

## THE PRIVATE ORIGINS OF THE GOOD

THE "public events" of recent history have given ample justification for a gloomy view of the future, especially if you have the habit of reading news that is written in a framework of ideological assumptions—and what news is not? The idea that political conflict determines the course of the world is, after all, the dominant idea of the century. This is evident from the fact that great nations have already shown that they will do practically anything to gain or maintain positions of political power.

So, you could say that even if this elevation of politics to the level of controlling the supreme values of human life has been a terrible mistake, we still have to cope with the consequences of that mistake, and we have to do it in political terms. People do say this, and compel themselves to think in the categories of *realpolitik*, even though they may long to fill their minds with other themes. Something of this feeling appears in a poem by Bertolt Brecht, who felt obliged to address the men of a more ideal future:

Ah, what an age it is  
When to speak of trees is almost a crime  
For it is a kind of silence about injustice!  
And he who walks calmly across the street,  
Is he not out of reach of his friends  
In trouble?

. . .

You, who shall emerge from the flood  
In which we are sinking,  
Think—when you speak of our weaknesses,  
Also of the dark time  
That brought them forth

. . .

For we knew only too well:  
Even the hatred of squalor  
Makes the brow grow stern.  
Even anger against injustice  
Makes the voice grow harsh. Alas, we  
Who wished to lay the foundations of kindness

Could not ourselves be kind.

But you, when at last it comes to pass  
That man can help his fellow man,  
Do not judge us  
Too harshly.

Here speaks a poet who was dragooned by his moral emotions into support of the Communist revolution. For Brecht, the political issues had to replace the existential questions. "We," he said to posterity, "distort ourselves for you"—

A guileless word is an absurdity.  
A smooth forehead betokens  
A hard heart.  
He who laughs  
Has not yet heard  
The terrible tidings.

Brecht was a German poet. A generation later, a Polish poet, Czeslaw Milosz, explained the compulsion which made him *leave* the service of the Communist revolution:

The actual moment of my decision to break with the Eastern bloc could be understood, from the psychological point of view, in more ways than one. From outside, it is easy to think of such a decision as an elementary consequence of one's hatred of tyranny. But in fact, it may spring from a number of motives, not all of them equally high-minded, but from a revolt of the stomach. A man may persuade himself, by the most logical reasoning, that he will greatly benefit his health by swallowing live frogs; and, thus rationally convinced, he may swallow a first frog, then the second; but at the third his stomach will revolt. In the same way, the growing influence of the doctrine on my way of thinking came up against the resistance of my whole nature.

Brecht resisted what might be termed his existential longings, while Milosz could not. Milosz, of course, was a different man, but he also came to maturity in a different age and possibly suffered more acute disenchantments with politics.

Few, of course, are likely to turn their backs on politics, but there can be little doubt that the

confidence of men in political solutions for their problems is slowly diminishing. Some kind of watershed of advanced opinion in regard to politics was reached during World War II, in the expressions of Dwight Macdonald, in his magazine, *Politics*, especially in his essay, "The Root Is Man" (later published in book form under the same title by the Cunningham Press, Alhambra, Calif.). In the section entitled, "We Need a New Political Vocabulary," Macdonald proposes that a clear distinction be made between Ideologists of the Left, whom he calls "Progressives," and Radicals. The Radicals, according to this analysis, are those who "judge things by their present meaning and effect, who think the ability of science to guide us in human affairs has been overrated and who therefore redress the balance by emphasizing the ethical aspect of politics." Macdonald continues:

The Progressive makes History the center of his ideology. The Radical puts Man there. The Progressive's attitude is optimistic both about human nature (which he thinks is basically good, hence all that is needed is to change institutions so as to give this goodness a chance to work) and about the possibility of understanding history through scientific method. The Radical is, if not exactly pessimistic, at least more sensitive to the dual nature of man; he sees evil as well as good at the base of human nature; he is sceptical about the ability of science to explain things beyond a certain point; he is aware of the tragic element in man's fate not only today but in any conceivable kind of society. The Progressive thinks in collective terms (the interests of Society or the Workingclass), the Radical stresses the individual conscience and sensibility. The Progressive starts off from what actually is happening; the Radical starts off from what he wants to happen. The former must have the feeling that History is "on his side." The latter goes along the road pointed out by his own individual conscience; if History is going his way, too, he is pleased; but he is quite stubborn about following "what ought to be" rather than "what is."

Macdonald is a mature intellectual who writes in political terms, giving an articulate account of what is in fact a basic change in the idea of "reality." He is saying that the decisions of the individual ought to stem from inner convictions

about right and wrong and the nature of things, rather than from political considerations. And he is implying that a sound politics can be built upon no other foundation.

