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A TIME FOR INCUBATION

PREDICTION is at best a hazardous activity and there is probably no surer way of being proved wrong than to declare that all the possibilities of innovation have been exhausted in some particular region of human undertakings. For example, a nineteenth-century man of science once asserted—and "demonstrated" with equations—that flight by human beings in heavier-than-air vehicles was absolutely impossible. Many years ago a patent office director announced that nothing more of any importance could be invented, so extensive were the claims already recorded in his files. And in comparatively recent years, on the eve of the discovery of quasars, a Swiss physicist made known his opinion that the only remaining value of telescopic observation of the heavens lay in the checks it provided on current physical theory.

If, as we are often told, thought is rooted in feelings, it seems evident that the idea that nothing new can happen or be found out is the natural offspring of a confident complacency—an attitude which, according to George Sarton, has been characteristic of historians of science and even of historians generally, who write of the past as though the present were the very apex of human development. But what of other sorts of feelings—the feeling, for example, of *dread*, of growing anticipation that only further disasters lie in wait for the human species?

One could say, of course, that such apprehensions are exaggerated emotional reactions to a breakdown of the complacency that was so widely felt only a few decades ago, and are no better grounded in reality. Yet these two sets of feelings may not be of the same order or depth of origin. The pessimism that is beginning to afflict the present is colored with moral accountability and may have deeper roots. And even where "pessimism" does not accurately describe what is felt, there is still a strong sense of having reached some end-of-the-line impasse in the affairs of mankind. People whose personal situations are still materially quite comfortable indulge wildly extravagant language about "survival," and apocalyptic futurist predictions are becoming commonplace.

Not unrelated to these tendencies is the gradual realization on the part of literate members of the population that modern man is the most voracious and wasteful predator in history, and also the planet's most destructive polluter. A reader who has been doing some brooding on this condition of mind writes to ask:

> Can people be idealists when one sees the stricken state casually created by good men? It would appear that some time back it was found that America no longer saw the need for the heroic image, and now it is all too clear that we do not have any villains. All men are good; perhaps misunderstood, but certainly not meaning to do any wrong as they press to advance their careers and also give some assistance to the world around them. If we have no villains, how can we have any evil? With the exception of the hardly guilty targets of the frantic finger-pointing of excited politicians, where is the tagged man who threatens us all?

Of the present, we can certainly say that it is an epoch in which both literature and the arts are filled with portents of psychological decline, and that no outside force or enemy can be blamed for what is happening. In fact, the attempts of politicians to invent an "enemy" who threatens the supposed excellence of our national life amount to indisputable evidence of this decline. The susceptibility of the people to such pretense shows a widespread lack of the capacity to identify the independent currents of man's inner life, and our settled habit of regarding everything that happens to us as the result of external causes.

Quite conceivably, the arts and literature could tell us far more about ourselves at this juncture than any amount of careful psycho-social analysis. Some years ago, on Broadway, Cyril Ritchard starred in a play dealing with the last of the Roman emperors. He portrayed a ruler who refused to be dismayed at the growing threats to the empire from barbarian incursions. Pursuing his horticultural and æsthetic interests without attention to affairs of state, he hardly noticed the repeated defeats of his armies and the inexorable approach of Gothic hordes. Finally, when the barbarians were at the gates of Rome, and all seemed lost, his counselors came to him in final desperation, asking what to do. When he told them nothing, one of them said, "You don't seem to care at all!"

"I care more than any of you," he replied, "but *our time has come."* He knew by a knowledge concealed from lesser men that it was time for the empire to collapse. So, the hour having struck, he went to his garden and gathered flowers with which to deck the invaders.

Any external parallel to the present is of course very imperfect, since there are no barbarians at our gates; but perhaps, as Pogo suggested, they are now all within, and in this case we might think of Charles Reich's *Greening of America* as a contemporary version of the story of the last emperor, containing the same kind of truth.

How shall we understand the application of an idea such as that "the time has come" to an epoch of history? It can hardly make any sense except within some basically metaphysical scheme of the meaning of human experience. One could say, for example, that a period of history is morally over when there is nothing more to be learned from its characteristic patterns of experience. The forms may hang on for a while, but they grow increasingly useless and become obstacles to men of moral intelligence. For at least ten years, for example, such men have tended to agree that the socio-political form of the nation-state has lost its constructive function and turned into an instrument of oppression and reaction. Another way to put this would be to say that it has become increasingly difficult to attract men of imagination and authentic talent into the service of the State.

