

FOUNDATIONS FOR NOT GIVING UP

SEEMINGLY everywhere one goes these days, one meets people who have given up. Even among political activists, the abandonment of hope is commonplace. For whatever personal reasons, they are still going through the motions of holding back the deluge, but many do not really believe they will have any effect. They believe race war is inevitable in the United States, and thermonuclear war is inevitable in the world. They believe that the human race will soon be starving amidst an irretrievably plundered and polluted environment. They believe that man is by nature a wolf to man, a "self-destruct" mechanism which will destroy itself within our time.

They say, "Look at what people are doing to the redwoods, Lake Tahoe, Yosemite Valley, everything good and beautiful in nature. Look at the dishonesty and demagoguery that politics forces upon even the best politicians. Look at the way people yield without a struggle to being brainwashed by Madison Avenue and the mass media. Look at the vacuous charade that most marriages are. Look at the humiliating waste of their lives that earning a living is for most people. Look at the deadening of minds and talents that is called education."

At the same time one sees such disheartening behavior, however, one may perceive a great deal of countervailing evidence. How one chooses to interpret the balance, and predict the outcome, would seem to be a matter of one's personal experience and taste, rather than anything dictated by the evidence itself.

Environmental pollution is not new, as readers of Samuel Pepys's diary are aware—but current programs to curb it are without precedent. There are many flaws in our (and every) democracy, but ours is a substantially more democratic society than it was a generation ago,

and is becoming more so all the time—in the meaningful sense that more people are exercising more influence over more aspects of their lives through trade unions; professional associations; student, church, religious, ethnic, cultural, recreational, consumer, and practically every other conceivable type of organization. There is no denying the power of advertising, but there seems, also, no denying that people are growing less gullible and more sophisticated, and that advertisers are obliged to invent new tricks to have an effect. It does not appear to be a process with an indefinite future; for there are not an indefinite number of new tricks.

There is no denying that many marriages—and for that matter, most parent-child, brother-sister, teacher-student, friend-friend, and other kinds of inter-personal relationships—are superficial, inauthentic, fearful, evasive of real self-revelation, feeling, or growth. But it seems, also, that there is no denying the emergence of new paths toward authenticity in communication and relationship, infinitely more promising than the long-drawn-out litanies of Freudianism on the one hand, and the "instant Nirvana" of the sex or drug cults on the other. Gestalt therapy, encounter groups, reality therapy, the "Synanon game," logotherapy, will therapy, client-centered therapy, the writings of Maslow and Fromm and Jourard and May, yoga, Zen Buddhism, various psychological institutes, body awareness groups, people studying mysticism and contemplative disciplines—all of these, and many more, whatever their differences, make up a powerful new force tending toward self-actualization, and actualization of relationships with others.

There is no denying that some branches of our educational institutions are promoting intellectual death rather than life. But some are promoting life rather than death. There is no

denying that most occupations are dehumanizing. But some creative rethinking of the work process is going on. I am going to cite some countervailing evidence which, at a single stroke, holds out hope for both the educational and occupational processes—and more besides. It seems to be one of the requirements of a savant these days to predict an automation revolution (which perversely never arrives on the dates predicted), the disappearance of useful work, widespread unemployment, a guaranteed annual income, the "problem of leisure time." The savants could afford to study at the feet of some 22-year-olds who are too brave to be unimaginative and too wise to fear the future.

Not long ago, in a graduate seminar in industrial psychology at San Francisco State College, students were asked to visualize and describe "new vocations": jobs which do not yet exist, but which would meet legitimate social needs, and at the same time the needs of the job-holders for both jobs and humanness. Many students responded to this challenge with wit and humor, but it was not an exercise in frivolity or fantasy. Each description of a new vocation was expected to include a plausible account of where the funds would come from, the supportive social structure, and other 'practical details. Here, however, excerpts are confined to descriptions of job functions and applicant qualifications. The following visionary occupations are couched in the exact words of industrial psychology graduate students at San Francisco State College.

Job Title: Hugger.

Description: The basic task is to dispense genuine affection to the children living in orphanages and other institutions.

Purpose: In an institutional setting where many children must live, it is very difficult for the staff to give sufficient time to emotional needs of the children as individuals. As a result, lasting psycho-emotional damage is sometimes done to institutionalized children. . . . The sole task of the Hugger is to circulate within a small group of children (probably no more than 8) giving them the love and attention which they deserve.

No administrative duties whatsoever are allowed.

Skills: Since the ability to give love has no correlation with education level, no formal educational requirements exist. However, rather extensive psychological tests should be given the applicant to . . . establish his or her "love quotient." It would be helpful to have some psychology background or training (but not too much)

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Job Title: Tide Pool Guide.

