

## DEMOCRACY AND PEACE

THE idea that peace and freedom are one and inseparable is a peculiarly American doctrine. The men who wrote the tracts that led to the American Revolution were convinced that a peace they did not make themselves, which they did not design and achieve, would not be worth having. A European, convinced that monarchs are a superior breed, would have argued that common folk need the rule of a more competently endowed intelligence. Left to themselves, they would fall into anarchic confusion and strife. The American colonists disagreed.

War, these first Americans maintained, may be necessary to establish the conditions of peace, but once achieved its virtues will become a lesson to all the world. This piety, earnestly believed at first, has been a theme in the war objectives of every conflict in which the United States has participated, with the exception of the Civil War. There is even some truth in it—truth in the sense that by acting on this argument men do make discoveries about themselves which otherwise might never have been understood. Even if the "peace" achieved by war had in it the seeds of future conflict, what they gained was what they meant by peace at the time. So, if it was not good enough—not a true peace—they needed to win it to learn its inadequacy. We may think that Gandhi saw this reality of human nature, since he said that no country which had not shaped itself through nationalism could make any contribution to internationalism. And one might add that only the nations which adopt a vigorous internationalism are likely to see that far deeper bonds than those which nations are able to forge are needed to unite human beings in enduring brotherly relations.

The generalizations of scholars point to somewhat similar conclusions about the part played by war in human affairs. Frederick J.

Teggart, an American historian, wrote in 1918 (in *The Processes of History*):

It is obvious that war has played a most significant part in the advancement of mankind, but the benefits it has conferred have been confined to the break-up of crystallized systems of organization and of thought. Since man has not become sufficiently self-conscious of the natural processes which dominate his life, he continues to submit to the fixative influences of group discipline, and throws all his weight in favor of maintaining the *status quo*. It follows that, in the past, the gateway of human advance has been the violent conflict of the representatives of old and new ways of thought and action, whether old and new be embodied, for the occasion, in states, in groups within a given state, or in single individuals. It must, therefore be regarded as a shortsighted view which imagines the conflict thus precipitated as in itself a desirable thing, though, heretofore, man's ignorance of himself has made such conflicts inevitable.

We adopt Teggart's view, here, for the reason that he puts the matter on a sliding scale, the decision being determined by how much knowledge men have of themselves. The more they understand, he implies, the less justification will they find to go to war. This analysis fits with the objective of peace, and it fits, also, with the conception that only free men can make authentic peace. In consequence, we have the proposition: No true peace without democracy. Is it defensible?

What is democracy? It is identified as a form of self-government. But we must ask, first, why is government desirable? The answer is easy enough. Men know that they can accomplish certain necessary or desirable things only by acting in concert. Their strength is greater in union for a common objective. Elementary. Democracy, then, is the way men choose for themselves how they will unite, and what they will unite for, and democracy sometimes specifies how it will not

unite them and lists the things they must not decide to do together.

We should now look at the problems of democracy in relation to war and peace. Suppose what some people hold to be a national emergency occurs. There will be differences of opinion. There is likely to be a war party, and also a peace party. And there will surely be those who feel uncertain and others who feel indifferent. In *our* democracy, we do not have the sharp focus for decision that was possible for the citizens of a small city-state like Athens. W. Macneile Dixon makes this evident in *Hellas Revisited*:

Imagine a state of things in which every villager is a statesman, a magistrate, a soldier, involved in all public affairs, and with a share in all responsible decisions. . . . There is no government to blame if calamity follows upon errors of judgment; he is the government. If his city declares war—and quarrels leading to war, quarrels over boundaries or the theft of cattle, are endless—it is he who fights for home, family and property with spear and shield in his own hands.

Whatever problems the Greeks had—and they were many and great—they did not result from apathy in relation to the affairs of the day. But in our own time it is certainly possible for a great many people to feel ignorant about the issues which press for decision. And it is even more possible for them to feel that facts have been withheld from them, since so much has been revealed, during recent years, about the way in which statesmen commit nations to war without explaining what they are doing, or why. How can a democracy handle such a situation?

There are various methods available. The people can decide to turn the problem over to a dictator, since it is too much for a democracy to handle. This of course makes an end to democracy—at least temporarily. Another course would be to put highly trained intellectuals in charge—paramilitary experts such as are found in the think-tanks of the country. They have really studied the problem and know what to do—or

claim to. Again, democracy is suspended. Finally, there is the old idea of having a vote. . . .

