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THE SECOND PHASE

THE study of history brings moderation to the forays of moral judgment—so easily provoked, these days, when so many things are obviously going wrong. Indeed, history has little practical value if it does not show that an easy fixing of blame is seldom possible, and that righteousness limited to castigating others is a commonplace impoverishment. There is also the problem of choosing among remedies, which often turn out to be worse that the ills they are meant to cure. In a bare two hundred years, we have moved from denunciation of the tyranny of kings to growing disturbance at the incompetence and inhumanities of States. It is no novelty, now, to hear low-key sophisticated requiems for the democratic process, which is found unable to cope with the complexities of the technological society. What next? we wonder darkly, not liking any of the visible alternatives.

How free are we, actually, to change our ways? It sometimes seems as though real change becomes possible only during certain widely-spaced intervals of history, of which the latter part of the eighteenth century was one. The present may be one also, yet there are great differences between the eighteenth and the twentieth centuries. For one thing, the form of the change needed, and accomplished, in the eighteenth century was essentially political. The conception of how men ought to be ruled was transformed in a brief twenty-five years, although there were decades of preparation and a long aftermath of adjustment. A valuable account of this momentous change is available in Ralph Ketcham's *From Colony to Country—The Revolution in American Thought:* 1750-1820 (Macmillan, 1974) . In both Europe and America, in those days, there were men of remarkable vision, rare historical understanding, and public-spirited resolve. Such epochs of psycho-moral transformation are something of a mystery. We can identify them in Periclean Athens, Renaissance Florence, and Elizabethan England, and when we know more about the factors which make possible these extraordinary junctures we shall have a much better understanding of history. Meanwhile, the best thing to do may be to accept them as realities without neglecting their significance because we cannot explain them.

Mr. Ketcham gives attention to the great change in thought about the order of society and the forms of government that occurred in revolutionary times in America. His book is a study of what went on in the minds of the leading men in the colonies—Ben Franklin, Sam Adams, Tom Paine, John Adams, James Madison, Thomas Jefferson, Alexander Hamilton, and various others. He shows the roots and background of their thinking—what they believed, and believed in—and how the circumstances of their lives in America and the policies of England, in combination with their conceptions of right and good for human beings, reshaped radically their thinking about government.

The account of the mind of John Adams illustrates this writer's method:

> His legal training taught him to revere the English common law as the foundation of human liberty, and to admire, following Montesquieu, the balanced structure of British government as the surest bulwark against tyranny ever devised. His Christian education taught him that England, the land from which Elizabeth had repelled the Spanish Armada and William of Orange had defeated the Papist legions of Louis XIV, was the defender of the Reformation against the superstitions, tyranny, and cruelty of Rome. To a Puritan this was the central fact of two centuries of Western history. . . . Also part of Adams' bone-deep English consciousness was the love of a cultured man for the homeland of his spiritual and intellectual heroes. For him, Shakespeare, Bacon, Milton, Bunyan, Locke, Newton,

> and Pope had expressed, in matchless English, the ideas and values that gave meaning and purpose to his life. Without them he would be empty and adrift, and they seemed disembodied apart from the "blessed realm" of England where they had lived and died. To John Adams in 1758, to call himself an Englishman was no mere pledge of allegiance; it was to have a purpose, to revere a tradition, to possess a culture—indeed, it was his self-identity. Though Adams, as an exceptionally learned and thoughtful man, had a rare depth of intellectual commitment, an equally meaningful attachment, however subconscious and unarticulated, pervaded in some degree all levels of the colonial population.

Why did Adams change? How could he, in a few short years, turn into "an American"? Prof. Ketcham has a brief passage on this:

> . . . he wrote in his diary that 1765 was "a Year in which America has shown such Magnanimity and Spirit, as never before appeared in any Country." It was also a year such as John Adams had never seen, and would scarcely have believed possible a few years before. He had examined the acts of his British rulers against hallowed principles and put the principles first in his allegiance. He still hoped the rulers would return to the principles, but he knew ultimately where he stood.
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> Through the tumultuous decade 1765-1775 John Adams and his wife Abigail agonizingly completed the "radical change . . . *in principles, opinions, sentiments, and affections"* that constituted the first phase of the American Revolution.

Ketcham also traces the formation of the American outlook in a number of others—Jefferson, Franklin, Patrick Henry, and Alexander Hamilton, showing the influence of both Puritanism and dawning Unitarianism. Paine's work, of course, had a large part in making the foundation for the new way of thinking—of men as self-governing citizens instead of loyal subjects of an English king. What was born in them all was a strong sense of *capacity* for decision and choice, and of sturdy competence in self-rule. Behind the political change was a change in their view of themselves. The self-reliance of frontier life gave them confidence in their own abilities, and this spirit of the times, as Ketcham says, "pervaded in some degree all levels of the colonial population."