Actually, for some time now, individuals of truly creative ability have been nearly all found in what can be called the "salvage" professions. They are working to save what they can of torn and mutilated human beings, either as individuals, in the fields of psychotherapy and mental health and remedial education, or as communities and whole peoples in the struggle for world peace. Others are engaged in trying to solve the problems of world food supply. Today, one thinks of Bhave in India, Dolci in Europe, Chavez in the United States, and of the unknown and unnumbered persons who, in their way, are trying to be like them, because somehow they know that the time has come when there is nothing else to do.

The "time has come" for an epoch when the moral aspirations and energies of human beings can no longer find avenues of expression in the typical forms of activity which the epoch affords. It is not only that these forms of activity are no longer productive of good, but that they can no longer even be made to *look* good. It is then that the attempts to perpetuate the old beliefs become targets for muckraking ventures, and if there is any area of endeavor which now holds the promise of endless new worlds to conquer, it is muckraking. Ralph Nader will *never* run out of pretenses and corruptions to expose.

How could we possibly get so far off the track in our proud undertakings? There are doubtless scores of ways to attack this question, but one that might be helpful is the following. First, human beings are partly independent in their intellectual and moral processes, but they are also dependent. The child is partly molded by his parents, teachers, and times, yet he does not become a man until he reaches some significant degree of intellectual and moral independence or

autonomy. We know this, more or less intuitively, and on principle, but applying the principle to particular cases is very nearly the most difficult thing in the world. The mysteries and dilemmas of religion are bound up in making such applications. Also involved is the idea of distinguishing between public and private truth. In any event, an educator uses the interdependence of human beings as a way of preparing them for what freedom they are capable of—and what each individual is capable of remains unknown and is probably by nature unknown except for the wisest and most intuitive of teachers. A manager or administrator is commonly interested in social control, not in either the flowering of individuality or human freedom, since both of these are unpredictable factors which may threaten the efficiency of managerial operations. Rulers, whether kings or presidents, are usually little more than administrators. So the tendency in any society is for those in power to favor any influence or cultural habit which assists in the maintenance of control. They have quite practical reasons for this policy, and feel comfortable when the exercise of freedom and individuality is mainly in symbolic gestures which do not interfere with the ever-increasing responsibilities of the administrators.

Wise administrators do not welcome this tendency and try to oppose it, but few administrators are wise. The political process does not favor the selection of wise administrators. They may be sagacious, but they are not wise, so even the best of them may take their ruling ideas of "truth" from other men. The administrators, that is, whose profession is control, accept the aims of their art of control from other men who are said to be in closer touch with "reality." And for the past fifty years or so, the administrators of the modern world have been taking a vague sort of instruction in "reality" from men of science. What is the scientific idea of "reality"? No serious pioneer of science would presume to answer this question, but the common practice of science speaks louder than words. So defined, then, "reality" exists in those areas of the natural world where men of science have developed techniques of experiment, prediction, and control. It follows that reality is what, sooner or later, can be experimented with, and finally controlled in its behavior.

So, what science knows of men—and what is therefore "real" about man—concerns only that part of man which is *never* independent, *never* free. It follows, therefore, that no conception of the good of men which involves *transcendence* of environmental influence can reach the ears of conscientious public servants through any form of scientific education; instead, their instruction is in terms of beneficent (and orderly) influence and control. There are of course much older identifications for these attitudes on the part of administrators, found, for example, in some of Machiavelli's arguments in *The Prince,* and in the self-justifications of the Grand Inquisitor in *The Brothers Karamazov,* but the language doesn't matter much. Princes and priests practice their own sort of empiricism. The fact is, whatever terms we use to explain it, that an ignoble society has come into being as a result of the almost total neglect of the higher aspect of human beings. Only Buddhist believers in Karma and Emersonian believers in the law of Compensation would go on to say that the evidence of current history—our interfering and immeasurably cruel wars—and the testimony of the biologists and others concerning pollution are no more than confirmation of the inevitably degrading character of the behavior of such a society.

What sort of people would not have allowed these terrible things to happen? We don't know; we can hardly imagine. In fact, the development of human beings who are, as Henry Beston used to say, "on the side of life," remains pretty much of a mystery to educators. The intelligence testers have never pretended to measure character. Some leaders call for "religious revival," while others say that something of the sort is already under way, but the relation between religion as we know it and the formation of character is completely

obscure. Lynn White, Jr., for one, is convinced that our traditional religion is fundamentally responsible for the devastating consumption and waste of the natural resources of the planet, especially in the United States. Meanwhile, no overt "program" for character education has ever found much favor in the eyes of those who are close to the needs of the young. Probably the trouble is that programs for the training of character are almost always intended to reform other people.