But all these approaches suffer from a major flaw—not a flaw from any governmental point of view, but a flaw from the viewpoint of individual freedom. The decision to be made, however it goes, must lead to a *single* solution. Those who reject the war lose their freedom of choice. They may, if they are of draft age, become conscientious objectors, but the Supreme Court has ruled that this is a privilege granted by Congress, and not an unalienable right.

One way of preserving freedom for all would be to have a volunteer army. This idea is controversial, of course, since some men would be fighting and others not, and that isn't regarded as "democratic." War is simply not favorable to any sort of free and independent decision-making.

Gandhi didn't believe in trying to stop people from fighting if they believed in it; "under Swaraj too," he said, "I would not hesitate to advise those who would bear arms to do so and fight for the country." However, he enlarged on this statement by adding:

Under Swaraj [self-rule] of my dream there is no necessity for arms at all. But I do not expect that dream to materialize in its fulness as a result of the present effort, first because the present effort is not directed to that end as an immediate goal and secondly because I do not consider myself advanced enough to be able to prescribe a detailed course of conduct to the nation for such preparation.

Elsewhere Gandhi wrote: "True morality consists, not in following the beaten track, but in finding out the true path for ourselves and in fearlessly following it."

It seems evident that Gandhi's dream of world peace depended upon the prior achievement of peaceful individual lives through independent non-violent decision. He spoke paradoxically of the ideal state as being without political power because there is no State. Then he added: "But the ideal is never fully realized in life. Hence the classical statement of Thoreau that that

government is best which governs the least." Gandhi declared that true democracy could come about only through non-violence. Even though the State might appear to do good by reducing exploitation, it does "the greatest harm to mankind," he said, "by destroying individuality which lies at the root of all progress." He continued:

The State represents violence in a concentrated and organized form. The individual has a soul, but as the State is a soulless machine, it can never be weaned from violence to which it owes its very existence.

It is my firm conviction that if the State suppressed capitalism by violence, it will be caught in the coils of violence itself and fail to develop non-violence at any time.

What I would personally prefer, would be, not a centralization of power in the hands of the State but an extension of the sense of trusteeship; as in my opinion, the violence of private ownership is less injurious than the violence of the State. However, if it is unavoidable, I would support a minimum of State-ownership.

What I disapprove of is an organization based on force, which a State is. Voluntary organization there must be.

Gandhi is very clear on one thing: No one should be coerced in respect to his own moral decisions. This might be called the *meaning* of the unity of peace and freedom.

Gandhi was often questioned about his own participation (although not with weapons) in both the Boer War and the first World War, and in the suppression of the Zulu Rebellion of 1906. He gave this explanation:

Being a confirmed war resister I have never given myself training in the use of destructive weapons in spite of opportunities to take such training. It was perhaps thus that I escaped direct destruction of human life. But so long as I lived under a system of government based on force and voluntarily partook of the many facilities and privileges it created for me, I was bound to help that government to the extent of my ability when it was engaged in a war unless I non-cooperated with that

government and renounced to the utmost of my capacity the privileges it offered me. . . .

And on those three occasions I had no thought of non-cooperating with the British Government. My position regarding the Government is totally different today and hence I should not voluntarily participate in its wars and I should risk imprisonment and even the gallows if I was forced to take up arms or otherwise take part in its military operations.

But that still does not solve the riddle. If there was a national government, whilst I should not take any direct part in any war I can conceive occasions when it would be my duty to vote for the military training of those who wish to take it. For I know that all its members do not believe in non-violence to the extent I do. It is not possible to make a person or a society non-violent by compulsion.

Non-violence works in a mysterious manner. Often a man's actions defy analysis in terms of non-violence; equally often his actions may wear the appearance of violence when he is absolutely non-violent in the highest sense of the term and is subsequently found so to be. All I can then claim for my conduct is that it was, in the instances cited, actuated in the interests of non-violence. There was no thought of sordid national or other interest.