Job Description: The coast of California is a wonderland of scenic beauty. . . . beauty and wonder lie in everything from the magnificent sunsets framed in the rock-splashed outcroppings of the Monterey and Mendocino County coasts to the myriad of color and marine life found in the tide pools along the coast. Each weekend, thousands of people attend the unending show which nature puts on along the land/sea line.

The Tide Pool Guide will enrich, stimulate and in all ways cater to the quest for knowledge manifested in those making their way back to the area from which all life sprang. Through the educational opportunity which he provides, there may be longer range benefits. Some of his audience may be stimulated to the point that they will decide to take more interest in the field and will some day make their own contribution to society in this or allied fields. It has been stated that humanity's future lies in the seas.

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Job Title: Travelers' Entertainer.

Job Description: Their task would be primarily geared to telling stories to children on long trips and giving parents a chance to relax. . . . The entertainers could be expert musicians and know children's songs. They could also know how to play children's road games. They could also know the route and point out points of interest to the children.

Required Skills: . . . personality should sparkle. . . .

Several of the proposed "new vocations" were modest, plausible extensions of activities already being supported by some Office of Economic Opportunity projects. For example:

Title: Ghetto Decorator.

Description: A painter well-versed in a variety of media, *i.e.*, pastels, oil, acrylic, etc., who tours poverty areas selecting sites such as eyesore fences and sides of old buildings for murals. He may enlist the help of the residents to execute the mural.

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Title: Art Rovers.

Description: Artists who work in a variety of art forms, *i.e.*, painting, drawing, ceramics, and sculpture and wander in poverty areas using empty stores and other available space as temporary headquarters to teach children and other interested parties how to paint, draw, sculpt, or make pottery.

A number of the suggestions envisaged a new breed of anti-bureaucrat. For example:

Title: Institution Agitator.

Description: An Institution Agitator will usually function as an individual within the confines of an established and settled institution. His primary purpose will be to upset the status quo in attempts to bring about the de-institutionalization of the institution's staff. The choice of methods to be used will be left up to the individual agitator but his methods will probably revolve around his activities while he is being processed through or working for the target institution. He may use any means possible to shake up the institution short of the actual destruction of the institution and its workers. Decision to destroy must be with the consent of the Destruction Committee.

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Job Title: Oratory Monitor.

Job Description: Each elected official from the county through the national level would have an Oratory Monitor assigned to him. . . . Whenever the official is making a speech, the monitor would be present. If the speaker makes a false, misleading statement or implication the Monitor would interrupt and correct him.

Purpose: 1. To assist the populace in establishing a source-credibility factor for the political representatives.

2. To encourage elected officials to tell the truth.

Skills: 1. B. A. in Political Science, Pre-Law or related fields; some Rhetoric and Public Address would be helpful.

2. Encyclopedic memory to catalog and recall all pertinent political information.

3. Irrepressible personality with the brashness of a used-car commercial pitch-man.

The two following suggestions were submitted under the heading "Anxiety Allaying Units for Mass Society":

Title: The Nonaggressive Riot Control Unit.

Description: Units composed of six to eight people, each person carrying a small transistorized tape recorder of rock music, who would roam or dance through large demonstrations and encourage the demonstrators to dance. . . .

Since in most large demonstrations there is a lot of milling about and general boredom, the frustration and tension increase as people look about for a little excitement to occur. The frustration is usually channeled into acts of physical aggression. With this control unit, frustration could be channeled into a physical action that was nonaggressive . . . dancing.

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Job Title: Rush Hour Singers.

Job Description: Singing groups composed of three persons would travel on buses during rush hours and sing to the passengers. In addition to being able to sing, these people would also have to know crowd psychology. . . .

The singers would serve to reduce the frustrations of traveling on overcrowded buses and the long waits for late running buses. If the bus was late, knowing that you were to be confronted by a jovial singing group on the bus when it finally arrived at least gives you something pleasant to anticipate. . . . Also, once on the bus, instead of the usual frustration-aggression responses of the passengers (people being surly and stepping on each other while scrambling on and off the bus), these responses would be replaced with responses . . . such as seeking proximity and physical contact, help, attention and reassurance . . .

Some of the ideas were obviously inspired by the "hippie rebellion." For example:

Job Title: Poppy Pitcher.

Job Description: Throw poppy seeds along freeways—in divider strip and on the shoulder.

Job Skills: Physical—ability to throw seeds. Mental—must know dirt from pavement.

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Job Title: Roving Barber.