If one adopts the metaphysical view of history suggested earlier, there are many signs, both psychological and external, that the present is the eve of a change almost wholly without precedent, and a time, therefore, of terrible waiting. Even though there is an overwhelming sense of the need to act, no certainty exists concerning what ought to be done, and, meanwhile, there is a constant dribble of worsening events—new offenses against humanity in the policy in Vietnam, further poisons identified in the environment, deepening nihilism in the reports of extreme human behavior, accompanied by excesses in the popular arts that will not even bear description. But is it a time of waiting only, or are there perhaps necessary processes of incubation going on? Do some further practical weakenings of existing structure remain to take place, in order to release a significant number of individuals from the hypnotic fascination exercised by the past? We often say that the young have neither knowledge of nor respect for the past, and this judgment may be accurate enough, but it overlooks the possibility that where there is neither knowledge nor respect, there is also freedom from confining habit, and that paths undertaken into the future with what seems to us an incredible innocence or naïveté might reveal workable alternatives which older eyes could not see at all.

There is one prediction, we think, that will stand up against all eventualities, and that is that there can be no going back to the old securities. The future cannot belong either to armies or to nation-states. Nor can the future be constructed by men who place their faith in techniques and institutions. It will be made and will belong to those who have primary faith in human beings and who rely on radical simplicities.

It should not be difficult to see that this kind of change will begin to take shape from the initiative of individuals, who work quietly, and perhaps quite spontaneously. First there will be a daring and ingenious few, and then more and more, as the pathways to Utopia multiply and are made into roads by combined but not stereotyped human effort. To become fully human means to transcend the existing environment. It means to follow an inner guide, not the dictates of custom and external authority. It also means the slow but sure evolution of a science of man, in which circumstances and conditions are recognized as points of departure rather than determining and limiting factors of control.

It is no wonder that this is a time of waiting. Where, in recent literature, is there recognition of the need for this sort of science, for this kind of recognition of the nature of man? Only an occasional pioneer and forerunner of the future has spoken of a science to be developed along these lines. We have of course much talk of freedom and much propaganda against constraint, but the idea that there may be a science of freedom, a discipline of transcendence, seems practically unknown.

There is an old Latin tag to the effect that demons are inverted gods—*Deus est Demon inversus.* We have in many ways been behaving like demons. Our wars are certainly demonic. Historians with a gift for imagery have suggested that the twentieth century has been the setting for an outbreak of the demoniacal in human nature. When one reviews the record, from death camps to atomic and nuclear explosions, from torture in Algeria to massacre in Vietnam—not to speak of the black mass of biological genocide carried on against plant and animal life in a variety of ways—nothing short of an obsession by the demonic

seems an adequate explanation. Is the Latin proverb worth considering seriously? If we are charitable to ourselves and say, in our shame, that we are not entirely demonic, but only half-way so, can we turn the polarity about and say we must be at least half-gods potentially? And if, pursuing this idea, a handful of men can be taken as symbols of the human race, since at least these few have shown godlike qualifications in their lives, could this be evidence of a common potentiality in all men?

The age itself, a man might say to himself, awaits the awakening of *his* Promethean resolve. When one man says this to himself, and acts upon it, and does it as a man and not a dreamer, the world feels the strength of his will. He becomes a redeemer. When there are a dozen such men, an epoch may be born through the power of their imagination. Has this ever happened? Not by the dozen, perhaps, but there have always been extraordinary human seeds to stir the metabolism of the great changes of history. This process has not dropped out of the natural order merely for the reason that a large collection of men, having made a considerable mess of the earth, suffer extreme depression at sight of the result of their labors, becoming so downcast as to claim that they do not know what to do.

REVIEW
WHAT COULDN'T HAPPEN—BUT DID

LARGE-SCALE farming has been going on in California ever since the gold rush of 1849 petered out and enterprising men turned to the wealth potential in the land. First they raised wheat, for which there was great demand. There is still some wheat production in California, but fruits and then vegetables have long been the state's major crops, and the farms have been growing larger ever since those early days, some 120 years ago, when it all began. Today, food raised in California feeds people throughout the country, and more than a third of the nation's large farms are in the fertile valleys of the West Coast.