Gandhi believed that non-violence was consistent with the highest qualities in human beings, and that, given time, it could become the guiding principle in the affairs of men and nations. However, when asked why the twenty-two years during which he had been working in India had not produced greater results, he said that "twenty-two years are nothing in the training of a nation for the development of non-violent strength." And he said in another place:

The *whole* of India is not non-violent. If the whole of India had been non-violent, there would have been no need for my appeal to Britain [to free India during the war], nor would there be any fear of a Japanese invasion. But my nonviolence is represented possibly by a hopeless minority, or perhaps by India's dumb millions who are temperamentally non-violent. But there too the question may be asked: "What have they done?" They have done nothing, I agree; but they may act when the supreme test comes, or they may not. I have no non-violence of millions to present to Britain, and what we have had been discounted by the British as

non-violence of the weak. And so all I have done is to make this appeal on the strength of bare inherent justice, so that it might find an echo in the British heart.

Asked what India would do after her liberation, in respect to non-violence, Gandhi said:

The question hardly arises. I am using the first personal pronoun for brevity, but I am trying to represent the spirit of India as I conceive it. It is and will be a mixture. What policy the National Government will adopt I cannot say. I may not even survive it much as I would love to. If I do, I would advise the adoption of non-violence to the utmost extent possible and that will be India's great contribution to the peace of the world and the establishment of a new world order. I expect that with the existence of so many martial races in India, all of whom will have a voice in the government of the day, the national policy will incline towards militarism of a modified character. I shall certainly hope that all the effort for the last twenty-two years to show the efficacy of non-violence as a political force will not have gone in vain and a strong party representing true non-violence will exist in the country. In every case a Free India in alliance with the Allied powers must be of great help to their cause, whereas India held in bondage as she is today must be a drag upon the war-chariot and may prove a source of real danger at the most critical moment.

This is Gandhi the visionary and Gandhi the realist, also one and inseparable. There was magnificent long-term hope in him, along with recognition of the obstacles to any early realization of his dream. Gandhi lost no time in anything he did, but he would not allow himself to be deluded or stampeded by moral impatience.

Few there are among his Western admirers who are willing to admit that "twenty-two years" of training are "nothing" when the goal is the training of a nation in nonviolent strength. Yet Gandhi's predictions about India's future policy seem to have worked out more or less as he suspected. Perhaps we can say that he knew what he was about, and that it was worth doing.

Gandhi wanted each man to act according to his conscience. He believed that the time would come when all men would refuse to take part in

war, but that the ripening of individual decision to reject war could not be forced. Only freedom to choose would bring the moral power to make the choice enduring. The movement for peace, in other words, could not be merely political. People determined to be non-violent could join together, as an encouragement to one another and to become an educational force, but true non-violence was a profoundly inward thing and could never be measured by response to slogans. Non-violence as a *policy* might be a step in the right direction, but it would fail unless supported by subsequent growth to nonviolence as a matter of deep conviction. Some day truth, non-violence, and freedom would be recognized as different facets of a single reality, but until then they might seem divided. Until that time of fulfillment, men ought first of all to be true to themselves.

For reasons of this sort, some of the most distinguished of human beings have seemed to be guilty of serious ambiguity. Kropotkin's enthusiastic support of the allies in World War I bewildered countless devoted anarchists who had regarded the old prince as a heroic leader in the struggle to outlaw war. Bertrand Russell, who went to prison for his anti-war convictions during that war, shocked firm pacifists everywhere by his change of heart in World War II. And Einstein, who had spoken out against war in 1914, and who, after the first great war, had told a Prague newspaper that if another war came he would "unconditionally refuse to do war service, direct or indirect, and would try to persuade my friends to take the same stand, regardless of how the cause of the war should be judged"—this world-famous pacifist, Einstein, would change his mind more than once in the years to come.

Einstein is a good case to consider, for his feeling about war is beyond any doubt. How are we to understand this man? He called himself an "absolute pacifist" and told the editor of the *Christian Century* that his attitude was "not derived from any intellectual theory but is based on my deepest antipathy to every kind of cruelty

and hatred." But in 1936 he blamed the dangerous situation in Europe on British and French pacifists "because they prevented energetic measures from being taken at a time when it would have been relatively easy to adopt them." This is the man who, six years earlier, had told a New York audience: "Even if only two per cent of those assigned to perform military service should announce their refusal to fight, . . . governments would be powerless, they would not dare send such a large number of people to jail." And two years later, in 1932, he proposed that workers should refuse to make or transport military weapons. "Then," he said, "we will have no more conscriptions; we will have no more war!"

The story of Einstein's part in stimulating the creation and manufacture of atomic weapons is told at length in *Einstein—The Life and Times*, by Ronald W. Clark. But years afterward he said: "I made one great mistake in my life—when I signed the letter to President Roosevelt recommending that atom bombs be made, but there was some justification—the danger that the Germans would make them."