Next we should consider the ground of intellectual conviction that instituted revolutionary change, as embodied in the great documents of the time, and what the people thereby undertook to do. Prof. Ketcham sets the problem clearly in an introductory passage:

> In the Declaration of Independence, almost offhandedly Americans made their first formal statement of the purpose and objectives of their new and uniquely oriented nation. . . . Under the "Laws of Nature and Nature's God," Americans, equally with the rest of mankind, possessed "certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness," to secure which they would "institute new government, laying its foundation on such principles, and organizing its powers in such form as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness." In this sketchy statement of purpose Jefferson included only a phrase about the mode of government, its just powers (derived) from the consent of the governed. Precisely what the "unalienable rights" were, in what the "safety and happiness" of the people consisted, and what its "foundation of principles," presumably the "Laws of Nature," prescribed were not set down, although, as Jefferson wrote in old age, the "American whigs" who signed the Declaration were all of "one opinion" on these substantial matters. Their manifesto rested on "the harmonizing sentiments of the day" gleaned from "the elementary books of public right, as Aristotle, Cicero, Locke, Sidney, etc."
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> In their general enthusiasm the signers passed by such difficulties as the basically different conceptions of the purpose of government found in Aristotle and in Locke. Moreover, in a single sentence of their declaration they committed themselves to two propositions unlikely, as they themselves soon saw and readily admitted, ever to coexist easily: their government was to guarantee "unalienable" rights and also to rest on the consent of the governed. That is, it was to ensure eternal verities but it was also to act as the people decided. What if the people, however organized to register their consent, agreed to an abridgment or suppression of one or all of these rights for most or even a few of the people? . . . So at the time of the Revolution not only were the details of future government unsettled, but serious tensions were implicit in the words of the Declaration of Independence itself.

Here, vaguely foreshadowed, are many of the problems that would beset the new nation. The

colonists were all agreed that the tyranny of a king was the worst possible influence on the people of a country. Sam Adams declared: "Wherever Tyranny is established, Immorality comes in like a Torrent. It is in the Interests of Tyrants to reduce the People to Ignorance and Vice." But what would now be the harmonizing factor, the principle of integration? How, indeed, would "the pursuit of happiness," so variously understood, unite the citizens of the new republic for the common good? The far-reaching change that had taken place is put into a few words by Prof. Ketcham:

> The root realization was that in a republic the character of the society and of the government depended, ultimately, on the character of the people. . . . Just as an absolute monarchy drew its alleged legitimization and virtue from the holy anointment and wisdom of the king, and a constitutional monarchy from the alleged sense of responsibility and obligation inherent in the lords and commons of the realm, a republic had no choice but to find its salvation in the alleged goodness of the people themselves. The Adamses and Paine and Jefferson accepted the centuries-old platonic postulate that justice in a society depended on the virtue of those who ruled. Their radically new problem was how to find, or to cultivate, and then to institutionalize this virtue and yet retain fidelity to the republican principle of government by consent.

Musing on the dimensions of the task before the colonists, Benjamin Rush wrote to James Price: "We have changed our forms of government, but it remains yet to effect a revolution in our principles, opinions, and manners, so as to accommodate them to the forms of government we have adopted." This, Rush believed, would be far more difficult than expelling an alien army.

Well, what were the "principles" then in formation, which would slowly become dominant in American life?

In *The Great Meadow*, a story of the settling of Kentucky by men and women from Virginia during the years the revolution was going on, Elizabeth Madox Roberts tells how the men met the objections of their women to taking Indian lands:

> "If the Indian is not man enough to hold it let him give it over then. . . . It's only a strong race can hold a good country. Let the brave have and hold there." . . .
>
> "The most enduren will take" . . . "Strong men will go in and take." . . . "Strong men will win there."

This was a time when the theories of Hobbes, Locke, Hume, and the Enlightenment *philosophes* were winning acceptance among the educated classes for the doctrine of Sensationalism in psychology, and when the application of Sensationalism in ethics declared that the seeking of pleasure is the decisive motivation in all human behavior. "Natural Man" needed only to be released from the bonds of political and religious tyranny, for then his spontaneous impulses would lead him along the paths of virtue. This Egoism became the philosophy of the sophisticated men of the Enlightenment, and Hedonism the morality of their followers. Adam Smith rose to fame by applying these doctrines in Economics. The laws of supply and demand, for Smith, were not quite the only laws deserving attention, but in time they came to be so regarded by the pioneers of the Industrial Revolution. As Lange remarks in his *History of Materialism:*

> . . . this market of interests was not with him [Adam Smith] the whole of life, but only an important side of it. His successors, however, forgot the other side, and confounded the rules of the market with the rules of life; nay, even with the elementary laws of human nature. This cause indeed contributed to give to political economy the tincture of strict science, by greatly simplifying all the problems of human intercourse. . . . men are conceived as purely egoistic, and as beings who can perceive perfectly their separate interests without being hindered by feelings of any other kind.