The labor policies of the farmers of California have been notorious for more than a generation, having been made known to the public largely through the work of John Steinbeck, whose *Grapes of Wrath* was a best-seller which stirred the sympathies of most of its readers. A few years later Carey McWilliams' *Factories in the Field* put the sufferings and struggles of California's agricultural workers in a historical setting, telling the story of the exploitation of one racial group after another by the big growers—Chinese, Japanese, Hindus, Filipinos, Mexicans, and finally the "Okies" and "Texicans" and "Arkies," who were victims of the dust bowl, toiled in California's fields. In the fall of 1947, the workers on the home ranch of Joseph Di Giorgio, head of the vastly wealthy Di Giorgio Fruit Corporation, struck for the modest demand of an increase of ten cents an hour and union recognition. There were eleven hundred of them working on this 10,000-acre holding of Di Giorgio, located near Arvin, California, at the southern end of the San Joaquin Valley. A heroic spirit animated the strike, and much help was given by sympathizers, but the men had no way to deal with the competition of *bracero* labor (Mexican nationals, imported to work under contract), and after two and a half years the strike failed. Actually, except under very special circumstances, farm labor organization in California has seldom proved successful, for reasons not easily understood except by those who work in the field and study the obstacles at first hand.

As some few readers may remember, a MANAS editor visited the Di Giorgio strike headquarters in 1948, talked to the farm laborers, who were almost to a man former farmers, interviewed the strike organizers, and then went to see the community-oriented, cooperative farming ventures that could be located in California at that time. This was also the period when the Bureau of Reclamation (in the Department of the Interior) was trying to apply the 160-acre limitation to all the holdings that would receive additional water for irrigation from the enormous Central Valley Project—a law passed in 1902 to protect tax-payers from subsidizing other than family-size farms with water supplied by the Government provided this limitation. It did not work—it couldn't, with the trend to ever larger farms continuing without interruption—and after publishing three articles on farm labor and agriculture in California, the MANAS editors more or less gave up on the subject. Communities then seemed against the grain of American life, as Walter Goldschmit showed in his 1947 study of California agriculture, *As Ye Sow.* The strike for elementary decency at Di Giorgio failed, although if ever a union deserved to succeed, the Farm Labor Union did. There didn't seem to be any avenues that could be worked on or opened up to a better life for these people and to better ways of using the land.

It was with a rather special interest, therefore, that we received for review a new book on the struggles of California farm labor during the years since. *So Shall Ye Reap* (Crowell, $6.95) is by Joan London, the daughter of Jack London, who was involved in the cause of farm labor since girlhood, and Henry Anderson (a contributor to MANAS), who has worked as a farm labor organizer and is now doing research on pesticides for the California Department of Health. Let us

say at the outset this is the first book on the subject which has in it the actual substance and promise of a happy ending!

The closing chapters are devoted to the achievements of a famous man to whom fame is unwelcome—Cesar Chavez. The beginning is historical, and the middle is given to unsung heroes who contended against forces that, it now seems clear, no man could have overcome: the wonder is that they kept on working for as long as they did. It is right and good that the story of these individuals be told. As the authors say:

> But even as the pioneers seem to fail, they succeed. By daring to challenge the reigning ways of looking at the world, the men on the trail who are ahead of their time reduce the monopoly of the old order men's assumptions, which constitutes its great and subtle power. With the possible exception of Cesar Chavez, on whom the final evidence is not yet in, the biographical sketches in this volume are "profiles in failure," as history customarily calculates success and failure. So much the worse for history, and for us all.
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> Father Thomas McCullough, Fred Van Dyke, and Ernesto Galarza are no longer part of the farm labor movement, but if they had not dared the things they dared, the movement would not be what it is, Chavez would not have accomplished what he has accomplished, the total quotient of hope in this country among disinherited persons would be reduced, and the quotient of despair increased by that much.

Cesar Chavez was born in Arizona in 1927. Forced to give up their farm in 1938, the Chavez family came West and worked the California crops, living in their car. Cesar was thus a farm laborer from childhood, and by the time he was fourteen and had completed the eighth grade, he had to leave school to work full time in the fields. He married in his early twenties and is now the father of eight children. *So Shall Ye Reap* tells the story of his early manhood, how he participated in strikes, picketed, and became a member of the Farm Labor Union. He learned from some of the organizers of the time, but his true talent resulted from his identity with the people he is committed to serve—he is one of them and he understands them.

