

## THE FAR HORIZON

THE unending flow of books dealing with the horror, stupidity, and immorality of war makes it reasonable to ask whether the anti-war movement may be a narrowly confined expression of an even deeper change in the human spirit. Except for the stance of time-honored religious groups—the Buddhists in the Orient and the peace churches of Christianity in the West—the idea of putting an end to war is a very recent proposal. As Charles Chatfield remarks in his just published book, *For Peace and Justice: Pacifism in America, 1914-1941* (University of Tennessee Press, 1971, \$11.95), "There was no substantial body of secular pacifism in America before the twentieth century." Not until after World War I did there emerge the nucleus of a movement for peace which had roots in social and sociological thinking, as well as a religious inspiration.

There had been "peace plans," to be sure, but the men who had been conscientious objectors to World War I, along with their supporters, represented something new in human affairs, for they began to produce a body of thought devoted to the idea that people should not wait on governments to make peace, but should take the initiative themselves. Today, the idea of opposition to war is a well-established cultural attitude embodied in the platforms and policies of a large number of organizations, while the moral appeal of non-violence has exercised so wide an influence that militant groups feel obliged to argue against it, in order to justify their guerrilla tactics or the use of bombs or other weapons.

How is the modern struggle against war to be understood? Is it no more than a reaction against the increasing destructiveness of the weapons which scientific research has made available? Or is there also a deepening moral awareness affecting the lives of a great many people, giving strong foundations to the anti-war movement?

We know that revulsion against war has been the source of serious efforts to alter conventional anthropological views of "human nature," starting, perhaps, with Kropotkin's *Mutual Aid*, which challenged the claims of the social Darwinists concerning the law of survival of the fittest as a biological justification of war. This debate still continues between the champions of friendliness and cooperation and the advocates of natural "aggressiveness" and inborn hostility. Even among the pacifists, there are wide theoretical divisions. Some maintain that a transformation of human nature will be necessary before there can be an end to war, while others insist that this is defeatism, since social justice and intelligent conciliation can be a means to peace among even men as imperfect as they are today.

It seems clear that human beings are better at dreaming of utopian conditions than they are in bringing them about. The pacifists who worked to stave off the first world war suffered terrible disappointments, and the same could be said of the many more workers for peace who labored throughout the 1930's, in the churches and in other organizations. Yet it would be foolish to say that they labored in vain. Each generation that comes along seems less inclined to submit to the call to war, and this reluctance may at root be something more fundamental than the rejection, as today, of a peculiarly revolting and morally objectionable war. A new attitude of human beings toward one another may slowly be taking shape.

Is this only a "utopian" speculation? It may be, yet the alternative that *nothing* good is happening to or in the human race may be even less acceptable. Consider the practical consequences of a purely biological conception of development for human beings: If we assume that there is and can be nothing more to men than an

expanded physiology can teach us, how can we resist the argument to apply, say, stockyard methods of improvement to the human species? Yet this goes against our deepest feelings and our sense of the moral fitness of things. Moreover, such proposals ignore that some of the most memorable members of the human race were often rather poor physical specimens, which hardly seems to matter when we consider what they achieved. There was nothing "biological" about their eminence, which is recognized by other and quite nonphysical yardsticks. Why, then, should we assume that future human development has only a biological measure? It is even conceivable that the habit of thinking about men only in biological terms is one of the causes of the mediocrity, if not the ignobility, of our present civilization.

It is no secret that low aspirations generate low achievement. As one perceptive humanist psychologist remarked of mechanist and behaviorist conceptions: the danger is not that they may be true, but that they may *become* true. Studies of dehumanization abound; they deal with retrograde tendencies in human life; why should not the same possibilities exist for humanization or rehumanization?

It may be difficult to find "models" for a society of the sort that would prevail in a warless world. Yet this is hardly an argument against attempts to visualize such a society and work for its realization. Perhaps the idea of a warless world is an indispensable symbol for the next step of human development. Perhaps devotion to that ideal is one of the means by which men will discover, little by little, what they ought to be doing with their lives. Thinking about the symbol, affirming the ideal, pointing to its desirability, and contrasting the evils of war with this vision may be activities which will help to generate the insight that we need to make the changes in our lives which are necessary to peace.

There is probably a substantial difference between the reality to be realized and the symbol

we use to represent it. For example, it seems likely that a peaceful people would never find it necessary to speak of "peace." Nor would a community of the wise hold lectures and seminars on the importance of wisdom. Only in a society torn by conflict does it become necessary to speak of peace, and only among the ignorant is it useful to speak of wisdom. And in both cases there is an inevitable artificiality in what is said. The doctrine is never the same as the thing it concerns, yet the doctrine is indispensable, just as trial and error are indispensable to all growth.