Job Description: A roving barber would be employed by the city to roam about administering his skills through the use of clippers, shears and soap on the general population.

Job Purpose: . . . to improve health conditions by creating sanitary scalps on males and females in need of mandatory hygiene.

Required Skills: A roving barber should be a graduate of an accredited barber college; must be six feet, four inches and weigh two hundred pounds, and be trained in methods of persuasion.

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Job Title: California De-Populator.

Job Description: A California De-Populator would be employed by the state of California to convince people to move away from California to some other state. Acting somewhat incognito, he would exclaim the virtues of other states and moan and groan about the traffic, smog, weirdos, etc., in California. He would distribute Chamber of Commerce packets from states desiring more residents. . . . Methods of completing this task would be left up to the de-populator who would receive a commission, in addition to his salary, for every registered Californian who changed residency to another state.

Many other "new vocations" were suggested, including Idleness Mentor, Neighborhood Laundromat Entertainer, and Humanizer of Household Appliances, but let us close with:

Job Title: Philosophical Humanicist.

Job Description. Acts as a consultant on ethical and moral considerations.

Requisites: Flexible-mental outlook, coupled with high sense of personal responsibility and personal ethics. Must have a love of humanity, coupled with a strong sense of personal rights. . . .

Organization: Agency for Social Research and Greater Human Dignity. Semi-private organization for action research in all fields of human social activity. Major areas of concern are problems like: . . . What are the ethical and moral bases of humanity?

All in all, these materials seem to me singularly good and cogent grounds for not giving

up. It is most heartening to know there are professors who conceive such assignments, and colleges and departments in which they are free to do so. But the most important point is this: fifteen years ago, when I was in graduate school, industrial psychology and sociology were oriented toward the goal of workers producing more, at less cost, and thinking they were happy doing so. It was, in effect, training people to be more efficient at manipulating other people. Now, in at least one major training center—and it is surely not the only one—industrial psychology evidently means something radically different, something humanizing. When they graduate, these psychologists will go out and start influencing policy in government, in industry, and in the teaching of future generations. Although some of them will no doubt be beaten down, and some of their ideas and ideals and wonderful good humor diluted, they will make a difference. I look forward to civil service announcements, within ten years, for the equivalent of Tide Pool Guide and Travelers Entertainer.

The biggest and most basic revolutions of our time are not the ones in the headlines, involving boudoirs, benzedrine, blackness, or bullets. The major revolutions are quiet and unheralded, taking the form, for example, of a rising generation of social functionaries who are imagining, and being encouraged to imagine, seriously and joyfully, the relevance of Huggers, Poppy Pitchers, and Philosophical Humanicists.

Yes, despite everything, there are grounds—not merely intuitive grounds either—for holding out against despair, for holding out for hope, for not giving up.

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REVIEW

CURRENT REVOLUTIONARY THOUGHT

THE passionate search for *the* correct solution of social problems goes on and on. Its rhetoric and appeals, which don't change very much, have been echoing in the literature of revolution for at least a hundred years. One of the few revolutionary men of the past who saw the issue clearly, Joseph Mazzini, reduced it to humanist terms:

Rousseau . . . had no conception of the collective life of humanity, of its tradition, of the law of progress appointed for generations, of a common end towards which we ought to strive, of association that can alone attain it step by step. Starting from the philosophy of *ego* and of individual liberty, he robbed that principle of its fruit by basing it . . . on a simple convention, avowed or understood. All Rousseau's teaching proceeds from the assertion "that social right is not derived from nature, but based upon conventions."

That first statement, the key of the whole system, is by now proven to be false, and because false, fatal to the principle of popular sovereignty. It is not by the force of conventions or of ought else, but by a necessity of our nature, that societies are founded and grow. . . .

Right is the faith of the individual. Duty is the common collective faith. Right can but organize resistance: it may destroy, it cannot found. Duty builds up, associates, unites; it is derived from a general law, whereas Right is derived only from human will. There is nothing therefore to forbid a struggle against Right: any individual may rebel against any right in another which is injurious! to him, and the sole judge left between adversaries is Force; and such, in fact, has frequently been the answer which societies based upon right have given their opponents. . . .

The passion for rights has inspired practically every revolution of history; but the problem of responsibility and duty has then been met by more or less improvised conventions. Often these legal conventions turn out to require mechanisms of control as oppressive as the chains burst by the revolutions.

Why do revolutionists continue to believe that some theory of the social contract, instead of *actual knowledge*—full-bodied, concrete understanding of the harmonious function of man in community—is sufficient to order a society? Why do they blind themselves to the necessity for organic infrastructure in their urge to destroy, to wipe out infamy, to make all things new?