The proposition to be defended here is that Macdonald anticipated a kind of thinking that is to become widespread among the present generation. This thinking, which is a quest for new connections with life, a search for roots which lie deeper than political doctrine, is going on beneath the surface of the discouraging public events of the time, but is finding so much expression as to be considerably more than "private" in character. It emerges in the popularity of Existentialist literature and drama, in the swelling demand for "individuality," and in the discoveries of modern depth psychology. Macdonald gives a rationalist's account of the rejection of ideological politics, but Milosz' "revolt of the stomach" probably comes closer to explaining the response of many others to the compulsions of power politics.

The public events of today—the alarms and "incidents," the displays of military strength, the muscle-flexing of nuclear test explosions, the prancing across the skies of satellites in the astronautical hot-rod competition of the nations—these are not images of the effective, serious thinking of the time, but shadows from the past. That they are deadly dangerous shadows does not change the fact that practically no one, any more, believes in his heart that these goings-on can do any good. Today, the creative energies of human beings are aimed in quite other directions. In large measure, the obsession of governments and the leaders of governments with such events has caused a splitting-off of the best men among us from any kind of close association with official enterprises in behalf of political power. The artists, the writers, the psychotherapists, increasingly the sociologists, all belong to another camp. It is as though, in the very hour when our leaders are proclaiming the need to save our civilization from the horrors of political disaster, the creative individuals, the men with living

thoughts in their heads, are busily developing the foundations of another civilization—one with quite different definitions of reality.

Behind this trend is a deep need to feel a touch with the meaning of life which does not depend upon the political manipulators of historical events. It is of a piece with the declaration of Jefferson: "If I could not go to heaven but with a party, I would not go there at all." Because the problems of the age seem to be political, many musing inquirers are going to the anarchists for instruction, since the anarchists are by far the purest and most extreme of the political thinkers, but this investigation of anarchism is probably only a way station in the quest. What do we think of man, that the anarchist view becomes important?

Plainly, the man so contemplated is a being whose nature is rooted in non-historical or timeless values—the values of truth, justice, love, and integrity. The insistent recovery or return of these values tells us something about our immediate past. It tells us that the effect of nineteenth-century science and theories of man's nature accomplished a serious, a well-nigh mortal, alienation of man from his intuitive sense of self. Out of nineteenth-century science came the doctrine that the human being is totally a creature of his heredity and his environment—mostly of his environment, agreeable to dominant social theories—with the result that change for the better was held to be simply a matter of changing the environment. The individual: *he* does not make the environment; therefore, individuals count for nothing in social reform; only man-in-the-mass need be considered. This idea became a political doctrine for the Communists, who justified their ruthless policies toward individuals and deviating groups with the promise of the "perfect environment" they had set out to create. In the West, the same doctrine was made to apply, but in a different way. The mass-production economy of Western capitalism geared its distribution scheme to the stimulation of a mass-man response to

merchandising and sales promotion. To keep the wheels of the machines turning—to avoid market saturation and over-production—new desires for goods had to be continually generated in millions upon millions of "consumers." Instead of a political compulsion, as under Communism, there developed an economic compulsion to make over the individual into a stereotyped consumer who would respond to the provocations and blandishments of advertising—the Salvation Nell of the Capitalist World.

Not for years, now, have serious men concerned with human betterment interested themselves in the promise of the Historical Process, nor with remaking man by an enforced change in his institutions. It is obvious enough that better men will have better institutions, but it is pretty well recognized that the only institutions which are good for man are those which he creates for himself, on a voluntaristic basis. For example, when Erich Fromm, in *The Sane Society*, looks around for the dynamics of social change, he does not recall either the French Revolution or the Communist Revolution, but turns to the French Communities of Work (see Claire Hutchet Bishop's *All Things Common*) as an example of the kind of movement toward change that he would like to see widespread. What is the most important thing we can say about the Communities of Work? Possibly, it is that these communities are designed for as free a play as possible of the existential values experienced and sought by human beings—truth, justice, love, freedom, and integrity. Individuals can *volunteer* for life in such a community, and the nature of the enterprise absolutely prohibits any other kind of association with it.

In a recent book, Dr. Harold Searles, a practicing psychiatrist, declares:

It is my conviction that there is within the human individual a sense of *relatedness to his total environment*, that this relatedness is one of the transcendently important facts of human living, and that if he tries to ignore its importance to himself, he does so at peril to his psychological wellbeing. . . . By

"relatedness" I mean a sense of intimate kinship, a psychological commitment to the structural relationship which exists between man and the various ingredients of his nonhuman environment.

Here, again, is no appeal to the historical process, but a searching of what amounts to the philosophic orientation of modern man. How does he feel about the universe around him? This is an existential question. The vocabulary of Dr. Searles' question belongs to his scientific specialty, but the content is ontological. It concerns the nature of *being*. The clear implication of this passage is that psychological health in some measure depends upon the *feelings* people have about the rest of the world, and these feelings are the working aspect of philosophy.

