellow human beings."

Since Mrs. Swann was prepared to go to prison in order to lend strength to her conviction that missile bases are symbols and instruments of anti-human policies, she had the moral right to make this suggestion to two "decision-makers" whose official duties oblige them to prosecute and sentence her. She is saying what Albert Camus said in *Neither Victims nor Executioners*; she works for a world in which "murder is not legitimate," where fabrication of the instruments of mass slaughter is not taken for granted as a proper enterprise of either man or the government.

Some may say that it is not "practical" to invite public servants to resign their responsibilities. What if we got worse ones in their place? The answer to this is that when public

intentions become by imperceptible degrees so destructive that only bad or irresponsible men are willing to carry them out, there is some possibility that the intentions may be changed before it is too late.

So long as good men are willing to administer evil-tending policies, the great mass of faithful, law-abiding people can hardly be expected to object. The large project of a national government functions very largely through a circle of trust. Men honor the dignity of office and the tradition of law and no government can survive without this kind of moral support. But should the "dilemmas" of the decision-makers turn into a choice between betrayals—of either the law or of mankind—then an official may best serve the dignity of his office by leaving it. This, at any rate, is the possibility revealed by Marjorie Swann and other peacemakers.

CHILDREN

. . . and Ourselves

GENEALOGY OF THE "BEATS"

WE have just finished reading a book which stirs us to further discussion of the ideas, attitudes and behavior which have been loosely and sometimes confusingly attributed to the "beat generation." (For previous discussions in MANAS, see "Children" articles, Feb. 19–April 30, 1958.) Lawrence Lipton's *The Holy Barbarians* (Black Cat pocket edition) is to the best of our knowledge the most comprehensive treatment to date of the significant aspects of "beat" psychology and philosophy. And Mr. Lipton is unusually, if not uniquely, qualified to write such a book, since his own experiences with "disaffiliation" from conventional society began in the '20's and continues by way of fraternization with both the intellectuals and the hangers-on of the present beat world.

A review of Coleman's *The Adolescent Society* (in the January-February *Children*) helps to explain the tendency to "disaffiliation" among the young. The reviewer, Albert Reiss, Jr., says: "The analysis shows that when the adolescent social system fails to give an adolescent status and to allow him a positive self-evaluation, he often escapes from negative self-evaluation through submersion in the mass media." So, in the high school or in the first year of college, many late adolescents give up any embryonic efforts to establish individual identity.

But what of those who do not give up? Not only are they *not* interested in the mass media as a means of providing soporific entertainment and safe opinions, but they also become alienated from almost everything one hears or sees through these agencies of communication. It is this minority—an increasingly influential though small one—which deserves consideration. In a concluding chapter of his book, *The Vanishing Adolescent*, Edgar Friedenberg gives at least a partial justification for "beatness":

It must be granted that in many respects our conception of integrity is obsolete: we include in it some ways of feeling and acting that acquired their significance under social conditions that no longer exist. Individualism, which led to success in a society dominated by the economic necessities of industrialization and empire, is a poor model for the young today. Equally dysfunctional is the model of the artist or intellectual as critic and rebel. Not that criticism and rebellion have ceased to be socially useful—they are more useful than ever. But the traditional style presupposes the existence of more substantial targets than can be found in times when commitments, even to evil, are usually elusive. What does Don Quixote do when the windmills become atomic piles and go underground?

If the beats have alienated themselves from conventional attitudes and opinion, the organs of conventional opinion—newspapers and mass publications—have returned the compliment, adding some malice. We note, for example, that a series by Don Neff appearing in the *Los Angeles Times* on "The Beatniks in Venice, California," is editorially slanted by the heading, "Beatniks' Search Leads to Life of Squalor." While "squalor" may be accurate enough from the standpoint of middle class living conditions, the tag is intended to suggest that the unconventional road can lead only to a dead-end of misery and degradation. However, the third of the *Times* articles (April 16) gives the beats a fairly decent shake. An illustration occurs in Neff's account of the meaning of the word "shuck"—which appears so often in "the special argot of the beatnik":

Religion and politics, business and war are all shucks: hypocritical, false and unworthy of his interest. Unlike members of the Lost Generation of the 1920s, the beat claims he isn't protesting against society. He says he ignores society, has become disaffiliated and has gone into "domestic exile" as an "urban Thoreau."