An intimate portrait emerges from the account of his development, and of his view of the way a labor organization ought to develop. He worked for ten years as an organizer for the Community Service Organization, but when he felt that the interests of farm labor were being neglected he resigned his job as General Director, took his savings of $900 and with his wife and eight children drove to Delano, California, settling there to work for the evolution of a farm labor program. His methods and outlook are of particular interest:

> With no outside support of any kind, Chavez began to organize agricultural workers. In order to avoid any suggestion that the organization would function immediately as an orthodox trade union, he called it the Farm Workers Association. . . . Chavez is not a dogmatic man, but he came dose to it on one point: support from outside, he was sure, could do more harm than good in the formative stages of a movement. Once, . . . he was asked, "If you were offered $250,000 to organize farm workers, how would you spend it?" "I wouldn't," he replied without hesitation. "I would turn it down. Of course," he laughed, "if you wanted to give me five or ten dollars to buy gas to get out of town, I might take it. But no more than ten dollars!"
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> Chavez felt that large or even medium-sized financial contributions carry strings which may strangle a young, immature organization, but he did not necessarily extend the same theory to an organization which had firmly charted its own course and proved its own vitality. By the end of 1965, Chavez was accepting substantial financial contributions to FWA and not only were they doing no harm, they were enabling the organization to survive what would otherwise have been fatal circumstances.

The first big victory for the Chavez organization—which was now the United Farm Workers Organizing Committee—came early in 1970, when contracts were signed with several major growers of table grapes. As many people know, a boycott against California table grapes had been sponsored by the union for several years, and finally this measure succeeded in winning the

agreement of the growers to basic wage increases, protection of the workers against pesticides, and other benefits. Looking back over what had been achieved in eight years, the authors of *So Shall Ye Reap* summarize:

> The accomplishments of Cesar Chavez, in trade union terms alone, are enough for any man's lifetime, and enough to make his organization a fork in the farm labor trail from which there can be no turning back. Even though his hand was forced at least two years prematurely, he had built so well that FWA-UFWOC was able to negotiate the first legitimate union contract in the history of California agriculture (Schenley); win the first true representation election (Di Giorgio); win all the other elections growers were willing to allow; win all the card checks growers permitted; operate hiring halls which it had been said could never work in agriculture; negotiate, renegotiate, and enforce more than a dozen contracts, covering thousands of workers with wage classifications, health insurance, paid vacations, sick leave, unemployment insurance, grievance procedures, seniority rights, and other benefits which growers had always said agriculture could not possibly grant.
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> But traditional trade union gains were not the beginning of Cesar Chavez's story, and they will not be the end. Even if California agriculture were to disappear, and the entire state were converted into freeways and parking lots, many of the accomplishments of Cesar Chavez would endure. Social movements ramify. Chavez, more than anyone else, has converted the farm labor movement into an authentic movement, with myriad ramifications.

Through this man's vision and inspiration, a spirit of self-reliance and self-respect has been reborn among the agricultural workers and the Chicanos. For Chavez, the union is an instrument for building community, "with contributions .to make in many other sectors besides the economic." No such pattern was suggested by the conventional labor organizing activities of the past, and its implicit presence in Chavez's approach to the problems of the workers—along with certain fortunate circumstances, such as the fact that *bracero* labor is no longer available to the growers—is doubtless responsible for his extraordinary success. Moreover, his attitude in relation to his adversaries is one of complete non-violence. Martin Luther King sent a telegram to Chavez at the conclusion of his twenty-five-day fast in the spring of 1968, in which he said: "You stand today as a living example of the Gandhian tradition," and the authors believe that "with Danilo Dolci and Vinoba Bhave, he is one of the great nonviolent reformers of the world."

There is much to be learned from the life of such a man. No situation seemed more forbidding and hopeless than the plight of the farm laborer in California at the time Cesar Chavez began his independent work in 1962. After a study of the situation some fourteen years earlier, a MANAS writer had felt that hardly anything short of a miracle could change the pattern of labor relations in California's agricultural valleys, while the use of the land seemed to be a form of industrial exploitation without foreseeable change. It is now evident that changes can come, if only little by little. A man who can take the tough, hard-headed realities of a struggle for union contracts and turn these circumstances into potentialities for human community is indeed, as one of his aides, Jim Drake, has said, a "man-for-the-people." The lesson is in the malleability of institutions. The labor movement is a partisan institution, but Chavez has turned it into something else. Whatever happens in the future, what he has already done is now known to be possible. Perhaps, in twenty-five or fifty years, there will be a better use of the land to take pleasure in and call attention to, or to join and become a part of.

COMMENTARY
THE MILITARY LANGUAGE

MORE and more, articles on Vietnam in the commercial press are sounding like pacifist tracts. Two weeks ago we quoted extracts from a *New Yorker* reprint which the War Resisters League had included in one of its mailings. Now we have a clipping from the *New York Times* of Jan. 4, sent by a reader, in which the writer summarizes a recent report to the American Association for the Advancement of Science on the effects of the chemical herbicides which the United States has been spraying over large areas of South Vietnam since 1962.