A. H. Maslow's recent book, *Toward a Psychology of Being* (Insight, \$1.95), is an extraordinary coverage of the various discoveries which are accumulating among the self-psychologists. At long last, the entire region of subjective experience is acknowledged to be a fit area for scientific investigation, and this constitutes an open return to the study of existential man—what he is, in himself. An indication of Dr. Maslow's viewpoint is the title of his last chapter—"Health as Transcendence of Environment." This is the author's way of saying that man must be defined in terms of himself, not by some outside criterion. Nor is there any value in defining Man by taking statistical averages of *all* human behavior, which would blur the meaning of individuality—the primary human characteristic. Dr. Maslow gets at this point more intimately in an interesting way:

Chickens allowed to choose their own diet vary widely in their ability to choose what is good for them. The good choosers become stronger, larger, more dominant than the poor choosers, which means that they get the best of everything. If then the diet chosen by the good choosers is forced upon the poor choosers, it is found that *they* now get stronger bigger, healthier, more dominant, although never reaching the level of the good choosers. That is, good choosers can choose better than bad choosers what is better for the bad choosers themselves. If similar

experimental findings are made in human beings, as I think they will be (supporting clinical data are available aplenty), we are in for a good deal of reconstruction of all sorts of theories. So far as human value theory is concerned, no theory will be adequate that rests simply on the statistical description of the choices of unselected human beings. To average the choices of good and bad choosers, of healthy and sick people is useless. Only the choices and tastes and judgments of healthy human beings will tell us much about what is good for the human species in the long run. The choices of neurotic people can tell us mostly what is good for keeping a neurosis stabilized, just as the choices of a brain-injured man are good for preventing a catastrophic breakdown, or as the choices of an adrenalectomized animal may keep *him* from dying but would kill a healthy animal.

I think that this is the main reef on which most hedonistic value theories and ethical theories have foundered. Pathologically motivated pleasures cannot be averaged with healthily motivated pleasures.

If it be wondered whether Dr. Maslow would countenance taking the results of a statistical study of "healthy" people, and attempting to *make* other people be like them in all ways, his book gives a fast answer to this question. In the first place, the "healthy" people, according to the criteria he establishes, would be the last to coerce others; and also, the qualities of this kind of health cannot be produced by any sort of compulsion. "Health is transcendence of environment," not a successful "conditioning." As Dr. Maslow says elsewhere:

An extra-psychic centering point cannot be used for the theoretical task of defining the healthy psyche. We must not fall into the trap of defining the good organism in terms of what he is "good for," as if he were an instrument rather than something in himself, as if he were only a means to some extrinsic purpose. (As I understand Marxist psychology, it also is a very blunt and unmistakable expression of the view that the psyche is a mirror to reality.)

If the political movements of the nineteenth century were founded on vulgarized nineteenth-century science—over-simplified mechanism in psychology—and if both communists and capitalists have been playing upon man's reflexes

ever since, the communists to control the social order, the capitalists to sell more goods, then we may expect the politics and practical psychology of the future to take its cues from the science of today. And the science of the day is *very different* from the science of the nineteenth century! Moreover, the shaping spirit is more than science—it is the rising temper of a new cultural outlook.

The change is not just a new "frame of reference." It was possible to believe, in the nineteenth century, that human beings could be coerced and manipulated for their own good. The testimony of the twentieth century is exactly the reverse. There are profound philosophical preachments in contemporary psychological and sociological science. There are endless revolutions in the new temper in literature, endless in the sense that the age of popular collectivism is really over—nobody believes in the dogmas of collectivism any more. So, while the "public events" of the contemporary scene may fill us with dismay, the semi-public or semi-private developments in the serious thought of the age are rich in the dynamics of a new life for human beings.

The problem, of course, lies in the change-over from the old ways to the new. How long will it take? Have we the time to wait? Further, the old coercive or manipulative methods of making people behave as we think they should had at least the apparent virtue of being able to affect large numbers of people. If they wouldn't do right, you could *make* them, or try. You could call out the Marines. And there are those who get a vast satisfaction out of ordering other people around for their own good.

The important question is not, how long will it take, but how can each individual who participates in this revolution help to spread the realization that the old methods of coercion and manipulation will never work again—that they only seemed to work in the past, and brought the so-called "advanced" peoples to their present state

of anxiety and desperation—and will not work, especially, now, because of the germs of psychological maturity which are coming into fruition in people all over-the world.

Men have said with great confidence that we can not turn the clock back, that modern progress is here to stay. It is equally true that men cannot abandon their psychological awakenings, nor the extended vision which these awakenings give their ethical perceptions. The time is coming—it is perhaps not so far off—when the good of man will be spoken of, not in either communist or capitalist terms—the terms which apply only to man's relation to his possessions—but in essentially human terms, unmediated by any political ideology, independent of the opinions of people who think they are competent to manage the lives of other men.