"A lot of beats wouldn't pick up on the fact at first that we're in a spiritual revolution because the squares always have been in control of religion," said Chris, a 22-year-old beatnik who is working on contemplation via Eastern mysticism. He continued: "But today I think the beats are the real religionists. The beats practice what they preach—though they don't preach because preaching isn't necessary. Every

man must work out his identity himself. A really widespread beat scene will have to come some day. It's the end mankind has been striving for, to live in peace and share things and be honest."

We turn now to Mr. Lipton's *Holy Barbarians* for a list of what the beats have "shucked." Lipton writes:

To the beat generation advertising is the No. 1 shuck only because it is the most ubiquitous. There are others which are equally if not more important. There is almost universal agreement among them that militarism and war is the biggest shuck of all.

That the typical member of the beat generation does not regard himself as a citizen in the usual meaning of that term is clear from all by observations and interviews. He does not value his right to vote, although he would be opposed to any move to take it away from those who do. His attitude toward the ballot is simply that it is usually meaningless; it does not present such vital issues as war and peace to the voter nor give him any voice in—or control over—such important matters as wages, prices, rents, and only the most indirect and ineffective control over taxation. His choices at the polls are limited by such tricky devices as conventions, gerrymandering, legal restrictions on party representation on the ballot, to say nothing of boss rule, back room deals and big campaign contributions. Elections are rigged, he will tell you, and the whole political game is a shuck. All the vital decisions, he will tell you, are beyond the control of the electorate, so why go to the polls? The decision makers and the taste makers are non-elective and non-appointive. They elect themselves and their ballot is the dollar.

The voter has no control over the uses to which atomic energy is being put by the businessman and the politician. Cold wars are launched without declaration and are well under way in the Pentagon and the State Department before he is told that they are even contemplated. The war machine is fed billions without any by-your-leave on the ballot. He is presented with a choice between a general with a folksy grin and a governor with an egghead vocabulary. Voting becomes a mass ritual, but an empty one without any art or healing in it.

The voter, the beat generation will tell you, does not have any control even over the air he breathes. What's good for General Motors is proving to be poisonous for the American air. And what's good for the defense industries, and is conned up to look good

in the employment statistics, is proving poisonous to the atmosphere of the whole globe. "Have you had your Strontium 90 today"? is a greeting you will hear any morning among the beat.

These paragraphs are of particular interest to those who identify, at least in some measure, with protest peace movements. As Lipton demonstrates by referring to psychological studies undertaken by the military, young draftees often discover in combat or even in training that they are "conscientious objectors" to war. Many of the beats, according to Lipton, have simply gotten to the same place sooner:

The disaffiliated of the younger generation are those who are conscious of their objections long before they are confronted with "Kill or be killed." They have analyzed their own feelings searchingly and know perfectly well what is stopping their hand. If they do not always make conscientious objector it is not from lack of awareness. There is no party line in this matter. "Pacifism is not something you talk about, it is not a matter of 'principle,'" they will tell you. "You don't know what you will do about killing or being killed till you are confronted with it. Pacifism isn't something you believe in or don't believe in. It is something you *do* or *don't* do. It is an *act*, not a statement."

But all the young men I have spoken with are doubtful that they could bring themselves to fire a gun if the enemy were in view.

Not all the beats choose creditable detours from the hypocrisy of modern society and not all of them identify with pacifism. But the general trend is certainly toward Gandhian nonviolence, with a respect for the religious pacifists that is in no way accorded to other devotees of religion.

Now and then you see comment to the effect that the beats are disappearing—being swallowed up in other divisions of society or, in time, rejoining the squares. But the attitudes assigned to "beatness" are not disappearing, nor are the causes which lie behind. Perhaps our readers will have some comment to offer on this point.

FRONTIERS Unclassified

SIXTEEN years ago, writing the first part of *The Root Is Man* in his magazine, *Politics*, Dwight Macdonald called for a "new political vocabulary." In a couple of pages of analysis (*Politics*, April, 1946), he showed how meaningless the designations, "Right," "Left," and "Radical," had become, when used as labels for familiar political allegiances. Today, the need for new ways of describing the leadership in the struggle against war and injustice has become far more evident. We were driven to this conclusion while trying to think of a heading to put on this week's contents for *Frontiers*, which will give some quotations from the May 3 *CNVA Bulletin*, and some material from the May *Independent*. Perhaps "radical" is the best word, after all, if we are not unwilling to use it according to the definition given it by Karl Marx in 1844: "To be radical is to grasp the matter by its root. Now the root for mankind is man himself."