The barrenness and sterility are hardly imaginable. In the name of "helping" these people, we have systematically poisoned their country. The reporter muses on what lies behind an abstract word like "defoliation," recalling Sartre's observation that evil is a product of man's ability to make abstract that which is concrete. "Defoliation" is only one example:

> We have free-fire zones, a clean-sounding phrase for the mass expulsion of people from their homes and land so an alien army can kill without qualms every living creature that remains. When we bomb North Vietnam, it is only a "protective reaction strike," which does not sound as though it hurts anyone.

The massacre of a village for which Lieutenant Calley and others are being tried is only a single concrete instance of the general abstraction. This writer asks: "To kill women and children with a gun is a crime, but how does it differ morally from the mass bombing and burning and spraying that have been official policy in Vietnam?"

Whole communities, he says, are punished "for being in the wrong place at the wrong time."

What are the "concrete" facts about defoliation? Five million acres, about an eighth of the country, have been sprayed. To accomplish this has taken six pounds of chemicals for each man, woman and child in South Vietnam. Some 800,000 people have been deprived of normal food supply, including the Montagnards, "the indigenous mountain people who have been notably opposed to the Communists."

Vast forests of hardwood are destroyed. Vegetation in hundreds of thousands of acres of mangrove forests seems permanently killed and erosion of the soil is already a disaster. "It might focus our minds," the reporter says, "to think of the Florida Everglades suddenly dead, or the Blue Hills of Virginia brown and bare."

This *Times* article is called "Death in the Abstract." As the writer explains: "The United States military in Vietnam have made it a general practice to treat mass methods of death and destruction as abstractions."

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves
MATERIALS FOR AMERICAN HISTORY

IN these days of accelerating social change, with communes springing up as fast as new schools, the question of the uses of the past is a natural one to raise. In the February issue of *Community Comments,* Griscom Morgan observes:

> Deep-seated departures from established ways are required for the future of mankind, yet they need to be so well confirmed in mankind's experience that we can move with sound understanding rather than stumble without historical guidelines. . . . Taken as a whole, modern civilization is an unproved experiment. Large elements of it . . . threaten the excellence and proved value of others. The old is not sacred because it is old, and the new is not necessarily the way of the future because it is new. With historical perspective and discrimination we can find the necessary guidelines to help us maintain our roots in the past while reaching into the future.

Picking the guidelines, then, is a vitally important task. It is probably the case that all the history textbooks will need to be replaced, but we don't know enough yet to start doing it. Maybe there shouldn't be any "textbooks," but just good books. Instead of writing books "for students," we might try compiling brief orientation pamphlets with bibliographies. Why should the textbooks be replaced? Because the national state is going to be replaced, one way or another, and it is time for thinking about human associations in other than national terms.

Yet there is good in the past, as Griscom Morgan says, and ignorance of its history puts men in the same class as animals, so far as learning from experience is concerned. For study of the American past, Alexis de Tocqueville is an exceptionally valuable source. Large doses of him are difficult to take, but ten or fifteen pages a day fills the mind with material for reflection. It would be a pity if only scholars were to profit from Tocqueville. Every American would benefit, for example, from thinking about the differences between the first settlers in Virginia and the pioneer stock of New England. Then there is this:

> In the laws of Connecticut, as well as in all those of New England, we find the germ and gradual development of that township independence which is the life and mainspring of American liberty at the present day. The political existence of the majority of the nations of Europe commenced in the superior ranks of society and was gradually and imperfectly communicated to the different members of the social body. In America, on the contrary, it may be said that the township was organized before the county, the county before the state, the state before the union.

What can be learned from this? Well, the *order* of the development of self-rule seems of the essence, here. It suggests: Don't try to do anything "big" if you haven't first done it successfully on a small scale. Tocqueville exhibits a profound understanding of the importance of the habits of responsibility which are generated in this way, and of the kind of institutions they shape. He is continually impressed by the difference between the Old World and the New:

> If, after having cast a rapid glance over the state of American society in 1650, we turn to the condition of Europe, and more especially to that of the Continent, at the same period, we cannot fail to be struck with astonishment. On the continent of Europe at the beginning of the seventeenth century absolute monarchy had everywhere triumphed over the ruins of the oligarchical and feudal liberties of the Middle Ages. Never perhaps were the ideas of right more completely overlooked than in the midst of the splendor and literature of Europe; never was there less political activity among the people; never were the principles of true freedom less widely circulated; and at that very time those principles which were scorned or unknown by the nations of Europe were proclaimed in the deserts of the New World and were accepted as the future creed of a great people. The boldest theories of the human mind were reduced to practice by a community so humble that not a statesman condescended to attend to it; and a system of legislation without a precedent was produced offhand by the natural originality of men's imaginations.