## *REVIEW*

### "THE MOVIEGOER"

WALKER PERCY'S gentle novel of this title is likely to interest at least some MANAS readers. Winner of the 1962 National Book Award for Fiction, *The Moviegoer* is now a Popular Library paperback. This is a book whose characters—for a welcome change—bear the cross of life without deep-felt agony. While it is true that, as Popular Library says, Mr. Percy does not write in an "exciting" manner, nor does what he writes "shock" or "surprise," the reviews of this book we have seen were vaguely annoying because none of the clichés convey its quality. How should we do any better? By letting Mr. Percy speak for himself, to show that his is an irony without bitterness, that the "quest for identity" of his central character is that of a man in no hurry.

In the first few pages, the "hero," Binx Bolling, is revealed as a movie-goer of long standing. He is apt to liken most human experiences to scenes or plots that have been unfolded for him on celluloid. On the particular morning when the story opens, Bolling sees William Holden walking down the street after shooting some scenes in New Orleans. Bolling follows at a respectful distance, as do others, and Bolling thinks he knows why he, as well as the autograph hunters, are fascinated by the actor. It is because Holden seems so *real*. Not only is Holden an excellent actor, he is also an image-maker. He creates illusions gladly received by millions, and the millions, of course, imitate William Holden, except that they are not themselves image-makers. Holden, therefore, seems a far more "real" part of our culture than they. In this obscure suggestion Percy is saying that ours is a civilization where such psychological phenomena are to be expected, but he is not criticizing anyone; he *likes* William Holden.

Binx Bolling is a movie-goer because his actual life is not particularly attractive. Yet he resists a complete loss of his own identity when he

is absorbed by the screen. He tries to make some personal connection with a movie or a movie house:

Before I see a movie it is necessary for me to learn something about the theater or the people who operate it, to touch base before going inside. That is the way I got to know Mr. Kinsella: engaging him in conversation about the theater business. I have discovered that most people have no one to talk to, no one, that is, who really wants to listen. When it does at last dawn on a man that you really want to hear about his business, the look that comes over his face is something to see. Do not misunderstand me. I am no do-gooding José Ferrer going around with a little whistle to make people happy. Such do-gooders do not really want to listen, are not really selfish like me; they are being nice fellows and boring themselves to death, and their listeners are not really cheered up. Show me a nice Jose cheering up an old lady and I'll show you two people existing in despair. My mother often told me to be unselfish, but I have become suspicious of the advice. No, I do it for my own selfish reasons. If I did not talk to the theater owner or the ticket seller, I should be lost, cut loose metaphysically speaking. I should be seeing one copy of a film which might be shown anywhere and at any time. There is a danger of slipping clean out of space and time. It is possible to become a ghost and not know whether one is in downtown Loews in Denver or suburban Bijou in Jacksonville. So it was with me.

Yet it was here in the Tivoli that I first discovered place and time, tasted it like okra. It was during a re-release of *Red River* a couple of years ago that I became aware of the first faint stirrings of curiosity about the particular seat I sat in, the lady in the ticket booth . . . As Montgomery Clift was whipping John Wayne in a fist fight, an absurd scene, I made a mark on my seat arm with my thumbnail. Where, I wondered, will this particular piece of wood be twenty years from now, 543 years from now? Once as I was travelling through the Midwest ten years ago I had a layover of three hours in Cincinnati. There was time to go see Joseph Cotten in *Holiday* at a neighborhood theater called the Altamont—but not before I had struck up an acquaintance with the ticket seller a lady named Mrs. Clara James, and learned that she had seven grandchildren all living in Cincinnati. We still exchange Christmas cards. Mrs. James is the only person I know in the entire state of Ohio.

Bolling tends to agree with all but assertive people, perhaps because he is sensitive to human predicaments and recognizes that the truth of an utterance must be related to its framing predicament. He feels himself to be an "exile" and discovers that there are many kinds of exiles in the lonely crowd. But Bolling feels a particular rapport with "the Jews," which makes him reflect:

An odd thing. Ever since Wednesday I have become acutely aware of Jews. There is a clue here, but of what I cannot say. How do I know? Because whenever I approach a Jew, the Geiger counter in my head starts rattling away like a machine gun; and as I go past with the utmost circumspection and with every sense alert—the Geiger counter subsides.

There is nothing new in my Jewish vibrations. During the years when I had friends my Aunt Edna, who is a theosophist, noticed that all my friends were Jews. She knew why moreover: I had been a Jew in a previous incarnation. Perhaps that is it. Anyhow it is true that I am Jewish by instinct. We share the same exile. The fact is, however, I am more Jewish than the Jews I know. They are more at home than I am. I accept my exile.