Einstein was never a "militarist," but it seemed to him for a time that peace had to be won by war, and as a man compelled to act on what he thought, he supported war against the Nazis. But after 1945 "he threw his support wholeheartedly behind those who defied the draft law on grounds of conscience and, later, those who refused to incriminate themselves before the House Un-American Activities Committee." With regard to these persecuted intellectuals, he said: "I can only see the revolutionary way of noncooperation in the sense of Gandhi's." They should, he maintained, refuse to testify, not on the grounds of the Fifth Amendment, but because "it is shameful for a blameless citizen to submit to such an inquisition."

Would the world be closer to peace if Einstein had not "changed his mind"? Some men demonstrate their freedom of choice by holding to one position; others make the same demonstration

by changing it. Both, it may be, preserve their integrity. But how, if this should be true, can we tell what is the right thing to do? How shall we distinguish between integrity and expediency? Don't we need consistent examples to follow?

Gandhi, explaining his Red Cross work for the British during two wars, said that he felt differently then about the British government. Later he changed his view and adopted another rule of behavior. But he made it very plain that he believed that each man should follow his own conscience in such decisions. Yet he held up the standard of non-violence for the consideration of all men. He hoped there would be a strong non-violent "party" in free India. But he expected a national policy of modified militarism.

In both Gandhi and Einstein, we have examples of men making personal decisions guided by their lights, which were no doubt different, although both were great men and both sought world peace. Gandhi was the most notable reformer of the twentieth century, Einstein the greatest physicist since Isaac Newton, who was in his later years called the "Conscience of the World." Should we now consult their behavior or their dreams? Or is the problem rather the dialectic between the behavior of imperfect men in an imperfect world, and a dream?

## *REVIEW*

### GEORGE RUSSELL

THE letters of AE (George Russell) are like a richly colored tapestry. Once begun, they are hard to put down. The reader moves easily from brief accounts of a "young scamp" of great ability named James Joyce, whom AE met in Dublin when Joyce was twenty-one, and of another youngster named James Stephens who wrote promising poetry, to the report of a chance encounter with George Bernard Shaw in an art gallery, where the two conversed for almost half an hour without either one knowing who the other was. Russell became a major figure in the Irish literary revival, he was a lifelong friend of W. B. Yeats, and he gave many years of his life to agricultural reform and the cooperative farming movement in Ireland.

He was very much a man of his time, yet the holding power of this book of letters is in its timeless quality. Russell lived in his mind. He knew old philosophy, being especially drawn to Eastern and Platonic teachings, but insisted upon assimilating what he read so that he could put it to work. He would not study what he saw no way to apply. This was his objection to a scholarly study of Bishop Berkeley's ideas; as he explained in a letter to the author: "The real trouble I have about the Berkeleyan system," he said, "is that even if I accept it I would not know how to live or act by my philosophy." Then, to explain his own preferences he added: "I have not this trouble with Plotinus, Sankara, Patanjali. I know what I ought to do, by what threads I climb inward to their light and to an expanding consciousness."

This book, which is a continuing delight, is *Letters from AK*, ably edited by Alan Denson, and published by Abelard-Schuman in 1961. Mr. Denson has added valuable biographical notes on many of the people to whom AE wrote. The letters cover a period of forty-nine years—from 1886, when Russell was only twenty, to his death in 1935. Early in life Russell was strongly

attracted by the ideas of the Theosophical Movement, as the first letters show. He became a member of the Society in 1890, but withdrew in 1898 because of internal dissensions in the organization. However, he remained faithful to the ideas which were the major inspiration of his life. He urged the works of Madame Blavatsky on his friends, and spoke of her colleague, W. Q. Judge, the Irish-American theosophist, as "a man whom I consider the wisest and sweetest I have ever met." In a foreword to Mr. Denson's volume, Monk Gibbon remarks that "the key to AE's life is the fact that he had elected to be a student of esoteric wisdom, and that his interest in literature, in poetry and in practical affairs were all to a large extent rooted in this original impulse."