The men and women who went to work to put an end to war during World War I and after kept their eyes on the far horizon of a warless world, trying to imagine what they must do to increase its possibility. They paid a hard price for their efforts. They wanted fellowship and they got—isolation. Evan Thomas, a conscientious objector to World War I, wrote to his brother Norman that the position of the pacifist was "so devilish unhuman," since it set him apart from the soldiers whose idealism he felt, but which he could not share in the same way. Sitting in the army barracks at Fort Riley, where he had been segregated, he wrote:

The comradeship one must give up, the being part of the fun and hardship of all this, yes of fighting and maybe dying along with the rest of your fellows on both sides in this huge human tragedy makes my stand seem so terribly aloof, so terribly unhuman. . . . I will see it through only I no longer feel like criticizing even the Y.M.C.A. Their stand is human . . . and I'm not sure that we two have always understood the terrible pressure of this game.

Jane Addams, another who stood firm, unable to participate in the "pathetic belief in the regenerative effects of war," spoke also of those in the ranks of the peacemakers who traveled "from the mire of self-pity straight to the barren hills of self-righteousness," and found no personal peace in either place. Wiser, perhaps, than many of her colleagues, Miss Addams knew the Gethsemane of pacifists who could find no comfort in feelings of personal virtue:

The pacifist, during the period of the war . . . was sick at heart from causes which to him were hidden and impossible to analyze. He was at times devoured by a veritable dissatisfaction with life. Was he thus bearing his share of blood-guiltiness, the morbid sense of contradiction and inexplicable suicide which modern war implies? We certainly had none of the internal contentment of the doctrinaire, the ineffable solace of the self-righteous which was imputed to us. No one knew better than we how feeble and futile we were against the impregnable weight of public opinion, the universal confusion of a world at war.

During World War I, social arguments were added by scholarly pacifists to the case against war. Randolph Bourne challenged John Dewey's support of the war, claiming it to be an intellectual default, and the application of sociological principles to the issue broadened the base of the argument from religious to humanitarian grounds. Charles Chatfield writes in a summarizing passage:

All the elements of later "revisionist" writing on the war question can be found in the antiwar literature of 1917-18. Pacifists and socialists alike stressed the role of commercial competition, imperialism, secret treaties, and war profits. Behind their rhetoric was a growing recognition of the power of nationalism with its psychological extensions of fear and pride which went beyond a strictly economic explanation and which enabled pacifists to distribute responsibility for the war among all the nations embroiled in it. Thus, young Devere Allen, a senior at Oberlin College, argued that there was no righteous side in the war. All nations shared the blame for its outbreak and the injustice and deceit which characterized the conflict. America could not rightfully fight for the freedom of the seas from German submarines when she had wilfully allowed Britain to abrogate that freedom. In a struggle to uphold humanity and democracy the nation would have to give tacit consent to the Allies' illegal food blockade of Germany, their violation of Greek neutrality, and the desecration of Poland by Russia. In fighting German tyranny the United States would help preserve 'the despotic internal politics of all the allied nations. . . ." Allen concluded: "In short, we fight against evil that is disagreeably successful, we strive to overthrow one sinner by the side of another sinner, of like kind, but of lesser degree. . . ." Jane Addams, Kirby Page, and others found that their

reports of Allied atrocities were resented by the public, which accepted a devil theory of warfare.

Chatfield's book, *For Peace and Justice*, is a detailed account of the efforts of pacifist organizations and groups to affect the policies of the nation. It is the story of the Fellowship of Reconciliation and its leaders, of the War Resisters League, the Friends Service Committee, the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, and several other groups, as well as of leaders such as A. J. Muste. This book shows the gradual penetration of pacifist ideas into the thought of a great many ordinary people, the influence of Gandhi, mainly through the work of Richard Gregg, and a widely effective education of the general public in the futility of war. Muste, the most well-known and indefatigable of the workers for peace, liked to quote Martin Buber on the work of the pacifists—"to drive the plowshare of the normative principle into the hard soil of political reality." But what was actually accomplished by all this effort may have been to have an effect at a deeper level—to prepare men's minds for a deeper realization concerning their own being and role or purpose in life.

It cannot be said that there have been any significant developments in political thought in recent years, either in the United States or elsewhere. Yet there are certainly profound changes in the attitudes of the young in respect to the political sphere and all forms of partisan side-taking. The world may slowly be getting ready for a holiday from conflicts of this sort. Timetables in such matters are ridiculous, yet it seems clear that the best of the coming generation will have nothing to do with activities which, on the surface, have been the cause of war. This means the rivalries and competition, the aggressions and retaliations which have been characteristic of Western history for many centuries. The rejection of all this is entirely consistent with the dream of a world without war.