There have, of course, been emphatic rejections of Adam Smith's economics, but they accomplished little in true human betterment for the reason that the arguments ought to have been, not about economics, but about the *nature of man.* As latter-day critics of socialism have

pointed out, a reform which seeks only the redistribution of wealth still regards material things as the highest good. There is no inward moral leverage in such doctrines.

In "Reflections on Authority" (*New American Review* No. 8, 1970), John Schaar traces the breakdown of moral authority in American government and personal life to the infiltration of these conceptions:

> The United States can be seen as a great experiment in the working out of these ideas. . . . At the time of the founding the doctrine and sentiment were already widespread that each individual comes into this world morally complete and self-sufficient, clothed with natural rights which are his by birth, and not in need of fellowship for moral growth and fulfillment. The human material of this new republic consisted of a gathering of men each of whom sought self-sufficiency and the satisfaction of his own desires. Wave after wave of immigrants replenished those urges, for to the immigrant, America largely meant freedom from inherited authorities and freedom to get rich. . . . Millions of Americans strive for that goal, and, what is more important, base their political views upon it. The state is a convenience in a private search. . . . We have no mainstream political or moral teaching that tells men they must remain bound to each other even one step beyond the point where those bonds are a drag and a burden on one's personal desires. Americans have always been dedicated to "getting ahead" and getting ahead has always meant leaving others behind. Surely a large part of the zealous repression of radical protest in America yesterday and today has its roots in the fact that millions of men who are apparently "insiders" know how vulnerable the system is because they know how ambiguous their own attachments to it are. The slightest moral challenge exposes the fragile foundations of legitimacy in the modern state.

A large portion of John Schaar's paper is devoted to showing how the once impressive moral authority of government—as an organization committed to do right, according to some high moral canon—has declined to a dignityless institution for servicing human desires and appetites. As Prof. Schaar says: "The work of dissolution is almost complete, and men now appear ready to attempt a life built upon no other ideal than happiness: comfort and self-expression."

It would be a mistake to assume that the Founding Fathers had no apprehensions concerning such developments. Rush's demand for a moral revolution had many other expressions. When Jefferson proposed a new penal code embodying relaxation of all punishments for crime, a Virginia patriot warned him, "You must find a new race of men to be the subject of it." Not indifferent to the risks of self-government, Jefferson's deep faith in agrarianism was based on his belief that farming would maintain moral character. Hamilton felt that with enterprising businessmen firmly in control, responsible government would fulfill worthy national purposes. The Puritans were confident that dutiful attention to religion would form the character of free men, and virtually all the Founding Fathers gave close attention to plans for a national system of education.

Looking back on those early days through Ralph Ketcham's eyes, it becomes evident that the distinguished men of that time used their freedom as well as they knew how; they were conscious of exercising historical initiative; they consulted their principles and seriously attempted to provide for the future, as they saw and understood its possibilities. They had high intentions and a strong sense of responsibility; yet, quite evidently, it was impossible for them to anticipate what would happen during the next hundred years. Bertrand Russell condensed the moral history of this period in a well-wrought paragraph:

> Throughout the nineteenth century, the True, the Good and the Beautiful preserved their precarious existence in the minds of earnest atheists. But their very earnestness was their undoing, since it made it impossible for them to stop at a halfway house. Pragmatists explained that Truth is what it pays to believe. Historians of morals reduced the Good to a matter of tribal custom. Beauty was abolished by artists in a revolt against the sugary insipidities of a philistine epoch and in a mood of fury in which satisfaction is to be derived only from what hurts. And so the world was swept clear not only of God as

> a person but of God's essence as an ideal to which man owed an ideal allegiance; while the individual, as a result of a crude and uncritical interpretation of sound doctrines, was left without any defense against social pressure. (*Nation,* Jan. 9, 1937.)

From this wholly acceptable analysis we go, not to generalizations about our fresh opportunities in the present—growing out of breakdown and crisis—but to some passages from the last book by Jules Henry, *Pathways to Madness,* in which this understandably angry writer tells the stories of five families in which there was—or developed—a psychotic child. What, Dr. Henry asks in his introduction, is the difference between these families and "us"? The only difference, it seems to him, is that they go to extremes in the direction in which they are aiming, while the rest of us are going in the same direction, but a little more carefully. The account of these families seems directly related to what Charles B. Thompson has said about repeater criminals and ourselves; to what Russell says about the defenselessness of modern man; and to what Schaar says about typical American motivation.