The current issue of *Our Generation* (Vol. 6, No. 3, published quarterly in Canada, 3837 Boul. St. Laurent, Montreal 131, Quebec, \$1.25) is filled with data for shaping the beginnings of an answer to this question. The editors are apparently making a strenuous effort to keep such inquiry from being closed out by political sectarians, so that the journal is richly informing of the varied content and directions of current revolutionary thought. Evident, however, from time to time, is a particular intolerance on the part of writers who have adopted the Marxist-Leninist conventions. Contributors who set out with more open, humanistic views are regarded as infected with bourgeois prejudice, as sentimentalists and time-wasters. Writers who propose the need for organic communitarian growth along with resistance to arbitrary power are often dealt with impatiently, if not denounced. Anyone who takes the "principle of popular sovereignty" seriously has not, it seems, understood revolutionary necessity. Power, not "building up," comes first.

Yet the ruthless requirements of power, when there has been no "building up" process—whether from neglect of its importance or the haste of meeting inescapable events—are now quite plain. This issue of *Our Generation* has "A New Left Open Letter to Fidel Castro," signed by five persons, asking the Cuban leader a basic question. *Why did he support the invasion of Czechoslovakia by the Soviets?* The letter ends:

All of us have supported the achievements of the Cuban Revolution! Most of us have visited Cuba since its liberation! We still do! We are in complete solidarity with the struggle begun by Che in the jungles of Bolivia and we shall continue to help in the struggle against U.S. imperialism. But it is precisely

because of our political position on these questions that we ask you Fidel: *Why ? ? ?*

One remembers, mournfully, the encounters of Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman in 1920 with several champions and leaders of the Russian Revolution. As told by Emma Goldman in *Living My Life*, the two anarchists had been deported by the United States, and they set out for Russia filled with visionary expectations. Arriving in Moscow, they talked first with John Reed. Fiery-eyed, the American poet exclaimed:

"Look at your old pioneers. . . . I don't give a damn for their past. I am concerned only in what the treacherous gang has been doing during the past three years. To the wall with them! I say. I have learned one mighty expressive Russian word, '*razstrellyat!*'" (execute by shooting).

Next Emma Goldman talked to Gorki:

I gasped at his sweeping indictment of the entire Russian people. His charge was terrible, if true, I told him. It was also rather novel. No Russian writer had ever spoken in such terms before. He, Maxim Gorki, was the first to advance such a peculiar view, and the first not to put all the blame upon the blockade, the Denikins and Kolchaks. Somewhat irritated, he replied that the "romantic conceptions of our great literary geniuses" had entirely misrepresented the Russians and had wrought no end of evil. The Revolution had dispelled the bubble of the goodness and naïveté of the peasantry. It had proved them shrewd, avaricious, and lazy, even savage in their joy of causing pain. The role played by the counter-revolutionary Yudeniches, he added, was too obvious to need special emphasis. That is why he had not considered it necessary even to mention them, nor the intelligentsia, which had been talking revolution for fifty years and then was the first to stab it in the back with sabotage and conspiracies. But all these were contributory factors, not the main cause. The roots were inherent in Russia's brutal and uncivilized masses, he said. They have no cultural traditions, no social values, no respect for human rights and life. They cannot be moved by anything except coercion and force.

Lenin greeted them warmly:

"Well, you're here. Have you thought of the work you want - to do? You are *ideiny* ["philosophical"] anarchists, I can see that by your stand on the war, your defense of 'October,' and your

fight for us, your faith in the soviets. Just like your great comrade Malatesta, who is entirely with Soviet Russia. What is it you prefer to do?"

Berkman, speaking Russian, after saying he was glad to hear his comrades praised, asked Lenin why anarchists were held in Soviet prisons.

"Anarchists?" Ilich interrupted; "nonsense! Who told you such yarns, and how could you believe them? We do have bandits in prison . . . no *ideiny* anarchists."

Emma Goldman rejoined at some length, ending with the suggestion that Lenin was punishing *activist* anarchists just as the capitalists in the United States were doing:

Bad reasoning on my part, Lenin replied, sheer muddle-headedness to draw similar conclusions from different premises. Free speech is a *bourgeois* prejudice, a soothing plaster for social ills. . . . my attitude was bourgeois sentimentality. The proletarian dictatorship was engaged in a life-and-death struggle, and small considerations could not be permitted to weigh in the scale. Russia was making giant strides at home and abroad. It was igniting world revolution, and here I was lamenting over a little blood-letting. It was absurd, and I must get over it. "Do something," he advised, "that will be the best way of regaining your revolutionary balance."