One might say that the peace movement of today is fatigued and disillusioned. A pacifist

writer remarked recently that "Dr. Strangelove's subtitle has come true: We have learned to stop worrying and, if not love, at least accept the Bomb." The accounts of the killing in Vietnam go on, and so distrustful have we become of claims that the war will be ended that public pronouncements are often read in reverse. But there is on the other side of this picture the fact that more and more of the young of draft age find it simply unthinkable to go off to war. They may not choose heroic solutions, but the resistance is felt, the friction has its effect. And it is more than happenstance that today a book titled *To End War* (Harper & Row paperback, \$1.50) is in use in some fifty colleges as an introduction to the courses dealing with the issues of war and peace. *This* would have been unthinkable, fifty years ago, or even twenty-five years ago. In a preliminary note to the reader, after reviewing the discouraging prospects for peace in the present, the authors, Robert Pickus and Robert Woito, say:

Given these realities, why look to the American citizen for the new initiatives needed? Can laymen lead in the construction of international or supranational institutions that can interdict the use of mass violence? Why turn to American citizens instead of to government for action that can develop a sense of world community strong enough to allow such institutions to resolve conflict without violence? Why regard America, of all nations, as likely to help certain and needed change come in the new nations with minimal violence?

For three reasons: because present governmental leaders won't undertake these tasks; because citizens can; because the fulfillment of the best in our tradition requires that they do.

We live in a world dominated by war. Any present American administration takes office with a spoken or unspoken commitment to the people of the United States to organize national military power for the security of this nation. *We cannot count on present governmental figures to lead us to peace because their primary commitment is dictated by military contingencies. The domain of that commitment is set not by their choice but by the degree of threat posed by other nations' military programs.* For entering a war or an arms race prepared to come in second is the worst possible

course of action. So governments talk peace and do as they have always done: prepare for and wage war.

Only the American people can authorize a fundamental change in direction. Without the burden of immediate governmental responsibility they can initiate currents of thought and policy that break with traditional conceptions of security and deal more adequately with a world of nuclear weapons. The means for citizen action are at hand. Despite currently popular attacks on the political process in this country, entry into the public policy arena is wide open. American government *does* reflect public belief and concern. But there is not yet agreement on policies that can control the threat of war nor is there the will to take the risks involved in pursuing them. When there is, Washington will reflect public understanding and America will lead in work for a world without war.

This book, *To End War*, is an expanded bibliography designed to provide the reader with a guide to reading about the major aspects of the war/peace problem. There are twelve sections in the bibliography, each with an introductory essay outlining the field covered. Topics include the causes of war, disarmament, world development and community, international organizations and law, U.S. international relations, the Communist nations and their relations, war/peace crisis areas around the world, philosophical and religious thought on war, conscientious objection, the nonviolent approach to social change, peace and political processes, and peace research. A second part presents various choices of action for peace and a final section lists resources available to those who want to work for peace. The book has more than 300 pages and a good index.

An interesting section of this book presents seven current contexts for regarding the issue of war. These frames of assumption are believed by the authors to include all the major positions regarding a present-day war. Each position contains varying emphases, but has "a clearly identifiable central thrust." Following are the seven "contexts":

(1) *Win*: a policy for achieving peace through the military defeat of Communism.

(2) *The Standard American Approach*: a policy for maintaining peace through a preponderance of American military power.

(3) *The Revised Standard Version*: a policy of achieving peace through military deterrence while strengthening international institutions and pursuing the other requisites of a stable peace.

(4) *"Reactive Politics"*: a *potpourri* of political and apolitical views arguing that America is the single villain in world affairs and/or that stopping the U.S. from intervening in other countries will bring peace.

(5) *Marxist*: peace through Communist world domination.

(6) *Traditional Pacifism*: peace through a commitment to non-violence.

(7) *Priorities*: the new withdrawal of America from attempts to shape world politics. This context, which can be acclimated to political views as diverse as President Nixon's and the mass media defined anti-war movement is the context coming to increasing prominence in the seventies.

This section continues with a brief expansion of each of these outlooks and concludes with what is termed a "developed peace position."

One thinks, in connection with this excellent text on the possibilities and means of making permanent peace, of Henry T. Buckle's analysis of cultural change, given in his *History of Civilization in England*. In the first volume, he speaks of how, when great ideas are first introduced, their advocates are rejected and even martyred. But after a few generations, as the ideas slowly percolate into the thought of the age, "there comes a period when these very truths are looked upon as commonplace facts, and a little later there comes a period in which they are declared to be necessary, and even the dullest intellect wonders how they could ever have been denied."

It is impossible to say where, on this scale, the pacifist idea is presently located, but the wide circulation of this book, *To End War*, may be indication of considerable progress since 1917. In

more ways than we may commonly realize, this is an age of transition.