At any rate, the question is open for consideration. We print below a letter recently (April 11) written by Marjorie Swann to the Federal District Attorney in Omaha:

Mr. Franklin D. Carroll, Assistant US Attorney
United States Court House, Omaha 2, Nebraska

Dear Mr. Carroll:

Please accept my apology for not having replied earlier to your letter of March 16. I was out of town throughout March and until last weekend and am just catching up with my correspondence. You wrote me about the fine and court costs of \$527.90 still outstanding on my conviction for trespassing on the Intercontinental Ballistic Missile base at Mead, Neb., in August of 1959.

I believe I made it extremely clear when I was tried in Omaha and during my imprisonment at Alderson Federal Prison in West Virginia that I could not conscientiously pay the fine of \$500 which was levied against me for the court costs. If anything, I feel even more certain of this now. . . .

I assume this leaves one course open to you, and that is to re-imprison me to serve out the fine. I am ready to accept this consequence, as I was ready to accept the six-month prison sentence, or even twelve months if Judge Robinson had seen fit to convict me for entering the missile base twice. I should appreciate your letter letting me know in advance, if possible, when the US Marshal will be coming to take me into custody, since I need to make arrangements for the care of my family.

You realize, I am sure, that I bear no personal animosity toward you or Judge Robinson. Judge Robinson understands very clearly, I believe, the gravity of the world situation and the necessity for personal responsibility and action to prevent a nuclear holocaust. I would urge that both of you seriously consider resigning your positions if you find yourselves to be in the untenable position of upholding laws which contribute to the murder of millions of fellow human beings. And please let me assure you that in no way do I consider myself to be morally pure or perfect. It is only that each one of us must attempt to live according to the highest light within him.

Very sincerely, Marjorie Swann

The second item from the *CNVA Bulletin* is the letter of Hal Stallings applying for the job of crew member of the trimaran, *Everyman*, which was to have sailed across the Pacific Ocean to the Christmas Island nuclear testing zone, but was stopped by the Coast Guard on May 26. As the *May Bulletin* explains:

The purpose of *Everyman's* voyage will be to "place a man under the bomb" to express in human terms the real meaning of bomb testing. It is hoped that this action will pose to the United States government two questions:

Are you willing to destroy us in carrying out these tests?

If you are not willing to kill us, how can you be willing to destroy hundreds of thousands of others by continuing the bomb tests?

The letter of Hal Stallings, who was accepted and chosen as skipper of the protest craft, follows:

I want to volunteer as one of the crew members for the voyage to Christmas Island. I am sure that you can find many people better qualified both as

peaceful human beings and as seamen, but I want you to know that I am willing and committed to going if it should be the right course.

You will want to know something of my reasons as I understand them.

One night while my five-year-old son was suffering from an acute attack of asthma it struck me that if there was a father anywhere in the world who could do anything that might help or protect my child no matter the cost to that man, I would *expect* it of him. I would not feel that he had done anything special. The fraternity of fathers brings its own unique responsibilities.

Now it is my turn. I see danger impending. The fathers who cannot protect themselves or their children are waiting for my response. They have a right to expect more than pious sorrow from me. They have the right to expect my life. Grand words. I'm praying for the courage to make them a reality.

Just recently I have come in contact with a man to whom I feel a special responsibility. I saw his wife and two small children in a film Barbara Reynolds brought from Hiroshima. He was a policeman who went into Hiroshima after our bomb to help the hurt. Because he helped those in need, he died this Spring from the effects of radiation. Each night his wife must put his children to bed alone. All my tears are useless. I feel him waiting—my brother—for my answer as my nation prepares to kill again. I must not fail him.

I am neither sensitive enough nor bright enough to conceive of a program which will open up a new way for us all. I am convinced that it will come because men act with their highest aspirations leading them—finite, selfish, weak men like myself.

"What a man can do, a man must do." If we decide that this is what I can do, then results, programs and all manner of things which I cannot even foresee must follow in their due course. All I can be sure of is that I have had inklings of a "Spirit which delights to do no evil." I would like to follow it, however haltingly, wherever it goes.

HAL STALLINGS

Lyle Stuart's *Independent*, one of the more dramatic examples of the new wave of independent publishing in the United States, in its May issue takes up the cause of persons who have suffered political persecution. Mr. Stuart reprints

portions of the recent Penguin volume, *Persecution, 1961* presenting four of the nine cases this book contains. The four, which were selected for "ideological balance," are Antonio Agostinho Neto, victim of the Portuguese administrators of Angola; Patrick Duncan, resister of South African *apartheid*; Olga Ivinskaya, friend and literary collaborator of Boris Pasternak, imprisoned by the Soviets; and Constantin Noica, Rumanian philosopher, secretly sentenced to twenty-five years imprisonment by the Rumania government for expressing his opinions on education.