Bolling's observations on religion are not meant to be profound. He suspects that insistent religious advocacy cannot be profound. People seem to try to use God just as they use William Holden. His mother's devotions are a puzzle to him:

Sometimes when she mentions God, it strikes me that my mother uses him as but one of the devices that come to hand in an outrageous man's world, to be put to work like all the rest in the one enterprise she has any use for, the canny management of the shocks of life. It is a bargain struck at the very beginning in which she settled for a general belittlement of everything, the good and the bad. She is as wary of good fortune as she is immured against the bad, and sometimes I seem to catch sight of it in her eyes, this radical mistrust: an old knowledgeable gleam, as old and sly as Eve herself. Losing Duval, her favorite, confirmed her in her election of the ordinary. No more heart's desire for her, thank you. After Duval's death she has wanted everything colloquial and easy, even God.

It must not be thought that this book is entirely without romance, though a New York

*Times* reviewer who says that "ultimately Binx breaks out of his own shell by having to face the far more desperate problems of his beautiful cousin, Kate Cutrer" can hardly have read the book with any care. Yes, there are romances, and Bolling is not unappreciative and does his best. He finally marries, and discovers this to be a good thing, but not like the movies. Hardly like the movies.

## *COMMENTARY*

### A QUESTION OF DEMAND

SOME years ago, when former President Eisenhower was touring India, he voiced hope for universal disarmament in these words:

The demand for it [disarmament] by the hundreds of millions whose chief concern is the long future of themselves and their children will, I hope, become so universal and insistent that no man, no government, can withstand it.

What might be a practical man's response to this hope? Mr. Eisenhower made the issues plain. It is not governments which can be expected to take the initiative. The role of government—the kind of governments we know about—is to "withstand" the demand for disarmament. For this reason, the demand must become "insistent," and the insisting will have to be done by ordinary people—when you say "hundreds of millions," you are talking about ordinary people.

How, in the middle years of the twentieth century, does an ordinary person make his insistence *audible*? This is a question the practical man should ask. You can hear a lot of things by means of the ordinary channels of communication, but any talk of peace or disarmament is always carefully filtered to be sure that insistence is transformed into formless sentiment, that nothing resembling a popular *demand* is heard at all.

It is this sort of routine stifling of the spontaneous longings of ordinary human beings which leads, after a time, to events such as the following, reported in a recent CNVA-West bulletin:

On Sept. 21 twelve CNVA-West walkers were arrested for civil disobedience at the Mare Island Naval Shipyard in Vallejo (Calif.), charged with federal trespassing. One by one, twelve persons confronted the arms race with their whole beings by walking in at the main gate of the shipyard at 3:55 p.m. They did this in an effort to communicate directly with the people at Mare Island. This action completed the 650-mile walk for peace sponsored by

CNVA-West, which began in San Diego on Hiroshima Day, Aug. 6.

About seventy other walkers stood in silent vigil as those entering the base were arrested. A hostile crowd, estimated by police at 2,000, jeered at first. As the expected circus failed to materialize and the dignity of the single persons offering civil disobedience became apparent, the crowd grew quiet. . . .

Initially, the twelve offenders were charged with subversion under the McCarran Act (Title 50, Sec. 797-A), while an offer was made by the U.S. prosecuting attorney to reduce the charge of trespassing for those who would plead guilty. The defendants pointed out that this amounted to coercive pressure, and they refused to plead guilty to any charge. Two hours later, when the McCarran Act charges were unconditionally dropped, all but one pleaded guilty to trespassing on Federal property. On Oct. 3, a U.S. Commissioner sentenced four of the eleven to 60 days (30 days suspended), and seven to 20 days (10 suspended). The twelfth defendant is being held for trial.

For some time after the arrests, a vigil was maintained seven days a week at the main gate of the Mare Island installation. A literature table set up near the vigil attracted interest and local high school students, apparently to fulfill some kind of "current events" assignment for one of their classes, came asking questions on non-violent action. What is the basis of action of this sort? A paragraph from an article by Danilo Dolci, in *Peace News* for Sept. 21 (adapted from a speech Dolci made before the Anti-Nuclear Arms Conference at New Delhi, India, last June) gives the view of a man who has thought much on this question:

Nearly always, when one asks the man in the street what he thinks, after a moment's thought he says, "No" to atomic weapons. It is essential, therefore, to make the inattentive, those with closed minds, the deaf—to make them hear and realize. We should oblige everyone to express himself in the way most suited to him and to his opportunities and to declare his "No" and to make his own suggestions—

person by person, group by group, nation by nation. Because while, on the one hand, it is necessary for the representatives of the people to interpret the implicit desire of man to survive, on the other hand it is essential for these same people to express themselves, press their opinions, make demands, so that the bloody follies of the past shall be rendered impossible in the future. In all countries of the world the people should discuss all decisions affecting international relations, thus securing an effective participation and consent of the mass of people.