## *REVIEW*

### THE MEANING OF DEMOCRACY

IT would be easy to say that all young people of college age, and perhaps those of highschool age, ought to read *After the Revolution?* (Yale University Press, 1971) by Robert A. Dahl, and we should like to say just that, yet must confess, instead, that many of the young of student age we have met recently seem more inclined to read nothing at all. Yet this book is so clearly written, so basic in its approach, and so sensible in its conclusions, that it would certainly meet with a better reception than the texts that are used at these levels. It is mainly a book of uncommonly persuasive common sense and would serve as a splendid antidote to what a great many people suppose to be political "thinking." Basically it is an inquiry into why we, or most people, believe in democracy, what democracy is, how much we have of it, what sort, and, finally, a consideration of how the practice of self-determination may possibly be increased in our common life.

Mr. Dahl gets rid of all slogan thinking by inventing a simple vocabulary of his own and persuading the reader to use it. He is never really difficult to understand, but he does require sustained attention to what he says. He begins by dealing with the idea of "revolution":

I have noticed that during the course of the last few years, revolution has swiftly become an in-word in the United States. In this respect the United States has been less developed than the Third World, where revolution has long been an in-word applied indifferently to the acquisition of a new military aircraft or a new military dictatorship. I find its increased usage in the United States somewhat worrisome, not because the increase foreshadows revolution, . . . but because I fear it means we are in for a period of putting rococo decorations on existing structures. A large part of politics consists of purely expressive actions with little or no consequence for social, economic, or political change, and to roll the word revolution trippingly off the tongue appears to be peculiarly cathartic. It has sometimes seemed to me that there is an inverse relationship between the rate at which the word is used in a given country and

the rate of change in the distribution of power and privilege. Some of the most profound changes in the world take place in a quiet country like Denmark, where hardly anyone raises his voice and the rhetoric of revolution finds few admirers.

This urbane mood persists throughout *After the Revolution?*, which, as the subtitle, "Authority in a Good Society," suggests, is concerned with deciding what sort of democracy is at once most desirable and most workable. The answer, of course, is that different needs in different circumstances call for different modifications of the democratic principle. Mr. Dahl early establishes three criteria for measuring the worth of a decision-making process or authority:

First, a process may insure that decisions correspond with my own personal choice. Second, a process may insure decisions informed by a special competence that would be less likely under alternative procedures. Third, a process may be less perfect than the other alternatives but, on balance, more satisfactory simply because it economizes on the amount of time, attention, and energy I must give to it. Let me call these respectively the Criterion of Personal Choice, the Criterion of Competence, and the Criterion of Economy.

For common-sense analysis, these principles serve admirably, yet one may feel that something rather important is missing. For example, the eighteenth-century philosophers believed that human law-makers ought to try to approximate the Natural Law in their conclusions, however imperfectly. We do not speak of Natural Law, any more, since this rule has, so to speak, been repealed by the Positivists, yet there is a feeling in human beings that the principles they live by ought to be somehow consistent with the general meaning of life. Now it is true that interpreting the General Meaning of Life in legislation would be a most difficult task; yet there is at least the mood of this idea in the Declaration of Independence. Moreover, the moral ground of the idea of civil disobedience proposes that such an order exists, and that it deserves an appropriate respect, even though we are admittedly unable to give it precise definition.

Possibly what we are talking about comes in better as a pervasive cultural background rather than a principle of law. For example, in contemporary economic reasoning, only those costs are considered which are measurable in terms of market value. The costs such as Rachel Carson enumerated, such as certain psychologists have described as "dehumanization," and various others which may be summed up under the rubric of "direct negative effects" do not now come into economic calculations. They will, no doubt, in the future, and they would in a civilization more aware of the values which they represent, but they do not now enter in. Perhaps Mr. Dahl would say that these considerations may be assimilated under the criterion of Personal Choice, yet that they are not named specifically in a statement of political criteria may only illustrate the *derived* character of all political philosophy. Quite conceivably, political principles should never be permitted to stand alone.

The third section of this book, "From Principles to Problems," is of great practical value in the removal of illusions and the exposure of myths. For example, several other countries—among them Australia, Britain, and Norway—show a more equitable distribution of wealth than the United States. Mr. Dahl cites the figures and illustrates some of the consequences of the disparity in income in America:

Although there seems to have been a decline in the concentration of wealth since 1929, when the top one-half of one per cent of all persons in the U.S. owned one-third of the wealth, it was nonetheless true that in 1956 (the latest year for which I have been able to find comparable data) the top one-half of one per cent owned one-quarter of the wealth of the country.