We shall not here take time to mourn the decline of the virtues which Tocqueville described in the 1830's, when he wrote, with so much

appreciation. Even if he seems to be writing about some other country, he is nonetheless telling how practical autonomy in social life was once achieved. A long section of this book is devoted to the New England township, where the lessons of democracy were learned by all. Towns, he points out, have no "power," so that the survival of independence in the towns depends upon their moral vigor and on long years of self-reliant practice, so that recognition of the rights of this smallest social unit becomes incorporated into the very manners and customs of the entire civilization. "Town meetings," says Tocqueville, "are to liberty what primary schools are to science; they bring it within the people's reach, they teach men how to use and how to enjoy it."

We have been quoting from the first volume of the Vintage (paperback) edition of *Democracy in America*, issued in 1954. Another book that could be picked up and used from day to day for the same general purpose is Richard Hofsteadter's *The American Political Tradition* (Vintage, 1954), and we should add John Schaar's essay on Authority in No. 8 of the *New American Review*. Reading of this sort will get anyone interested in American history started with basic questions to pursue on his own. Schools and teaching probably shouldn't attempt more than this. People who want and expect to be spoon-fed would do better to leave school and go to work.

One direction of inquiry that has natural interest after reading Tocqueville on early American life is the role of the small community in the shaping of civilization. A sound social instinct is behind the migration of the young to the country and the formation of small, face-to-face associations, providing the best possible setting for the recovery of the relationships of normal life. The problems of the advanced societies of the present might nearly all be studied as results of the excesses of urbanism, of unnatural concentrations of power and population. A few years ago, Charles E. Dederich, the founder of Synanon, observed that the "problem-solving" approach to the ills of disturbed persons who live in urban slums cannot possibly meet the needs of these people, who are "referred" from one agency to another. What they need is a new frame of life—a *community* life, which mops up their problems by filling the barren abysses in their existence with opportunities for useful, constructive activity.

One man who has given most of a very long life to the study of the small community as the nuclear educational and socializing influence is Arthur E. Morgan, founder of Community Service, Inc., in Yellow Springs, Ohio. A chief activity of Community Service, at present, is publication of *Community Comments,* which has lately been presenting the research papers of Griscom Morgan, Arthur Morgan's son. The February issue, which we quoted earlier, is on "The Future of the Community Heritage." Here Griscom Morgan shows by illustration how various balances and social controls which operate naturally, and one could say invisibly, in community life have been lost to modern society with the dying out of the small communities in the United States and elsewhere.

It is difficult to convey the meaning of the influence exercised by a good community by means of a quotation or two. Any attempt to do so suffers from the same defect as an analytical approach to a work of art. You may learn something about the structure of the work, but the spirit is killed by taking it apart. So with community. Understanding community calls for personal experience of the subtle morale of community life. Mr. Morgan quotes from Clarence Woodbury, who wrote in *The Future of Cities and Urban Redevelopment:*

> Poor morale is just another name for the . . . lack of feeling of solidarity, of cohesion or community spirit. . . . Urban living with its diversity, complexity, money standards and impersonal character has dissolved or seriously weakened these systems. . . . This weakening has been both a cause and an index of the low morale, indifference, and splintering of the urban body, social and politic. . . . If we fail at this task [of developing a valid, revitalized system of commonly understood values], I at least can see little

long-term hope for many worthwhile programs and activities.

Mr. Morgan's paper on community deals with such broad questions as population control and crowding, showing that small communities dealt with such problems with a kind of intuitive social wisdom. Then, turning to the background attitudes which have maintained community life through the centuries, he speaks of the pantheistic philosophies of the American Indians, relating their ideas of time to modern field theory in recent biological studies, and bringing in the mind-stretching possibilities of extrasensory perception. There seems a likelihood that this sort of discussion, while brief and uncomplicated, is set at the right level for developing workable solutions for many of the problems of the age.

FRONTIERS

"Winds Out of Pandora's Box"

THE scale of the human transformation demanded of modern man often seems beyond the power of imagination to conceive, especially after reading some fresh account of the breakdowns, and moral disorders which are becoming characteristic of the age. Yet, at the same time, one can say, or should say, that the literate segment of the population—which has never been so extensive as it is today, or so well equipped with the materials of historical self-awareness and criticism—has also an opportunity which is without precedent: the people of this generation can *try* to imagine what must be done.

This is a period of history when alternative courses of action seem available to fewer and fewer persons. Necessity is increasingly the dictator, and when a man can act only from necessity, and no longer by choice, he is perilously close to losing his humanity. While a strong man may be able to hold and cherish excellences of character in his mind, his humanness then consists only in what he is, not in what he does, because he finds that he cannot *do* anything. Even so, what he does with his mind may be a torch of hope to others; or, at the very least, stir them to self-questioning.