## CHILDREN ... and Ourselves

### NOTES AND QUOTES

LAST week we discussed education in "controversial issues," using material written for *ETC.* by Prof. Earl C. Kelley, a thorough-going Socratic. Socrates, we recall, was a man who believed that ignorance could always be dispelled by wisdom.

Dr. Kelley's position on the matter of "controversial issues" is obviously based on an inveterate optimism toward human potentiality. Carl Rogers also takes this view. We have a quotation from Dr. Rogers concerning the basic human need for being both unconcerned and optimistic when strong differences of opinion arise. He believes that, ultimately, we learn only from empathy, and that the best work of the intellect is in breaking down barriers which withhold the natural empathy men have for one another. He writes:

There is one deep learning which is perhaps basic to all of the things I have said thus far. It has been forced upon me by more than twenty-five years of trying to be helpful to individuals in personal distress. It is simply this. *It has been my experience that persons have a basically positive direction.* In my deepest contacts with individuals in therapy, even those whose troubles are most disturbing, whose behavior has been most anti-social, whose feelings seem most abnormal, I find this to be true. When I can sensitively understand the feelings which they are expressing, when I am able to accept them as separate persons in their own right, then I find that they tend to move in certain directions. And what are these directions in which they tend to move? The words which I believe are most truly descriptive are words such as positive, constructive, moving toward self-actualization, growing toward maturity, growing toward socialization. I have come to feel that the more fully the individual is understood and accepted, the more he tends to drop the false fronts with which he has been meeting life, and the more he tends to move in a direction which is forward.

Perhaps "optimism" is not the right word. The courage of Socratic faith rests on something

far beyond wishful thinking. David Riesman's "Autonomous Man" is possible only if one believes that every individual, in time, can fully accept the responsibility of his own decisions—and learn constructively from them. But the autonomous man is not, as some have thought, a kind of perpetual rebel. There are times when he is better at "acceptance" than most of his contemporaries. What he *accepts* is neither that the world is a misery-go-round nor a system which guarantees that God will make all things right in the end. Rather, he accepts the fact that every situation, including every human injustice, and those he may personally suffer, is a learning situation.

Several accounts have appeared in *MANAS* of Synanon, the self-help laboratory for drug addicts who are ready to become something more and something different. What assures the success of Synanon, for all those who are ready to strive for any sort of success, is their determination to learn *from* their addiction. A "Synanon Philosophy" has emerged, and finds expression in sentences reminiscent of Ralph Waldo Emerson and suggestive of the contemporary psychologist, Abraham Maslow. A statement of the "Synanon Philosophy" is as follows:

The Synanon Philosophy is based on the belief that there comes a time in everyone's life when he arrives at the conviction that envy is ignorance; that imitation is suicide; that he must accept himself for better or for worse as is his portion; that tho' the wide universe is full of good, no kernel of nourishing corn can come to him but through his toil bestowed on that plot of ground which is given to him to till. The Power which resides in him is new in nature, and none but he knows what it is that he can do, nor does he know until he has tried. Bravely let him speak the utmost syllable of his conviction. God will not have his work made manifest by cowards.

A man is relieved and gay when he has put his heart into his work and done his best, but what he has said or done otherwise shall give him no peace. As long as he willingly accepts himself, he will continue to grow and develop his potentialities. As long as he does not accept himself, much of his energies will be

used to defend rather than to explore and actualize himself.

No one can force a person toward permanent and creative learning. He will learn only if he wills to. Any other type of learning is temporary and inconsistent with the self and will disappear as soon as the threat is removed. Learning is possible in an environment that provides information, the setting, materials, resources, and by his being there. God helps those who help themselves.

Anyone who attempts to live this philosophy is on the road to maturity by way of self-correction, whether he is a dope addict, an alcoholic, or a supposedly "normal" person. And it is equally true that a youngster in an elementary school can build a solid basis of self-evaluation from the same precepts, even if he cannot understand all the words. "A man is relieved and gay when he has put his heart into his work and done his best; but what he has said or done otherwise shall give him no peace," is a universal, self-provable dictum. "Imitation" *is* "suicide," so far as the will to self-transformation is concerned. And here we come to the paradox behind any philosophy worthy of the name the need for acceptance of one's present status, for the present, as a point of departure, in combination with a total unwillingness to allow the situation, whatever it may be, to remain unchanged in the future.

Robert Ulich, in *Philosophy of Education* (American Book Co., 1961), has some good things to say on the subject of self-liberation:

When we now look from a certain vantage point at the struggle of man to find ever better forms of education, to establish a constructive balance between the various polarities of civilization, to prevent the great institutions, such as the state and community, as well as the great aspirations, such as religion and humanism, from the danger of hardening and perversion, and finally to lead men to the awareness of mankind—for what we may ask, is man really struggling?