I have stressed inequalities in wealth and incomes because they reveal how far this country falls short not only of an ideal but of an actual condition of equality which was taken for granted by democrats like Jefferson and Madison in the early years of the Republic. But there is another important reason for particularly stressing incomes. When we attempt to compensate for gross inequalities in incomes by means other than providing income itself, the result is

likely to be a patchwork of irritating regulations enforced by bureaucratic agencies. It is exactly this that has helped to make a mess of welfare in the United States. At one extreme, the range of personal choice is vastly increased by opulence; at the other it is drastically restricted, not only by the deprivations inflicted by low income but by the enormous network of bureaucratic regulations and restraints that have bedeviled the life of the welfare recipient in the United States. Instead of providing the poor with unrestricted income with which they could make their own personal choices effective, our system of welfare payments has treated them as wards of the state incompetent to make their own decisions. The disastrous results have finally become so evident that provision for a guaranteed income as a substitute for welfare now seems inevitable. Yet the central and most obvious implication of this experience might easily be lost sight of: extreme inequalities in income such as now exist in the United States mean extreme inequalities in capacity to make personal choices effective, and hence extreme inequalities in individual freedom. Bureaucratic regulatory devices may compensate for loss of income; they cannot compensate for loss of personal choice, freedom, dignity, and self-respect.

Of particular interest is Mr. Dahl's discussion of the enormous and virtually uncontrolled power of corporate enterprise in the United States. Back in the days when the defining conceptions of rights and freedom were being shaped by the American people, the owners of land were the men who worked it, so that ownership was taken as representative of all the rights involved. This conception survived vast economic changes:

The sanctity of the private property owned by the farmer and small merchant became sanctified in the "private" property of the corporation. Because a nation of farmers had believed in the virtues of private enterprise, a nation of employees continued to accept the virtues of "private" enterprise.

The transfer of the old ideology to the new economy required a vast optical illusion. For nothing could be less appropriate than to consider the giant firm a *private* enterprise. Whatever may be the optimal way of governing the great corporation, surely it is a delusion to consider it a *private* enterprise. General Motors is as much a public enterprise as the U.S. Post Office. With gross receipts approximately equal to Sweden's Gross

National Product; with employees and their families about as large as the total population of New Zealand; France or Germany, wholly dependent for its survival during every second of its operations on a vast network of laws, protection, services, inducements, constraints, and coercions provided by innumerable governments, federal, state, local, foreign, General Motors is de facto the public's business. It is hardly to be wondered at that the head of General Motors could have believed, and what is more uttered in public, that what is good for General Motors is good for the United States. In the circumstances, to think of General Motors as *private* instead of *public* is an absurdity.

Discussing the "government" of the corporation at some length, Mr. Dahl shows that what the socialists call "public ownership" is no solution at all, since in Soviet Russia, "the general 'public,' as distinct from state officials, has no more to say about the government of enterprises than the general 'public' in the U.S. has to say about the government of General Motors; and workers have probably even less to say than in this country." The stockholders of large corporations do not, could not, and do not really want to "run" the companies they nominally "own"; in fact, ownership doesn't mean much of anything, any more. If anyone has a real interest in seeing that these companies are properly run, along with the managers, it is the employees and the customers, although Dahl admits that trade union leaders would probably frown on any such proposal. He suggests something called "interest group management" as a possibility, but prefers self-management along the lines of Yugoslavian industrial democracy, which has proved far more democratic in the government of economic enterprise than anything in the USSR. However, he by no means points to Yugoslavia as a political model, since "merely to advocate an opposition party may land one in jail" in Yugoslavia today, as the cases of Djilas and Mihajlov show.

The book concludes with an advocacy of small-scale democracy in the neighborhoods of large cities, in units of about 500 persons, as a means of working toward the restoration of the

primary processes of self-government. The author concludes:

I do not see how we can do what needs to be done until an integral part of our culture and habits of thought is a vision of the potentiality of the city as a major civilizing force; a unit of human proportions in a world grown giant, demonic, incomprehensible; an optimal site for democracy; an education in the arts and habits of the democratic life; an association in which citizens can learn that collective benefits from cooperation and peaceful conflict are so great that rational self-interest must act as a restraint on self-destructive egoism, an opportunity to engage in creating a new kind of community the shape of which no expert can foresee and to which every citizen can contribute.



## **COMMENTARY**

### **AVENUES TO VISION**

IT is the idea of Mihajlo Mihajlov that the ordeal of totalitarian rule can have a purging and even an inspiring influence on its victims (see *Frontiers*), and one could certainly draw this conclusion from the lives of some of the characters in Solzhenitsyn's *The First Circle*. It is as though an intelligent man, subjected to this sort of tyranny, is driven to reflection on the ultimates of human existence, coming to realize that what Maslow called Being-needs have far greater importance than the deficiency-needs on which political claims and ideologies are founded. Perhaps the pain in men's lives acts as a kind of rack which stretches out certain popular illusions until they snap, leaving the way clear for another order of awareness.