> I perceive these families [writes Dr. Henry] as Greek tragedies without gods. They seem destined to misery and catastrophe because they were locked in by their past and by the configurations of love, hate, anxiety and sham which became established in the home, rigid as the walls. . . . Orestes had one relationship to his sister, another to his mother, and another to his father's soul, and these relationships, controlled by Destiny, drove him. So it is in families, but, of course, without the gods. When we think of an average family we say, "This is the way the Billingses are," but when we feel a family is disturbed, we tend to say, "This is the way the Joneses are driven." If we put together the past history of the mother and father and the constellations of personal relations established in the family—largely by virtue of the relationship between the parents—we have my conception of a family destiny; in other words, the force is not supernatural any longer, but the family's history. . . . The quality of life in these families is their particular creation of what they have taken from their culture without being aware of it. I view them, however, as just as helpless to change their destiny without outside help as Agamemnon was helpless to change his destiny without a god. This book will get no sympathy from those robust, bumptious ones who believe that man—and they in particular—can seize life and compel it to do their bidding. The people in this book will look to them like congenital weaklings, lacking guts, intelligence or both.

Yet of these people, Dr. Henry has written: "So much of their activity seems within 'normal limits' that in much of what I have written I do not use the word 'pathology' !" The bounds of their lives, he says, were taken from the common culture—which is our culture, too.

Dr. Henry also asks:

> What is the intellectual structure of sanity? . . . I begin with an analysis of the integration of the assumptions, shared with all other "sane" people in our culture, about how reality is constituted, and I study these assumptions become part of everyone's thinking, become "mind" itself, become the fabric of sanity.

What is the bearing of such material on the question we set at the outset: *How free are we, actually, to change our ways?* From Prof. Ketcham's study of the American mind, 1750-1820, it becomes evident that freedom, socially speaking, results from a deliberate and reflective *change of assumptions*—a remaking of culture. Jules Henry's book examines what seem to him the qualities or habits in human beings which make such changes unlikely if not impossible. (An earlier book by Dr. Henry was titled *Culture Against Man.*)

Probably, to present the problem symmetrically, we should have looked for potential Tom Paines and Jeffersons in the present. Paine was a transformer of cultural assumptions. But, somehow, choosing Dr. Henry's agonizing report on typical (but gone to extremes) family life seemed to join the issues with a deeper bite. His book puts before us a measure of that *radical change in principles, opinions, sentiments, and affections* that must precede the second phase of the American Revolution.

REVIEW
CUT UP THE LAND

FIRST we read "Increasing the Harvest" by Edward Groth (III) in *Environment* for January/February, and then we began *The Fat of the Land* (Schocken, 1975, $6.95) by John Seymour. In consequence, the enjoyment of Mr. Seymour's rural idyll was haunted by what Edward Groth said about world food supply and by all the unlikely things that will have to happen if millions of people are not to starve. Happily, upon reaching Mr. Seymour's last chapter, we found considerable relief, since he there deals with the question of food for the world.

The Fat of the Land is the story of how a writer (Seymour) and his wife, Sally, a potter and illustrator, drifted (or were pushed) into a life of farming in Suffolk, England (starting in 1957), how farming grew on them, and they on it, until, now, they couldn't possibly live any other way. This book is not a how-to book; their how-to book was published a couple of years ago—*Farming for Self-Sufficiency*—winning high praise from people who ought to know. *Fat of the Land* is a joyous account of how they became farmers, and more fun to read.

Why compare a book about the delighting experiences of two farming individuals with Mr. Groth's study of world food supply? Because you can't help doing it. Because—if you read Mr. Groth, and then Mr. Seymour—you are bound to wonder how the good sense of two unusual people can be applied to the macro-problem of feeding all the world. How can personal solutions be equated with massive statistical problems? Maybe they can't. But if you read enough about it you begin to suspect that there *isn't* any solution for the statistical problem—not at the macro-level. You can preach, but you can't solve. What then? Well, if there could be halfway, or quarter, or ten per cent application of what the Seymours did by enough other people, and, at the same time, socially ingenious compromises at the level Mr. Groth writes about, then, after a few years, some balances might be achieved. But we doubt that anything like this will become possible unless there are a lot more people like the Seymours, around the world, all making a stir by describing their happy lives and great good health. On, then, to the last chapter of *The Fat of the Land.*

The problem, according to Groth, is that agribusiness methods, which depend upon monocropping, heavy use of chemical fertilizer, and extensive consumption of fossil fuel, will almost certainly do irreversible harm to the environment if they are allowed to continue. Then large numbers of people will surely starve. Meanwhile, agri-businessmen do not have a long-term view, and governments are nearly all avoiding the politically painful transition to a better kind of agriculture, so that the prospects for change are not good. Mr. Groth concludes:

> . . . the potential long-run consequences of failure to remedy our food-related environmental ills—which could include at least the partial collapse of the agricultural base on which we all depend—are very real threats to our security, every bit as serious as world hunger and inflation. It is imperative that we make the necessary efforts over the coming decades, until our food production system rests on ecologically sound foundations. Unless that effort succeeds, all the advances in the war against hunger of the past century will merely have postponed the ultimate defeat.