Our answer is: whether or not he is conscious of it, he wants to be free. He wants to liberate himself from the shackles that obsolete organizations and distorted ideas fasten around his ankles even when his mind may already look toward new horizons. . . .

On the capacity of man to understand himself as a participant in a macrocosm that is at once his source, his friend, his threat and his mystery—on this capacity depends his freedom. For freedom is the power of the soul to have purposes worth living for, and to feel at home within a cosmos of infinite promise and chance, but also of infinite risk. The coward is never free!

So, a great deal more is involved in dealing with controversies in ideas and ideals than sophisticated arguments. The smallest children and the most developed intellects both face the never-ending task of self-transcendence.

## *FRONTIERS* Voices of Conscience

[While Algerians exhausted by seven years of war were crying out to their rival leaders, *Halte au sang!* (No more bloodshed!), and villagers were insisting that the troops of Ben Bella lay down their arms and fraternize with opposing forces, other voices were being heard in other lands. In the United States, Jack A. Smith, editor of the *CNVA Bulletin*, issued a statement that was presented at his trial on Sept. 4. In Italy, Danilo Dolci fasted afresh to press the Italian Government to take up in earnest the dam project it had planned as a means of bringing livelihood to the unemployed poor of a large region in Sicily. These are but a few of the expressions of conscience, notable for their moral strength, their indisputable logic, that are becoming a common occurrence, these days. We reprint below Jack Smith's statement, from the *CNVA Bulletin* of Sept. 1.]

I am being tried as a criminal for violating an order to report for induction into the armed forces. Yet, I do not feel criminal.

I have openly violated a law of the United States government.

Yet, I do not feel "guilty."

Why?

It is my belief that the crime of the United States government or any government which prepares for the nuclear annihilation of mankind is so enormous that it transcends the legal "guilt" of a human being who will not be a party to such inhumanity.

I am not led lightly to break the law. I nurtured my decision to violate the Selective Service law for two years before I felt able to witness to my conviction through personal action.

It is one year since President Kennedy announced that the United States, to use his words, would "stand firm on our rights in Berlin" even if it meant war.

Even if it meant war! Translated into English, this phrase signifies that Mr. Kennedy—a well-meaning family man, I have no doubt—was

willing to initiate moves that could have resulted in the extermination of civilization because of the contrived diplomatic issue of West Berlin.

To me, "standing firm" meant this: My children someday will die unknown amid a mound of dead, in agony, twisted and alone—their grasping hands unmet, their blood unwashed by tears.

This was the reality of "standing firm"—the meaning of the drums. And I was told, "March to them!" I will never march to them. Nor am I deceived by those words—duty, patriotism, urgency, firmness. They mean the rotting flesh of millions of innocent children, including my own.

I decided that neither government nor man would "stand firm" upon their broken lives as long as I—with all my human weakness—was able to stand in opposition.

It was then that I returned my draft card to the Selective Service System and informed them I would no longer cooperate with their immorality. In so doing, I felt that I was giving a personal answer to my children, lest some day in fire and torment they should ask the simple question, "Why?"

For returning this piece of paper, the government saw fit to draft me, although I had previously been classified 3A because of my dependents, and was exempt from conscription in any event because I was considered over-age by present regulations. I had expected this reaction and was prepared for it. Paradoxically, I am not even able to enlist in the armed forces because a father is not permitted to join the army, much less a man who falls under the so-called "26-or-out" provision of the draft laws, stipulating that a registrant may avoid military service entirely when he reaches the age of 26. I am now 28.

Clearly, the government drafted me for punitive reasons because I refused to carry a small piece of paper symbolizing the power of the state to force me to commit crimes against humanity.

Would that an Eichmann had returned a similar piece of paper!

I am sure that some people would define my deed as anarchy. I would prefer, however, to look upon it as a manifestation of the ultimate democracy—one that recognizes the right of the individual to act in accord with his conscience as long as his actions do not cause harm to his neighbor.

I do not believe my convictions can cause harm to anyone. The only person who might suffer for them stands before you, and I willingly accept the penalty of imprisonment rather than forsake my conscience in this matter.

I do not think of myself as a "superior" person for this stand either morally or in any other way. I have many failings. I endeavor to follow truth as I see it and realize that I may not always see it clearly.

In determining my guilt and in passing sentence, I ask the court *not* to consider mitigating circumstances—such as my age, dependents or the punitive nature of my being drafted. I have presented them only to depict the bankrupt posture of a government as strong as the United States whose moral position is so weak that it feels threatened by a lone man who openly and nonviolently says, "No."