In the same issue of *Our Generation* Hal Draper offers a comprehensive outline of socialist theories over a period of about a hundred years, drawn up according to whether a theory advocates *Socialism-From-Above* or *Socialism-From-Below*. Mr. Draper contributes thirty one pages of tough-minded analysis, concluding that most socialist theorists are really statist. It seems fair to add that whatever socialist thinkers are in theory, they are compelled to become statist in practice if they should succeed in *seizing* power.

What else can they do, one wonders, when "the masses" are as undeveloped as Gorki maintained? And are the bourgeois masses in Western democracies any better prepared because they can read and write? How can anyone with even a little knowledge of these people suppose it possible to arouse the millions of factory and other workers in highly industrialized countries

and persuade them to adopt and act upon abstractions of political theory derived from the nineteenth-century version of the class struggle?

Mr. Draper, of course, cares only for socialism-from-below, which he finds advocated by Marx, and understood by Rosa Luxemburg and William Morris. Similarly, in the text of a talk printed in *Our Generation*, after stressing the obligation of radicals to make their "new morality" visible in their actions, Herbert Marcuse says that socialism as an alternative to what now exists must be "socialism neither of the Stalinist brand nor of the post-Stalinist brand, but that *libertarian* socialism which has always been the integral concept of socialism, but only too easily repressed and suppressed." Mr. Marcuse also asks for "models," even very modest ones, of ideal human beings.

But *social* models—even very small ones—do not spring fully developed from the brains of ideological thinkers. They are acted out from vision, not planned and blueprinted by radical intellectuals. Erich Fromm, looking around for such models, found the best available example in the French Communities of Work—in which the ruling convention is the noticeable absence of enforceable conventions or rules! And there is no talk of "up against the wall" among these people.

COMMENTARY

"THE PRESENT WORLD SITUATION"

THE seekers and defenders of power in order to do "good" achieve a monotonous similarity in argument. The people, they contend, do not know enough to organize their lives properly. They must be instructed, and for this power is essential. "Popular sovereignty" cannot be trusted. The peasants "have no cultural traditions, no social values, no respect for human rights and life." The middle classes are no better. "Free speech is a *bourgeois* prejudice, a soothing plaster for social ills."

Then, when the leaders who insist upon power get it, they use it in ways that create situations nobody is able to cope with. This gives the advocates of power a second round. Now they are able to quote expert opinion on the fact, which has become true enough, that "People cannot risk being overwhelmed by the anxiety which might accompany a full cognitive and affective grasp of the present world situation and its implications for the future." In such circumstances the use of power in the form of thought-control becomes unavoidable. Unruly fears must be managed, suspicions regulated, practical requirements justified by propaganda. "Popular sovereignty" is no longer merely unreliable, but completely impossible.

It is at this point that Power is openly admitted to be the highest good. Truth is what serves power, as intellectuals who trooped to Washington to "help out" during the past ten years learned to their bewilderment, and subsequent sorrow—or conversion.

Theirs was not a new discovery, but, somehow or other, during their education, they had failed to make contact with "the age-old yet radical doctrine that we perceive the world and ourselves in it as we have been culturally 'hypnotized' to perceive it." So they were not educated at all. Then, in the seats of power, they encountered men of the same stamp and

conviction as Aurangzeb, the "great" Mogul emperor who, after reaching a power awesome enough in his day, wrote to the tutor of his youth:

You told my father Shah Jehan that you would teach me philosophy. 'Tis true, I remember very well, that you have entertained me for many years with airy questions of things that afford no satisfaction at all to the mind and are of no use in humane society, empty notions and mere fancies that have only this in them, that they are very hard to understand and very easy to forget. . . . Have you ever taken any care to make me learn what 'tis to besiege a town, or to set an army in array? For these things I am obliged to others, not at all to you.

What then is a philosopher? A philosopher is an intellectual who refuses to clear his conscience with the ease of a traveling salesman—who knows that the advocate of power becomes incapable of "relentless self-questioning," and cannot end as a man.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves
 GUILT AND ATONEMENT

MUCH effort is now expended in trying to explain the "generation gap." At root, it seems the result of a fundamental change in moral attitude. While "technical" reasons are sometimes given, such as the advent of television, the real break with the past undoubtedly lies in the longings of the young for simplicity, for non-commercial goals, and for immediate goodness of life, leading to behavior that often seems incomprehensible to their now aging parents. Dr. Hutchins put the major realities in a sentence or two:

To the confusion of their elders, the taste as of ashes is on the lips of the younger generation everywhere: in the West, in the Communist countries, and in the Third World. In the United States the resistance of the better college students to going into business is almost as intense as their resistance to going to the war in Vietnam.