For the substance behind this claim, read Mr. Groth's heavily documented article in *Environment.*

Now for Mr. Seymour's solution:

> The big landowner—the large scale agri-businessman—does not care about a high production of food per acre. What he is interested in is profit, and he can achieve this by specialization (always the enemy of good husbandry), mechanization, and lavish use of chemicals. His chief expense will always be labour—and labour he must cut at any cost. There is a man I know who farms ten thousand acres with three men (and the use of some contractors). Of course he can only grow one crop—barley, and of course his production per acre is very low and his consumption of imported fertilizer very high. He burns all his straw, puts no humus on the land (he

> boasts there isn't a four-footed animal on it—but I have seen a hare) and he knows perfectly well his land will suffer in the end. He doesn't care—it will see him out. He is the prime example of that darling of the agricultural economist—the successful agri-businessman.
>
> Cut that land (exhausted as it is) up into a thousand plots of ten acres each, give each plot to a family trained to use it, and within ten years the production coming from it would be enormous. It would make a really massive contribution to the balance of payments problem. The motorist with his *News of the World* wouldn't have the satisfaction of looking over a vast treeless, hedgeless prairie of indifferent barley—but he could get out of his car for a change and wander through a seemingly huge area of diverse countryside, orchards, young tree plantations, a myriad small plots of land growing a multiplicity of different crops, farm animals galore, and hundreds of happy and healthy children. Even the agricultural economist has convinced himself of one thing. He will tell you (if he is any good) that land farmed in big units has a low production of food per acre but a high production of food per man-hour, and that land farmed in small units has the opposite—a very poor production per man-hour but a high production per acre. He will then say that in a competitive world we must go for high production per man-hour and not per acre. I would disagree with him.

This, right here, seems to be the argument that has to be settled, and settled conclusively in favor of Mr. Seymour, in order to swing public opinion in the direction of his solution. Judging from the facts (and their implications) presented by Edward Groth, there isn't any other solution worth considering. If, then, more people like Mr. Seymour—articulate family or small-scale farmers—are needed to create that public opinion, then his book is very important and should be widely read. And it *can* be read with enjoyment even by people who don't plan to become farmers, since it is not a how-to book but an adventure story.

The Fat of the Land starts out with John Seymour voyaging around in a Dutch sailing smack, writing travel books and doing material for BBC. Then he got married, and after that came babies and the need for a base ashore. Finally the Seymours found a double cottage and five acres in Suffolk for very low rent, with an out-building good for Mrs. Seymour's pottery. They wanted a garden—John had grown up on a farm—but they didn't plan for total self-sufficiency or anything like that. The well-rounded life on the land crept on them, declaring its empire bit by bit. The village, for example, was a mile and a half away—quite a trip every day for milk for the babies. So they got a cow. The cow produced enough manure to enrich an acre. Going to town to buy meat was also a chore, so they began keeping pigs—and chickens—and ducks—and geese. After some experience they limited their livestock to just enough production for their own consumption and for giving away.

> Eighteen is too many geese. Actually they were useful that year, because Sally had another baby, and we found that we wanted to repay the midwife, and the doctor, and the postwoman who kindly came and cleaned the house for us when it got in a beggar's muddle, our landlord, and all the other people, male and female, who had helped us in various ways, and we were able to give them each a goose for Christmas. I suppose we could have sold geese too: but we never did. We never sell anything that we produce here excepting Sally's pots and my writing, and the occasional calf.
>
> For this we discovered early. Once you start trying to sell the produce of the land you enter a world of thieves and rogues and bouncers in which you just cannot breathe. I know people who sell lettuces at a farthing (a fourth of a penny) when lettuces are selling in the shops—days old and stale and weary—at tenpence. We wish to be included out of that world, please.

The Seymours raise odd-breed, half-wild ducks.

> People say to us sometimes: "Why do you have cross breeds and mix-up strains in your animals and poultry? It's as cheap to feed a good animal as a bad." The answer to this is that a pure-bred animal is not necessarily "better" than a mongrel. For our purposes it is generally worse. It is probably too specialized. If it has been bred to lay eggs: it will lay too many eggs and get sick and die. If it has been bred-to give milk, it will give too much milk. And cost too much to feed, and have to be molly-coddled, and have to have

> a vet in almost constant attendance as do commercial herds of British Friesians. For us—the all-round animal, not too highly specialized, not too developed away from the wild creature, not too finicky and highly-strung, not too productive.