While, as Gibbon says, "the real man was the mystic," Russell plunged into practical affairs, although he was never really "political" in his approach. Starting in 1897, he became an organizer for the Irish Agricultural Organisation Society, founded by Sir Horace Plunkett. After ten years of cattle ranching in the United States, Plunkett had returned to Ireland to devote his life to the promotion of agricultural cooperation there. He trained Russell for this work, and in 1905 appointed him editor of the *Irish Homestead*. This paper was succeeded by the *Irish Statesman* in 1923, with Russell continuing as editor. He wrote for and edited this paper until it succumbed in 1930, as a result of the onset of the great depression. By reason of Russell's extensive knowledge of agricultural problems and rural life, Henry Wallace brought him to the United States for a lecture tour during the first Roosevelt administration, in which Wallace was Secretary of Agriculture.

Although Russell was never preachy—he was too much of an artist for that—his life was consciously founded on moral convictions. This becomes evident from his differences with Yeats, whom he also admired. Monk Gibbon quotes from a letter by Russell to George Moore what he

terms "a most remarkable analysis of Yeats's character":

He [Yeats] began about the time of *The Wind in the Reeds* to do two things consciously, one to create a "style" in literature, second to create or rather to recreate W. B. Yeats in a style which would harmonise with the literary style. People call this posing. It is really putting on a mask, like his actors, Greek or Japanese, a mask over life. . . . The present W.B.Y. is the result. The error in his psychology is, that life creates the form, but he seems to think the form creates life. If you have a style, he argued once with me, you will have something to say. He seems also to have thought though he never said so, that if you make a picturesque or majestic personality of yourself in appearance, you will become as wonderful inside as outside. He has created the mask and he finds himself obliged to speak in harmony with the fixed expression of the mask. . . . He bores me terribly now and he was once so interesting.

Monk Gibbon adds this comment:

Yeats's doctrine ran counter to AE's firm conviction that it was the inside of the platter which counted. Even art had no intrinsic holiness. Its holiness arose out of the fact that it was a revelation. He wrote to Clifford Bax, "I have no interest in people who find in literature anything but an avenue to life. Every thought or mood is the opening or closing of a door to a divine world and who is there. . . . Art for art's sake is considering the door as a decoration and not for its uses in the house of life."

Concerning Russell's life as a campaigner for agricultural cooperation, Gibbon says:

Many of the letters in this selection are the outcome of one of AE's periodical plunges into the economic or political affairs of his nation. The gentle, bearded, shaggy individual whom they used to see puffing his pipe and speaking slowly and with a strong Armagh burr: when he removed it from his mouth, suddenly became an angry knight, mounted on a steed of almost rhetorical eloquence, charging down, with lance levelled, upon the enemy.

. . . AE had not come into the-world a controversialist. He tells Quinn, "It seems odd that a person like myself, originally shy, should get caught into labour or economic movements." It amazed him too to find in the office of the *Irish Homestead* that his colleagues generally "leave all arrangements to me as the practical person of the group. I am sorry I lost my old reputation as a dreamy unpractical man."

How did Russell think of himself? To a German scholar who had done his doctoral thesis on AE's work, he said in a letter:

As for Catholicism and Protestantism while I was yet very young, about fourteen years of age, I escaped from their influence, and really knew very little about Christian dogma until I was about thirty-five or thereabouts I began to read the books which to my contemporaries were scriptures. But I came to them after reading the sacred literatures of other religions, Brahmin, Buddhist, Tao, Hermetic and Platonist and Neoplatonist literature and then I began to see things in gospels and epistles which I could not see when I was a boy and turned from them. All these scriptures I have mentioned and the Christian scriptures as well I read for sentences which come out of a deep life. I brood upon a sentence rather than upon a book, carrying it away in my mind until I have realised all its implications, spiritual and psychic and material, until in fact I have come to some kind of glowing realisation of spiritual life or law which was implicit in the sentence. You see my life has been made up of a series of visions and intuitions, and each of these has appeared to me so precious that I never thought of making a system out of these intuitions. . . . I do not know if I have enlightened you in your quest, I feel always how slight a thing I am in the universe and have I believe but little variety, but I cannot help being pleased that you should have found something to light your way in my books. If I have had a light even for a little it is something. . . .