Those who try to understand such matters naturally look for broad generalizations, feeling that a very basic analysis is called for, yet this is a case in which even the best of generalizations may be misleading, especially if they suggest that there can be a *collective* remedy for an alienation which is not only widespread, but endlessly diverse. Take for example the tremendous sense of being "understood" which young people of the 1950's gained from reading J. D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye*. It would be impossible to calculate the liberation from "phoniness" accomplished for the young by this book. Its contribution, however, was limited to American middle-class youth. A black woman who fought her way to graduate studies in library work recently pointed out that there is absolutely nothing in *Catcher in the Rye* for Negro youth to identify with. Richard Wright's *Black Boy* or the *Autobiography of Malcolm X* would serve them far better.

Here, obviously, is the case for "Black Studies." But cultural approaches and art forms which do not penetrate to *common* human

problems are not enough to serve white students, either. At the same time, we know that literature which does not come out of the grain of actual life—which gets its "universality" from contrivance or moralistic response to social pressure—will never explain anything to anybody. We might have to begin by recognizing the "universal" quality in whatever is available. As J. E. Seigel said (in the *Winter American Scholar*) of Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth*:

Fanon's adoption as a spokesman by militant blacks in our country is both a reminder of the painful present and a warning of a troubled future. But in meeting the challenge this poses, we would do well to consider whether, hidden behind the rhetoric of black militancy, there does not remain something of Fanon's hunger "to reach out for the universal."

A limited cultural tradition can remain "cultural" only by deliberate battle with its own limits. The great moment in Chaim Potok's *The Chosen* comes when the old rabbi, frees his son from the traditional succession to the role of teacher or *tzaddik* in a small, Talmudic sect:

"You think I am cruel? Yes, I see from your eyes that you think I was cruel to my Daniel. Perhaps. But he has learned. Let my Daniel become a psychologist. I know he wishes to become a psychologist. I do not see his books? I did not see the letters from the universities? I do not see his eyes? I do not hear his soul crying? Of course I know. For a long time I have known. Let my Daniel become a psychologist. I have no more fear now. All his life he will be a *tzaddik*. He will be a *tzaddik* for all the world. And the world needs a *tzaddik*."

Another father-son relationship—involving a generation gap of monstrous proportions—is the subject of Hans Habe's *Christopher and His Father* (Popular Library). This is a book which recalls Gitta Sereny's newspaper articles on German youth (MANAS, July 19, 1967). The German generation gap has special dimensions:

West Germany has 60 million people. Thirty million of them are under 35. In other countries a man of 27 or 30 is an adult—in Germany the term "youth" must apply even to those of 35 and over. For the only valid point of division is who was part—and who was not part—of the Hitler era.

These "youth" encounter a conspiracy of silence in their parents concerning the immediate historical past. What are their responsibilities? One of them called the material prosperity of West Germany a kind of bribery offered by parents to the young: "We'll give you this and you'll be proud of being German: You won't think of all the things you can't be proud of." A student in Munich told Miss Sereny:

"We see and feel the consequence of this past every day. We can't visualize it, and how it came about. And we can't reconcile it, or for that matter fight the effects, because our parents' rejection of their part in it makes it entirely unreal to us. We must either brand them as liars, or construct our lives upon a void."

Hans Habe's novel breaks through this fog of anonymous guilt with the story of the son of a famous movie director who under pressure made propaganda films for the Nazis. After the war the father was tried, but found not guilty. His son tells him, "I have not exonerated you." He remembers dinner parties with Goebbels and the others, when he was a boy. Tortured by the question of what he should do to atone for his father's weakness and betrayal, Christopher adopts a Jewish name and spends over a year working in a Kibbutz in Israel. Haunted by fear of recognition as the blond son of a famous—now infamous—father, and realizing after a time the pointlessness of assuming a Jewish identity, he returns to Germany. Having talent as a writer, he contributes articles about Israel to magazines, then resolves to write a play based on the trial of a Hungarian Jew who is accused of killing a Christian child, and then, by lucky accident, is proved innocent. This play is intended to undo the terrible wrong of an anti-semitic film made by his father for Goebbels—*Ritual Murder*.