The formula for raising chickens on a farm in Sussex is elementary:

> Simply leave them absolutely and entirely alone.
>
> I am often amazed when I see the complicated apparatus that is made, and sold for enormous sums, for hatching eggs and rearing chicks. For all you need is a *hen.* Leave the hen alone—let her go off alone in the wood and—provided she has been introduced to a cockerel at some time—she will come waddling back in due course with a dozen little chicks. That is our experience. Nobody knows so much about rearing chicks as a hen. And the chicks that she rears will be much stronger and healthier than the poor little orphans that come out of a machine.

The chickens stay healthy. So do the four Seymour children. The family has forgotten the name of their doctor, and their dentist never has anything to do—except, once, to fix a broken tooth when a girl fell off a horse. John Seymour is well into his fifties and has not noticed any diminution in either his fitness or his capacities since he was twenty-five. The Seymours never have much money, and John absolutely refuses to do any bookkeeping on his farming operations. Often he works sixteen hours a day doing things he *likes* to do—and how, he asks, can you keep books on that? He has a chapter addressed to young people, advising them about other ways (besides writing) to earn a cash income.

The main problem, today, is the ridiculous price of land. There ought, Seymour thinks, to be vast reforms in land ownership, fixing it so that "anybody who wants to be a self-supporter should be allowed to be one, if he can show first that he knows how to do it."

The Fat of the Land is a very persuasive book.

COMMENTARY
UNRESOLVED QUESTIONS

THIS is an appropriate time to recall Bernard Bailyn's comment on the influence of Thomas Paine in altering the outlook of the American colonists—from troubled dissatisfaction with the mother country to the resolve to be free. In the opening essay in *Fundamental Testaments of the American Revolution* (Library of Congress, 1973), Prof. Bailyn said:

> The great intellectual force of *Common Sense* lay not in its close argumentation on specific points but in its reversal of the presumptions that underlay the arguments, a reversal that forced thoughtful readers to consider, not so much a point here and a conclusion there, but a wholly new way of looking at the entire range of problems involved. For beneath all the explicit arguments and conclusions about independence, there were underlying, unspoken, even unconceptualized presuppositions, attitudes, and habits of thought that made it extremely difficult to break with England, and find in the prospect of an independent future the security and freedom they sought. The special intellectual quality of *Common Sense,* which goes a long way toward explaining its impact on contemporary readers, derives from its reversal of these underlying presumptions and its shifting of the established perspectives to the point where the whole received paradigm within which the Anglo-American controversy had until then proceeded came into question.

This seems a key observation for understanding not only the necessities of change two hundred years ago, but of today as well. There will not now be much change in outlook without the kind of innovation in thinking that Paine made possible. How did he do it? Prof. Bailyn puts it well: "by exposing . . . inner biases and holding them up to scorn he forced people to think the unthinkable, to ponder the supposedly self-evident, and thus to take the first step in bringing about a radical change."

What are the "inner biases" we now need help in exposing? Obviously, we ought to look rather closely at the psychological contradictions in the Declaration of Independence (see page 2), and to recognize the force of the diagnosis quoted from John Schaar (page 7).

We need to consider, without benefit of demagoguery, the meaning of the "happiness" which we are committed to pursue, and the shortcomings of our "equality."

It seems quite evident that practically all the social problems of the United States have their origin in the unresolved questions described by writers quoted in this issue.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves
DON'T DESPAIR

A READER told us about a book which enabled him to transform the way he thought about himself at a "practical" level—as a job-hunter—and since all the young are, or are going to be, job hunters of one sort or another, it deserves attention here.

In Go *Hire Yourself an Employer* (Anchor, 1973), Richard K. Irish makes discussion of a gloomy topic fascinating. You could say that he deals very seriously with the problem of finding a job by refusing to be dull. What he says seems just right for times which are changing so rapidly that personal equilibrium is far more important than training or technical qualifications. If it is at all possible for a book to enable its reader to take a different view of both himself and the times, this book will do it. Required, of course, is some readiness for Mr. Irish's somewhat cocky approach. His book is a catechism about work and finding it—questions and answers running through about 150 pages. For example:

> *Aren't teachers in oversupply in today's job market?*
>
> Back in the late fifties, the country panicked about our educational system.
>
> Now the hens have come home to roost.
>
> The result is the biggest glut of teachers in history. Every kind of teacher from pre-elementary to postdoctoral is swamping every personnel office in the country.
>
> If you want to teach and can't, a word of advice. Don't despair. Technical people (physicists, chemists, and petroleum engineers—yesterday's aristocracy) are in as bad shape. So you've got to pull yourself together and decide what *else* you want to do.
>
> Here are some suggestions:
>
> —Start your own private school.
>
> —Manage a day care center.
>
> —Obtain specialized training for a specific population: retarded children, juvenile dropouts, underachievers. Demand is still there for the special education teacher.
>
> —Think about Job Corps camps, Neighborhood Youth Corps programs, counseling as alternate careers. . . .
>
> In brief, teaching is a field with broad applicability. . . . Study what elements in your "teaching" personality make you an effective teacher. . . . Then translate those skills into another "field." If you can teach, you have by definition a lot to contribute to any organization you hire as an employer.