Yet this sort of awakening to transcendental conceptions does not always require the spur of externally caused pain. Sometimes a deep inward feeling of dissatisfaction stirs a man to his very roots and forces him to change his life. He has the pain, but it arises from his own sense of fitness or moral order. Mihajlov might call it a gnawing feeling of metaphysical guilt, suggesting that the time has come to look at himself without flinching or excuses.

Perhaps the most dramatic case of this self-caused kind of awakening is found in Leo Tolstoy's extraordinary record of his inner struggle, given in *My Confession*. No one was persecuting Tolstoy. On the contrary, as a famous novelist, he was lionized by society. The feeling of the meaninglessness of his life was born against the external evidence of his time. Yet he realized, somehow, that he *knew* better and could *do* better. His recovery from extreme depression began only when he decided he could blame no one for his suffering but himself.

There was more than this at the foundation of Tolstoy's changed life, but the idea of personal accountability was certainly the key to the change.

The thought of such men has little or nothing in common with the prevailing diagnoses of the age. Yet it seems likely that there will be no higher life for mankind without this sort of thinking, and the cost of having to be driven to it runs very high.

The present generation of rebellious youth in the United States is sometimes spoken of as "affluent," as though to discredit their dissent. Yet it is surely to their credit that their resistance to today's militarism and to the acquisitive habits of the times springs from an inner moral rejection and not from claims that they have been "deprived" of any material benefits. They, too, in their way, are moved from within.

## CHILDREN ... and Ourselves ADVENTURE STORY

THE education of a child, said Francisco Ferrer, begins with his grandfather. The school described in *The School in Rose Valley—A Parent Venture in Education* (Johns Hopkins Press, 1971, \$8.95), by Grace Rotzel, might be taken as an illustration of what Ferrer meant. This school got going in 1929, and was in for a period of hard times which the parents and teachers made into good times for the children, but the story and meaning of the school, as Grace Rotzel shows, go back into the nineteenth century. Its inspiration, you could say, came from ideas and feelings about human life which were given currency by John Ruskin and William Morris. At the turn of the century some people who lived in near-by Philadelphia organized the Rose Valley Association, a company intended to encourage the handcrafts. They secured some land on Ridley Creek in Delaware County, Pennsylvania, and planned workshops where craftsmen would produce beautiful things under wholesome conditions. Furniture, bookbinding, metalwork, handwrought jewelry, and ceramics were among the projects undertaken. Many Rose Valley people became involved, but while the project was acclaimed an artistic success, financially it was a failure. The products were too expensive and people didn't buy them.

But there was no failure so far as the generation of human attitudes was concerned. Other undertakings survived—the Hedgerow players for one—and in 1929 the parents of the area had reason to think that they could do better for their children than the conventional schools of the day. They organized themselves into committees, persuaded Grace Rotzel, who had worked with Marietta Johnson in her school at Fairhope, Alabama, to be principal, and everyone went to work. As Miss Rotzel tells it:

The parent committees were to find pupils, a house, and funds, and I was to make plans to put the whole in operation. My only addition to the plan, a request for the shop and a shop man, was accepted, and school opened in September, 1929, in the little house where we had our first meetings. This building fitted comfortably the needs of twenty-nine children and five teachers, with its many doors opening out on attractive outdoor living space. A large open field was perfect for kite flying, garden making, and various digging operations. At the lower end of the property, under a big willow, large blackspotted orange salamanders lived in the spring that fed a stream of interesting life, such as caddie worms, back-swimmers, minnows, tadpoles, and snails. The adjacent Geary woods leading down to the marsh was ours also to roam over and investigate, and this, with the stream-bound meadow, made a perfect setting for our school.

The development of this school reads something like an adventure story. After more than forty years, it is possible to look back on those early days and say that the ingredients of the School in Rose Valley were just about perfect, and *no wonder* it turned out so well! This may be true enough, but the people involved at the time didn't know all that. They had to make it come out the way it did.

In his foreword to the story, Leon J. Saul says:

This is the kind of school in which learning becomes so enjoyable that a child cried if he had to miss a day, a school he wept to leave when his age required departure. It is a school where he absorbed pleasurably so much real knowledge that he could go on to superior accomplishments in the routinized lock-stepped schools that are so typical of today's educational system.

Why did this school survive and flourish? The answer lies somewhere in the interaction of the parents, the children, and Grace Rotzel, who tells this story. The parents' secret was their intense interest; Grace's secret was that her interests matched theirs. She is a woman whose inner light radiates through all she says and does. Because of this quality she was asked to be the first principal of the school; because of it she attracted like people to the staff, and guided the gleam in the eyes of parents to fruition. This quality was partly her own personality and partly her interest

in all of life—her feeling and learning through the feeling and learning of the children. . . .