The best parts of the book are the conversations between Christopher and a Goethe-like friend who helps him to understand his problems as the son of his father. The burden of the book's meaning is the complete futility of mass solutions and mass goals, of total condemnations

and collective extenuations. The special ordeal of Christopher is that his father's guilt is *known*. There is no cloak of anonymity, no vague participation in a "collective" crime. While his father was no more guilty than thousands of others, the son knows exactly what he did. The famous old German writer illuminates for Christopher what an individual may accomplish in the midst of the moral confusion that is post-war Germany. A little before Christopher's play opens, he writes:

"You have many enemies and I shouldn't be surprised if now, on the occasion of the first night of your play, they make themselves heard. There are many who will accuse you of treachery toward those 'ideals' in which your father himself never really believed. Others will say that you should let the dead rest in peace, as though the dead slept better if their injustice was buried with them. If you fail, people will compare your failure with your successful father. If you succeed, they will call you an opportunist.

"You had the good fortune—good fortune, I repeat—to read in others' eyes the question: Is he like his father? It is not enough for young Germans to condemn their fathers—they must erase the similarities from their hearts and faces.

"Don't let yourself be discouraged, and don't make things too easy for yourself! Skepticism is no guarantee against false enthusiasm, and a clear conscience is unworthy of an intellectual. If you only worry about your own conscience, you cannot speak of a clear conscience, no matter how clear it may be. The intellectual, as I understand the honorific title, should be distinguished from the traveling salesman by the fact that the latter only has to live with his own conscience, but the former has to live with all our consciences. And they would not be good intellectuals who, out of disgust or self-satisfaction or fear of infection, flee from the sick after having diagnosed their malady so accurately. . . ."

So, the German question is an intensification of the human question, and the German "generation gap" a projection and objectification of issues that will eventually come to the surface, one way or another, for us all. The universal man, as the old German writer says, is the one who accepts the obligation to "live with all our consciences."

FRONTIERS

Dialogue in Extreme Situations

IN a paper presented before the American Association for the Advancement of Science in 1962, Dr. Lester Grinspoon (of the Harvard Medical School) discussed the propensity of people to isolate themselves from "facts" on which even their lives may depend. What, for example, is to be done when it becomes evident, as this psychiatrist observes, that "the nature and truth of thermonuclear war" is rejected by the great majority because such horrors reach far beyond the ordinary human capacity to cope? A distinction must be made between what people, as we say, "ought" to do, but fail to attempt, and what they are simply unable to do. Dr. Grinspoon writes:

People cannot risk being overwhelmed by the anxiety which might accompany a full cognitive and affective grasp of the present world situation and its implications for the future. It serves a man no useful purpose to accept this truth if to do so leads only to the development of very disquieting feelings, feelings which interfere with his capacity to be productive, to enjoy life, and to maintain his mental equilibrium.

This, quite apparently, is one form of the fundamental dilemma of a society organized and run by specialists, for only the specialists have the advanced knowledge which the rest of the people need in order to become aware of the vast problems that are likely to confront them. It follows that conscientious specialists *must* warn the people of such threats—yet here is a psychiatric specialist who says, in effect, that the warnings will do no good!

On the other hand, should the specialists keep silent? Would you reproach physical scientists filled with moral concern for starting the *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists* as a medium of warning to the general public? Would you tell the ecologists to stop issuing disturbing manifestoes about the progressive mutilation of the biosphere? Would you advise the Gandhians to stop preaching nonviolence as the remedy for impending war on

the ground that only a small minority seem capable of the personal self-sacrifice and courage which the Gandhian program entails?

It is not hard to see the direction in which this inquiry is going. Such questions shape what is now known as the issue of "information control." It is obvious that specialists, who often represent interest-groups, have important information and that these specialists either themselves use or delegate to others the power to control its flow to the public. But who *ought* to regulate the flow of information?

Are the members of the Atomic Energy Commission the right people to dispense information about the effects of fall-out radiation on human beings and other forms of life? Is the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces the one who should release information concerning an existing or prospective war?

It seems obvious that in a specialist society the maintenance of power depends in many ways on inequality of information, yet the root-principle of democratic self-government is equality of information. Admittedly, we have no solution for this contradiction. Then there is what may be called the "educational" factor, to which Dr. Grinspoon's paper is devoted. The man with specialized knowledge must exercise judgment in instructing others:

. . . he who would have others know "the truth" must take into account what "the truth" would mean to them and how they would respond to it. The truth has a relativity in interpersonal affairs; it has meaning only in relation to people and this meaning is often difficult to anticipate. The messenger of "truth bears part of the responsibility for the results of his effort.

Will a certain item of information lead to human learning and growth, or will it baffle and confuse? Will "knowing" it strengthen or diminish the capacity of people to "cope"? There is some evidence, says Dr. Grinspoon, that "fear-bearing communications decrease the ability of the

recipient to respond adaptively to important facts."