This is the service performed by Friedrich Percyval Reck-Malleczewen in what has been termed by Hannah Arendt "one of the most important documents of the Hitler period." The personal journal of this Bavarian aristocrat was translated by Paul Rubens and published last year by Macmillan under the title, *Diary of a Man in Despair*. Mr. Rubens put it into English, he said, because he felt that much of what this tortured German confided to his journal "applies to our lives today, however different the setting and the details."

Fritz Reck wrote in a towering passion and with a terrible contempt that, finally, he could not control. He died in Dachau in 1944 by a bullet in the neck. There are no solutions in this book, only the agony of an essentially decent man. For all his hatred of Hitler and his associates, he recognized at the end that revenge is only an emotional conceit. What then is the book about? The texture of decay, the self-degradation before his eyes of people whom he had loved and respected. In one place he says:

> It is an old theory of mine that gasoline has done far more harm to mankind than alcohol, and I am sure that the masses in the United States or England react just as little to what happens to them as the Germans. But it is shattering when this Hottentot condition happens to one's own people. The average German now registers developments as he would the scores of the Sunday football games, shouts happily over the results and has forgotten all about them by next morning. He has gotten into the habit of victory, and takes each successive triumph more and more for granted, which is charmingly simple of him—except that he is becoming more and more brutalized, and the level of his greed is constantly going up. I can hear the rumbling of a terrible storm in the distance.
>
> Truly, with the Germans it is as I have said: every nation normally puts its demons, its delusions, its impossible desires away into the cellars and vaults and underground prisons of its unconscious; the Germans have reversed the process, and have let them loose. The contents have escaped like the winds out of Pandora's box. A storm is raging across this long-suffering old earth. Germany, drunk with victory, is sick. The language one hears, the speech of war commentators, the talk in the coffee houses, together with the German of the military, has degenerated into a kind of street jargon that makes the blood run cold. The newspapers heap coals of fire on the banished Kaiser because he supposedly blocked a plan to have London erased from the map by a gigantic fleet of zeppelins in 1916. Little receptionists cry for blood, and old ladies who still have the aura of a better time now use slang to describe enemy statesmen that would make a Hamburg bartender stare.

This was in 1940. The ugliness grows with the war, the Nazis become insanely suspicious of everyone, and executions take place every day; but the horror of this writer for what they stand for and are doing does not change: it was fully developed at the beginning.

What was the fatal flaw in Germany? Hundreds of books have failed to provide a clear answer. They fail, perhaps, from supposing they must uncover a uniquely German ill.

Fritz Reck writes witheringly of a German government "whose Magna Charter was a broken treaty and whose foundations are largely propaganda!" Two paperbacks which came in for review recently could be read as similar comments on the involvement of the United States in Indo-China. One is John J. Abt's *Who Has the Right To Make War?* (International Publishers, 95 cents), the other, *Kill for Peace?* (*Corpus* Publications, $1.50), by Richard McSorley. Abt is a constitutional lawyer, McSorley a Catholic priest. Abt challenges the legitimacy of the war from a legal point of view, McSorley as a Christian moralist. It becomes clear that from neither stance can anything be said in defense of this war.

Mr. Abt discloses the discouraging fact that various presidents of the United States had usurped the prerogatives of Congress and made war beyond the borders of the nation more than a hundred times before the present activity in Vietnam. Which is to say that while it may be useful to know the legal case against this war, much more than a legal case is needed to bring it to an end. Richard McSorley shows that the Vietnam war "is an immoral war by every and any moral test." He also doubts that any war could be "legitimate" today, citing Max Born's view that "technology and war are incompatible." The following, perhaps, embodies the view of this writer:

> We have been forced by the circumstances of weapon power and national power to consider the moral values which always should have been our guide. We can now see plainly that compounding violence is in no way a useful response. For the first time in history, we consider the wisdom of the Gospel: "Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good" (Romans 12:21). "Love your enemy"—not because we have reached some new level of moral development, but because we see that without principles like these we have nothing to guide us and to save us from destruction.

Love may indeed be able to overcome fear, but what sort of "love" can be generated out of fear, whether inspired by impending destruction or by the threat of some other dark fate?

All such studies help, since they speak to some part of man's nature, to some portion of the population, yet the change that is called for, one must think, can have its genesis only at a much deeper level, from motives prior to both legal and prudential considerations. While we may know little or nothing about this aspect of ourselves, we are able to acknowledge its reality in human beings, since rare men have found access to it.