I ask the court to judge this case on one merit alone: Is the individual conscience worthless when in conflict with what it holds to be an immoral law ordained by government and, if not, should an individual be deprived of his liberty because he refuses to compromise his conscience in such a conflict? I ask the court for a precedent-making decision—a revolutionary one, as it were—in favour of the supremacy of the individual human being as opposed to a dictatorship of conscience by the State.

In conclusion, I move that the government's case be dismissed, regardless of statute or slogan, because it is in conflict with the higher law of conscience.

JACK A. SMITH

New York, N.Y.

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[In 1952, Danilo Dolci, an Italian architect turned worker for the impoverished poor of Sicily, began a fast which did not end until he was given assurance that a dam would be built on the Iato river, to water a large region of Sicily, near Partinico. Last month, Dolci fasted again, protesting delays in the building of the dam. This time the lag was due not only to the Italian Government, but also to the opposition of the Mafia, which saw in the dam a threat to its interests. Dolci fasted from Sept. 7 until Sept. 15, when a special Government public works committee announced that construction would soon begin on the Iato dam. At the end of his fast, the San Francisco *Chronicle* (Sept. 16) reported: "Danilo Dolci, known as the Italian Gandhi, ended his nine-day hunger strike with a plate of spaghetti and a glass of wine yesterday as he won a double victory against the Mafia and the Italian government. . . . He fasted in an almost airless, fly-filled room at his home, which was cluttered with people. . . . Hundreds cheered as he began eating." Following is Dolci's statement of his intention to fast, reprinted from *Peace News* for Sept. 7].

By now we should all be quite clear that wherever disorder based on irresponsibility and fear is widespread, selfish overbearing behaviour which is destructive and wasteful will be rampant.

In recent years more than two thousand million cubic meters of water has gone to waste in the sea in Western Sicily alone, while poverty has been wearing down hundreds of thousands of families. Possibly about sixty million pounds have been wasted.

In November, 1955, more than 1,500 of us appealed to the authorities to intervene quickly in the area of Partinico and to build a dam on the river Iato which, by irrigating almost 25,000 acres of arid land for a large part of the year, would have been able to guarantee sufficient steady work for almost the entire population. When in the following February hundreds of unemployed men wanted to demonstrate publicly their wish to work and take some real part in life (as is only the duty and right of every man), then once again the state

replied by violently preventing their attempt to work, arresting many and sentencing them. (Recently these sentences have been reconfirmed, to the shame of truth and of the Constitution.)

In the following years able and responsible technicians proceeded with the project until the appropriate licence was granted in 1960 and the contract for the dam was assigned to a firm of contractors which should have begun work at once. We waited confidently, telling all enquirers that everything was now well on the way to completion.

Two years have passed; the dam could have already risen to over half its ultimate height; hundreds of workmen could have had regular employment, and the developments could have fired fresh hope in the people of the area.

*Many promises have been made, but these do not bring nourishment to the land. Nobody has lifted a pick; not a single stone has been shifted.*

People say that there is no clear reason for the standstill; it is either because no agreement has been reached on the compensation to be paid to dispossessed landowners or because of the pressure of a group of the Mafia. Some people in responsible circles, already intimidated, almost despair of the work being started and carried out, and in the meantime millions of pounds have to be paid out in compensation to the firm under contract.

It is clear that the good of everyone cannot be brought about by ruining a small group of landowners with poor and tardy payments (it is a wretched State that cannot bring business of this kind to an honest, simple and prompt conclusion). It is also clear that we should consider, with deep shame, the possibility of a State which allows itself to be ensnared by a few overbearing and self-interested men when it is intervening to create works for the basic good of the people.

The future holds out a dismal prospect for everybody, and this we cannot accept. I shall fast from the seventh to the sixteenth of September as

a protest and a warning, and I shall be ready to start yet another fast if the long-awaited and much hoped for work does not commence. Others in the area will take on their responsibilities in the way each thinks best.

Here we are not concerned with dreams or with one ideal or another, but with understanding essentials, with taking on essential responsibilities, with carrying out acts of essential necessity. Faced with such serious situations on a level as simple as this, it is impossible to entertain doubts and uncertainties.

The acceptance, time and time again, on different scales of such insane situations is leading to the aberration of a world the development of which already entails notable difficulties, but which is devoting half the fruits of its labours to the production of instruments for its own destruction. In the next few days in London, by non-violent demonstrations against the atomic bomb, Bertrand Russell and his friends will try to bring to their senses those who are ready to set off the explosion of death in the world. The co-ordination of our actions is intended to emphasize the necessity for the human race to take a new road.

My decision, therefore, taken with regard to a clear and specific local problem in conjunction with those who are suffering wrongs in this area, is also intended as an act of solidarity with all those people in the world who are carrying life forward by means of active non-violence.

DANILO DOLCI