A popular solution for all such problems is the idea of a world court of wisdom, which is proposed from time to time. But even assuming that the thorny question of "world representation" can be settled, and that we could resolve the matter of how much power, if any, should be provided to implement the court's rulings, there is still the issue of whether even *savants* are wise enough to make far-reaching decisions for all the other people in the world. This latter question is by implication central to the deliberations of some of the most thoughtful men of our time. For example, Willis Harman, a research scientist at Stanford University, writing on revolutionary changes already under way in the scientific outlook (in *Stanford Today*, Winter, 1969), predicts that one characteristic of "the new science" will be—

the incorporation, in some form, of the age-old yet radical doctrine that we perceive the world and ourselves in it as we have been culturally "hypnotized" to perceive it. The typical commonsense-scientific view of reality will be considered a valid but partial view—a particular metaphor, so to speak. Others, such as certain religious or metaphysical views, will be considered also, and even equally, valid but more appropriate for certain areas of human experience.

So, if Dr. Harman is right, a world assemblage of the wise would not deliver rulings about "the truth," but only metaphors to consider, for people to use as they will. It is a question, of course, whether the world would listen to such a court, any more than the Athenians hearkened to Socrates.

Meanwhile, we rely on a vast collection of "adversary proceedings" to determine what is to be regarded as "true." Questions are argued out in public by specialists of various sorts, and it has become extremely difficult to distinguish between the specialists who want to educate and those who want to maintain and increase their own or their employer's power. A test might be whether, on

the most important issues, the specialist claims to supply final truth, or only a metaphor.

One effect of these endless adversary proceedings is that people in time become numb to claims of every sort, and uninterested in the uses they might make of the metaphors shyly suggested by the wise. This fatigue from listening to the debates of interest-groups may be a partial explanation of the incapacity of so many people to grasp the significance of the warnings which come from worried specialists. And we may have here the fundamental elements of what is called an "extreme situation"—a situation in which the moral necessities of some men encounter the impenetrable indifference of others. In such a situation, the power of reason breaks down. Then, for a few, personal sacrifice is seen the only remaining appeal, while others resort to violence and are met by violence in return. A great many people deplore violence, but fail to ask themselves where the major responsibility for the discredit of reason lies. Is, in fact, the declaration, "You people must listen to reason, *or else* . . .," an appeal to reason? To whom, for example, is the appeal of I. F. Stone, in his *Weekly* for last Sept. 9, most reasonably addressed?

To meet the crises of race and war which confront the country, time and patience, faith in persuasion, are required. But how preach these virtues to a youth who may be called up any day for the army? The war is destroying our country as we are destroying Vietnam. Hate and frenzy are poor substitutes for political thinking, yet the *enragés* among the youth, with their romanticism about guerilla war, may set the tune for the whole country. . . .

The real tragedy lies in the increasing abandonment of nonviolent tactics by black and white dissenters alike. To howl down those with whom we differ, to use obscenities instead of arguments, to abandon persuasion for direct action, to dehumanize the other side with cries of "pigs" and worse is to embark on a game rightists are better equipped to play, and to set examples which American Storm Troopers may some day apply to us. Hate is still the main enemy of the human race, the fuel that heats the

furnaces of genocide. How build a better world by relapsing into primitive and sanguinary habits?

Well, what is the most important question to decide: Whether or not Mr. Stone is right, or why some people are more likely than others to recognize the reason and value the warning in what he says? For example, should you clip this statement out and send it, special delivery, to Eldridge Cleaver, who recently said to certain black people whom he called "pacifists and Uncle Toms"—"get up of your knees, . . . pick up the gun, and help liberate your people"; or would it be more productive to mail to the men in the Pentagon copies of a Sorbonne student's "Reflection' on Violence," set down after the days of last May in Paris (reprinted from the *London Letter* for January/February):

I suggest that only that kind of violence may be called noble which leads to relentless self-questioning. We are like the gladiators of old times, left in the arena without the slightest chance of escape unless we "prove ourselves" worthy of survival. Confronted with, and engaged in, this form of violence the individual is personally *involved*. . . . I must reject that false violence which is practiced by our contemporaries, the kind which enables them *to submerge in anonymity*. In their actions the self plays no part. . . .

Is there anything more contemptible than *anonymous* violence of groups whatever their name? Dialogue is out of date, people say smugly, but perhaps they should be reminded that so is their kind of violence. It is merely barbarous. . . . Is it still possible to talk of violence when it becomes "comfortable"? Just reflect on the incompatibility of these two words—*comfortable violence*. It sounds like a joke.

Finally, in relation to Dr. Grinspoon on the "acceptability" of truth, which should we be most concerned with—the fact-impact or the metaphor-value of what we say?