Mr. Irish is out to help you get a job in this world, not in the next; but, along with the reader, he is interested in changing the world somewhat for the better; he is saying, in effect, that we have to use what troops we have.

He is mainly interested in getting jobs for people who want to use their native intelligence in whatever work they do. These he calls "judgment" jobs. Many would like such a job, but few have thought much about how to find or prepare themselves for one. Mr. Irish's inventory of the typical weaknesses of job-hunters—based on talking to some eight thousand people—is a salutary revelation filled with little stabs of self-recognition. *Everyone* has at least some of the weaknesses. He is trying to put an end to "slot" thinking about jobs.

> What matters is not where you work and for whom you . work as much as the job itself. The *quality* of your work vastly exceeds in importance what most people regard as central to employment, i.e., salary, organizational identification, fringe benefits, promotions, etc.
>
> Most people are unhappy in their jobs. (I think most jobs are something to be unhappy about.) But in nearly every line of work about 10 per cent of the jobs are judgment jobs.
>
> Judgment jobs are jobs where you're paid for your decisions. This means taking responsibility: you hire (and fire) people, you spend and account for money, your work is easily evaluated, you become a "key" man or woman in an organization.
>
> Judgment jobs aren't just management and administrative jobs: teaching is a judgment profession, so is community action, counseling, and social planning.

Irish is cautionary about going back to school to get more "training."

> Almost everybody but me thinks college degrees are important on today's job market. But I've hired a thousand people and (unless they were specialists) the particular thrust of their education concerned me not. . . .
>
> Degrees (and the unhappy obsession with them) are a childish manifestation of our certificate-mad culture. Degrees are increasingly unimportant the further from school you go (particularly for B.A. generalists).

This is a healthy-minded book with no more invitation to "compromise" than the reader decides to tolerate. The healthy-mindedness is especially good for those who start out with the idea that there aren't any jobs fit for human beings in this worst-of-all-possible worlds. "The point here is not for me to develop a long exegesis of how one makes it in a capitalistic society on relatively little, but to make all you incipient job finders and job jumpers face up to a question . . . Do I really want a job?"

Mr. Irish thinks—probably "knows," since he works for a high-level employment agency in Washington, D.C.—that a job-market revolution is going on, and that the job hunter ought to recognize what this involves. One current fact is that there is a ten per cent turnover in jobs every year. Old jobs are dissolving, new ones emerging, and a lot of people are changing occupations. There is also rebellion among the young; Irish thinks that the "back-to-the-land" movement is just getting under way, and will go on. Question:

> *So, what you're* saying is *that there's a cultural revolution going on side by side with the job-market revolution?*
>
> Actually, I don't like the word revolution. It's a loaded word which conceals lots of natural evolutionary change. What's happening in this country is the product of a postindustrial society trying to cope with technology, industrialization, overpopulation, and a score of other major realities. But the nature of work—where, how, and when we work—is conditioned by the kind of society that great collectives of people want.
>
> So, whether you're a barefoot boy with cheek, new on the job market with a college diploma clutched in sweaty palm, or a somewhat aging middle-class dissenter to our Babylonian value system, now is the time to study your soul, gird your loins, and conclude whether the young might be *half* right.

So there are all these changes going on "out there"—in both requirements and possibilities. Mr. Irish manifests a certain hardheartedness:

> *What about doing your own thing?*
>
> A sentimental, pervasive, and largely self-destructive national delusion.
>
> The dream of every American over the age of fifteen.
>
> But few of us—in isolation—do our own "thing."
>
> Oh, sure, there are independent lawyers, consultants, and myriad professionals. But they are no more independent than big organizational counterparts.
>
> Why?
>
> Because independent men depend perforce on customers: The client is a heavy taskmaster. So think twice about running your own business—whether it's a string of hardware stores in Westchester County or a candle shop in Vermont. There's nothing wrong, of course, in running your own business. But don't think you will be "independent," you'll be more dependent than ever on the need for business.

We have a small disagreement, here, with Mr. Irish. If you have your own business—and it survives—you do have more freedom of a sort. You're not really the slave of your customers; you have to serve them, but a sensible customer doesn't want slavish suppliers. And you don't have to do some things a job might require. For example, you can live without defense contracts. Independent craftsmen can earn a modest living making things they are able to feel good about. Probably Irish is attacking certain illusions more than minimizing the freedom of the self-employed.

FRONTIERS

After Prisons—What?

LAST year David Rothman, a Columbia historian, contributed an article to the *Nation* (Dec. 21) in which he proposed that the failure of prisons to rehabilitate criminals be openly declared, since everybody who looks at them agrees that they don't work. We should, he said, stop trying to "improve" prisons and find other solutions.