This is the story of a school that stimulates and encourages children to follow their own natural impulses of interest, curiosity, and creativity, allowing and helping them to learn by exploring and experimenting in the real world, as well as with books and abstractions. Here the child becomes interested in arithmetic by building, in science by observing and living with animals and trees, in astronomy by trying to create a representation of a solar system, and in art by exercising his own artistic expression. . . .

An extract from a *Parents' Bulletin* issued in 1930 tells about the "astronomy":

People visiting the school have wondered about the big eighteen-inch rubber ball in the cedar tree by the shop. That is the center of our solar system. Owen Stephens, Barbara's father, thought out the scheme for us. The fourth grade measured the distances and placed the planets. The first planet, Mercury, is a tiny bead seventy feet from the sun. It hangs on a branch of the beech tree, and like the other planets, has a waterproof label. Venus, a slightly larger bead, is on the maple, one hundred and thirty feet distant. The earth, a bead about the size of Venus, is at a distance of one hundred and eighty feet, and Mars is three hundred feet away down by the chokecherry. The rest of the planets are off the school grounds. Jupiter, a tennis ball, is in an apple tree in Eugene Brewer's yard, approximately one thousand feet from the sun. Saturn, an inch-and-a-half ball, with a cardboard ring, is seventeen hundred feet away in Ned Chandlee's yard. Uranus, a marble, is thirty-five hundred feet distant in Richard Taylor's yard in Media. Neptune is fifty-five hundred feet from school in the yard of James Vail in Media. Planet X (not yet called Pluto) is at Broomall's Dam, seven thousand feet away.

On April 22 the fourth grade, with Owen Stephens as chief explainer, went to Swarthmore to see Jupiter and its moons through the big telescope.

It is difficult to do anything with this book except to quote from it. The value is in its original flavor. People are still "discovering" what the teachers at the School in Rose Valley found out a long time ago. For quite a while, some parents were a bit worried about the school:

The shop and outdoor activities gave the community its first inkling that this school was different. A building being made by children, and a group wandering along streams with fish nets and pails were visible. "Of course the children are having a good time, but that isn't education! How will they ever pass examinations?" Timid parents removed their children with a minimum of delay; others transferred at the end of the year.

Many visitors, then and in later years, were dismayed by the activity they saw and by the informal nature of the classrooms. Prospective parents usually asked to see the oldest group, for there they could observe children accustomed to the school, and could judge the kind of learning going on. It could be disconcerting if one expected a sober, quiet, studious atmosphere, to find children painting a map on the floor, a few arranging a display on the ceiling, small groups each working on something engrossing, possibly a few doing nothing, but all completely oblivious to the noise. Some visitors came away in shock; others with the remark, "If only I had gone to a school like this!" And the usual question arose, "How will they adjust to another school in seventh grade?" In the early days we had to answer that we did not know, but we added that the pupils had managed to adjust to many situations, and we expected them to continue to do so. We were happy to find later that our expectations were borne out. Most of the children met the educational requirements of the public or private schools they attended later with large margins of safety.

The hard times of the early thirties didn't hurt the school at all. The parents and teachers had to learn how to make their own equipment, the school stayed small, and at least half the teachers were mothers, a number of them having professional requirements. Usually, parents and offspring were in separate areas and the advantages of having parents and their children in the same school outweighed the disadvantages. When, after five years, the land and building they were renting was sold, they raised a little money, "borrowed" three acres of land, obtained plans from some architect parents, and everybody pitched in—men, women, and children—to build its own school house for the School in Rose Valley:

Only a small percentage of fathers were technically equipped—professors of Sanskrit, literature, finance; artists; lawyers; researchers—they all wheeled barrows of cement, laid foundation blocks, nailed on roof and siding; their wives and older children helped. No labor was hired except for the basement. The plumbing was installed by one whose regular job was designing medical instruments for the Johnson Foundation; the building was wired by fathers who worked for the Philadelphia Electric Company; and a heating system was put in by a father in the furnace business. Work continued from March to September on the thirty-five by ninety foot structure called the Main Building. It was incomplete at the opening of school but the weather was mild, the building usable and fathers continued to work weekends well on into the winter to finish it. . . . By June 1935, we were on the way. The budget was encouraging; there was a small manageable deficit. We were living under our own roof, which meant continuity for at least five or ten years. We could start some of the projects for which we had been waiting.

At this point, another section of the book gets under way, and the adventure story continues.