Persecution, 1961 is by Peter Benenson. For an account of the work of this man, we quote from Lyle Stuart's editorial in the May *Independent*:

Let me tell you something about Amnesty. It is an international organization. Its aim is to secure the release of political prisoners throughout the world. One of its weapons is a library containing facts about all known political prisoners. I'm sorry to say that they are believed to number nearly a million.

Amnesty was founded by Peter Benenson, a British lawyer active in the Labor party in England. Here is its purpose, told in its own words:

"The Amnesty movement is composed of peoples of all nationalities, politics, religions and social views who are determined to work together in defense of freedom of the mind.

"The spread of dictatorship, the tensions that have resulted from the Cold War, and the increasing cleavage between races of different color, have combined to make state persecution of the individual the gravest social problem of the 1960's.

"The principal object of Amnesty is to mobilize public opinion in defense of those men and women who are imprisoned because their ideas are unacceptable to their governments. It has been formed so that there should be some central, international organization capable of concentrating efforts to secure the release of these 'Prisoners of Conscience.' Essentially an impartial organization as regards religion and politics, it aims at uniting groups in different countries working towards the same end—the freedom and dignity of the human mind."

In its literature, Amnesty suggests five ways you can help. At the moment, the most urgent need is for funds. Anyone over the age of fourteen may join Amnesty by paying dues of \$3 a year. . . . All letters and contributions should be sent direct to Amnesty, 1, Mitre Court Buildings, Temple, London, E.C. 4, England.

That the *Independent* should take up the cause of Amnesty, giving it the deserved publicity of reprinting four cases from Mr. Benenson's book—and enlarging its (the *Independent's*) size from eight to twelve pages in order to make room for this material—is a notably encouraging sign of the times. The politically persecuted are seldom heard about except from partisans, but in this case neither Mr. Benenson nor Mr. Stuart can be called partisans of anything but the right to think and to give expression to one's thoughts. Increasingly, this is a bedrock issue of modern life. When you read the extracts from Benenson's book in the *Independent*, and realize that these crimes against the mind would not occur in a world which was sensitively aware that such things are happening, you become increasingly indignant at the smooth apologetics for the commercial press, whose space is so taken up with advertising and with editorial "features" geared to the joys of material prosperity that there is no room left for publicizing to the ends of the earth the story of these injustices. The ads may be innocuous enough, or simply meaningless: *it is the loss of what they displace that constitutes the crime of commercial publishing.*

In the same issue of the *Independent* Lyle Stuart tells the story of Milovan Djilas, the Yugoslavian writer, one-time comrade of Tito, who went to trial last month to answer for his latest book, *Conversations with Stalin*. If convicted, Djilas may be sentenced to ten years in prison, and have to serve the remaining five years of an earlier sentence as yet incomplete.

Djilas' first encounter with the political orthodoxy of his country came seven years ago when he told an American newspaperman that he wanted "democratic socialism." He was tried and

given a suspended sentence for spreading "hostile propaganda." Later, when he was again quoted by an American writer as saying that "The revolution in Hungary means the beginning of the end for Communism," he was jailed for three years. When, after another year, his book, *The New Class*, appeared in the United States, he was given seven more years to serve. Djilas was paroled in 1961, but now that his *Conversations with Stalin* has been found offensive, he may lose his parole along with facing the new penalty. Djilas, who is fifty-one years old, enjoys a curious sort of "freedom of the press." His statements and books get good circulation in America while he serves time in Yugoslavia for expressing his opinions. Implicit in the *Independent's* editorial presentation of the Djilas case is the idea that Americans have an obvious responsibility to this man!

An *Independent* subscription is \$3 for twelve issues. Single copies by mail are twenty-five cents—five copies of one issue, a dollar. The address is 225 Lafayette Street, New York 12, N.Y. The *CNVA Bulletin* is sent free upon request. Naturally, contributions are welcome, either to support the *Bulletin* or to further the work of CNVA (Committee for Nonviolent Action). Address: 158 Grand Street, New York 13, N.Y. Both the *Independent* and the *CNVA Bulletin*, while quite different in many ways, illustrate the irrelevance of old political labels. Both papers resist any sort of familiar classification.