Well, what material is available about alternative programs? A group in Elyria, Ohio—Betterway, Inc.—which operates halfway houses for people who have had conflict with the law, has issued a report which says:

> . . . evidence shows that people in prisons grow worse in their antisocial behavior as a result of the experience. Prisons are now seen as protecting society from a person for a period of time. It is now an accepted view around the world that only about 20 per cent of those in prison are really dangerous and need to be isolated to protect society. For the other 80 per cent, prison is simply punishment, not rehabilitation.
>
> With the accumulation of evidence pointing to this conclusion there has been a worldwide movement toward programs broadly characterized as "community-based corrections." This includes anything from small, prison-like places near local communities, to more widely used halfway houses, and to more probation and early parole. In some countries, the trend is to very short prison sentences. In the Scandinavian countries, for example, prison sentences average four months, and a year's sentence would be "long."

But apparently most of these approaches are "community-based" in name only:

> Many places simply return the person to the community (or leave him there) without establishing programs effective in rehabilitation. Too often governments rely on old methods that have never worked, such as once-a-month contact of the released individual with a probation officer. Quite evidently, the trend to community-based correction has resulted from a disenchantment with institutions, not from development of a better approach. Naturally enough, there has been a backlash against community-based correction as a result.
>
> In Ohio, for example, while the prison population dropped to an all-time low in 1973, today it is higher than ever before, and there is talk of reopening the ancient prison in Columbus in response to public outcries against "leniency."

Particular problems are anticipated in Ohio, since a state-wide policy of early parole was adopted last December, which will make a third of the prison population soon eligible for release, despite the fact that few programs have been provided to work with these people. There may be especially urgent problems for Cuyahoga County, where a third of Ohio's prison population originates.

Apart from obvious superficiality, what has been wrong with the programs which failed? No great research is needed to answer this question. The failure is in the weakness of community resources. A single pamphlet, *The Manhattan Court Employment Project* of the Vera Institute of Justice (Room 1330, 100 Centre St., New York, N.Y. 10013), published in 1970, has most if not all the relevant facts. This project sought to find jobs for young men charged with felonies or misdemeanors and to persuade the judges to release them if they were willing to work. Considering the great difficulties under which this program was carried on, it was remarkably successful, even if only token gains, by comparison to the over-all problem, could be reported. Why was "rehabilitation" so difficult? The report says:

> Most of our participants have broken the law repeatedly, exposing themselves to the risk of arrest and their neighbors to the risk of injury, but their actions seem entirely unplanned, often poorly executed and—considering the dangers involved for them—extremely unprofitable. Car theft, shoplifting, robbing a victim of four or five dollars by means of personal threat, entering an empty slum apartment to burglarize it, or smoking marijuana are typical of their crimes. . . . Most of them have a key characteristic in common: they don't believe they can succeed at anything straight and, even if they thought they could, would not know how to go about doing it. Having been counseled and programmed throughout their lives, they have generally lost faith in outside

> helpers. . . . they feel little compulsion to cooperate with the project unless it can deliver something for them, and deliver it pretty fast. . . . It is likely that the only successful people most of these defendants had ever known were people beating the system: gamblers, pimps, numbers-runners, narcotics dealers. People from the ghetto who make a legal success of themselves do not remain in the ghetto as examples for the young.

Actually, what success the Manhattan Court Project did have was due almost entirely to the program "Representatives" who worked closely with the participants, guiding them, encouraging them, trying to save them from jail. These "reps" had the same street background as the offenders: they all had done time in prison, but worked their way out of criminal life. Because of their past the "reps" were able to establish "a relationship of respect, trust, and often affection with significant numbers of the participants." In short, a slender but vital element of "community" was contributed by the "reps."

How could this community element be enlarged and strengthened? Charles E. Dederich, director of Synanon, gave what may be the best and simplest answer years ago. Speaking of an entire family with problems, he said that the only workable solution would be to

> take in such a family and introduce it to a completely new style of life, a life in which all those people would mingle with people who have succeeded on the outside people who have education and a measure of success, but who are now exactly the same as the people of that family that is, paid up members of the same club.

The Betterway program, carried out in its several homes and halfway houses, puts normal community relations into the daily life of the participants, who are never isolated from the main stream of life. The whole community is the "client," for Betterway, including neighborhood, school, stores, local industry, police, and government. Everybody has a chance to help. There is no psychiatric jargon, only "plain talk" sessions. The staff people are young and inexperienced, but "trained in Betterway's mode of operating." The Betterway projects are rated by a recent Ohio State University study as having the highest success rate in halfway house programs in the state of Ohio. For additional information, write to Tom Peters, Betterway, Inc., 700 Middle Ave., Elyria, Ohio 44035.