## *FRONTIERS*

### Have We Ceased To Believe?

WHY is it that writers of European background are so openly forthright in their declaration of idealistic and even metaphysical views, in contrast to the guarded expressions of American thinkers? Is this because European culture is considerably older than that of the United States, and can be host to a greater intellectual maturity? Or have the Europeans suffered ordeals which have sharpened their moral perceptions?

Years ago, when Simone Weil's *The Need for Roots* first appeared (in 1952), there was reason to wonder about this difference between American and European thought. While her book was a cry in the wilderness, it was none the less resonant and clear, and it came from a young woman of France, not of the New World. Books which show the strong determination of the writer to live by transcendent vision are so rare that the place of their appearance and the source of their inspiration become matters of importance. How is such literature generated?

An article by Miguel Serrano, a Chilean writer, in the *New York Times* for July 17 bears on this question. Serrano has written a study of Charles G. Jung and Hermann Hesse, and the present article is on a Jungian theme. He says in one place:

There are many people concerned with social problems and social change. . . . What is more fundamental, although it can only be the work of a very few, is to go under, to submerge oneself in anonymity in order to preserve human individuality. As Dr. Jung has said, "The work of a private man has repercussions in eternity." Or, to use the words of an ancient Chinese proverb, "If a solitary man sitting in his room thinks the right thoughts he will be heard a thousand miles away."

These words may sound romantic or meaningless today, but unless this task is undertaken, there will be no salvation for man or for the earth. There will be only artificial union of mankind created by technology and political slogans. These promise little more than a mechanistic or dictatorial

regulation of the individual, producing a collective slavery of one kind or another. The new man, who is already born, requires more than that, and individuals all over the world dream of something else.

Meanwhile, in Belgrade, a man but lately released from prison, Mihajlo Mihajlov, seems to have been doing this kind of thinking. It is not what one expects from a man jailed for political reasons. In a contribution to the *New York Times* of July 28, he recalled that Dostoevski thought that human life was impossible without belief in the immortality of the soul. Mihajlov adds his own conviction:

Presently when there are no questions which are exclusively political, religious, medical, chemical, etc., the idea of the immortality of the soul assumes not only universal but practical political meaning. Never before has the question of personal immortality been posed as sharply before each man—not theoretically but practically—as in the present totalitarian societies. If physical death is the end, then slavery is justified. Then, it is indeed better to be a living slave carrying out unquestioning the direction of the party than not to be. And vice versa—if the soul, the "I" of each one of us, is immortal, then worship of outside violence is the loss of the soul, which is worse than loss of life. Thus in totalitarian societies one can observe the rebirth of religious life which the nineteenth century seemed to have completely rejected.

Mihajlov turns now to a curious moral theme in the literature of the oppressed:

It is extraordinarily instructive to read the Soviet underground and semi-underground literature—Pasternak's *Doctor Zhivago*, works by Solzhenitsyn, the novel-confession, *All Flows*, by Grossman, *Reminiscences* by Nadezhda Mandelshtam. In these works one feels awareness of the fact that the prison of totalitarianism was not undeserved. The longer the punishment lasts, the more clear it becomes that man was guilty, of course, not politically, but metaphysically.

Analyzing Stalin's purges one unwillingly recalls the Biblical proverb, "Those who live by the sword shall die by the sword." The more one reads the memoirs of Soviet prisoners the more one is impregnated with the paradoxical conviction that there was *no injustice* done, but a mystical justice was manifesting itself all the time. The worst

punishments went to men who most believed in Communism, that is, in compulsory reorganization of the world.

This idea leads Mihajlov to a reaffirmation of individual responsibility:

So, the paradoxical consciousness that in the world there is no real injustice leads toward consciousness of one's own responsibility for one's own and the world's destiny. Society is not guilty, the world is not bad, but man himself is guilty, although his sin lies almost always in obedience to external violence, or active faith in violence. Thus simultaneously with the psychology of personal guilt a free man is born.

Mihajlov is persuaded that since the question of man's future—his life, history, and the hope of mankind—is today acute in Russia, the Soviet Union "is preparing the soil for a planetary religious rebirth." He means, perhaps, that Stalinism and the awakening it has produced in men like Solzhenitsyn and others are the chief reason. He concludes by explaining what he means by religious rebirth:

Religious rebirth is not a theoretical and ideological matter. There is no need at all for an all-embracing theory giving precepts of what to do, but one has to be able to feel in oneself that internal compass which during every moment of life shows the only right direction for action, and to have faith in it, follow its directions despite deadly threats.

He quotes Pasternak, "The whole tragedy started from the fact that we ceased to believe our own opinion," then adds:

To live trusting our inward feeling means to live a religious life. But what punishments and purges are still waiting for us in order that we might be capable of so living? Plato thought that "the ancients were better than we are and were living closer to gods." And it seems to our epoch that Plato himself lived in a mystic epoch of closeness to gods.