Despite this essential modesty, Russell had strong opinions. Of English poetry, he wrote to the dramatist, Clifford Bax, that for all its splendor "it moves in a world of illusion because of its lack of fundamental ideas." But he added: "I except Shelley, Wordsworth and Blake." He regarded post-impressionist painting as "the second childhood of art, with Noah's ark, trees, houses, animals, only rather more badly drawn than the Noah's Ark, trees and houses of the first childhood." Deeply purist, he said to John Quinn: "Gauguin and one or two others of the pioneers of this movement had a kind of talent, but now Picasso and Matisse have gone into a kind of hopeless drivel of line and color and ideas which makes one feel unhappy as if one were in the society of lunatics." This was in 1913. It should be noted that Russell painted throughout his life,

and that a well known Blake scholar maintained that painting would have been his true vocation if he had cared to give all his time to it. Monk Gibbon thought that at his best he was "a great painter." In any event, his critical views were those of a practicing artist. Here he sought to follow the Greeks:

I have heard that the Greeks had fixed standards of proportion which were applied to architecture. I am not yet sure that the criterion of truth might not be applied to test beauty in literature and painting. We seem to be better able often to agree as to whether a statement is true than we are to agree about its beauty, if beauty only is discussed; but we might possibly arrive at a criterion of beauty by calling on truth to act as judge. Keats I think would have been satisfied to have his most beautiful lines appraised by that test for he said: "Truth is beauty," but I am almost afraid to suggest this. . . . I will only say for myself that "style" in literature, the quality of literary excellence which we can all see exists even if we cannot agree on standards, seems to depend upon truth telling, whether of telling truth about what one sees or what one feels . . . at the last analysis the fixing of standards of excellence in art or literature would be found to depend on one's conception of the nature of the being for whom art or literature exists, and we have not decided yet whether man is material or spiritual in his origin.

AE felt deep admiration for Emerson. His letter to Van Wyck Brooks, thanking him for the American writer's life of Emerson, reveals the Irish poet's sense of kinship with Emerson's thought:

. . . he [Emerson] is one of the few writers who last so that I can take up his essays and find new profundities in them. . . . He was of that order of genius whose daemon utters through him wiser things than he himself knows. He must have known they were wise or he would not have written them down. But I doubt if he saw all the implications psychological, philosophical and spiritual of many of these sentences. He requires to be explained at some length by the reasoning mind which yet has insight enough to feel that there are divinations of truth above reason to discover but which when stated reason may defend or make clearer. . . .

He says things so swiftly that a slow mind passes on to the next sentence without having seen all the

implications of the one it has just read. No American writer needs a commentator more, for his mind went into occult depths and had kinship with arcane fragments like the Chaldean Oracles or with the less arcane Plotinus or the Upanishads. There are deeps and profundities in these which he saw, and knew that they were of the eternal order of truths which are not for a time but will not cease to be illuminating to the spirit until man becomes more than man. If I was younger and had more energy of mind I would like to write that commentary on say a hundred of the Emersonian aphorisms just to let Americans know how great a man this was whom they have learned from, but who was I think the spiritual germ-cell of American culture. . . .

What is your next book? I think the deeps in Whitman have to be rescued from his surfaces. Sometimes he utters cosmic revelations and sometimes he is betrayed by surface vitality to be a mere booster of the land of pork and cotton. Few people understand how a man can sometimes be inspired and sometimes will shout nonsense. The tide of being rises and falls in us in ways we do not ourselves comprehend. I have seemed to myself in meditation to be near the Oversoul on the next day I would be shouting or excited over some of our ephemeral politics. . . .

What a rich companion Russell must have been to those in whom he confided! Fortunately, we have his books, his poems and his letters.



## **COMMENTARY**

### **A TRAGIC FIGURE**

WHEN Einstein explained to the editor of the *Christian Century* that his pacifism was not based on any "intellectual theory," but grew out of his innermost feelings, he may have given a clue to the reasons why he felt compelled to change his mind under the emotional pressures of World War II. Peace-making was not his whole life, but a spontaneous side of his nature which came out whenever it could. To Gandhi, however, peace-making was what the study of the physical world was to Einstein. Gandhi had both the inner conviction of the evil of violence and war and an "intellectual theory" about the centrality of nonviolence as a way of life—as a principle of the universe, if you will. He acknowledged that at times its operation might be quite mysterious, but he remained true to the principle as well as he could.

It is of interest that Einstein's extraordinary knowledge of physical theory gave him no consistent guidance through the moral crises in his life. He remained true to himself, but was profoundly saddened by what he thought of as his mistakes.

Why, one wonders, should great cosmological ideas afford a man no light in times of moral confusion? Is "morality" made only of after-thoughts, having no intrinsic connection with natural law and cosmic and evolutionary processes? No science has any significant comment to make on this question, which lies outside the area of scientific relevance and comprehension. Only the researches of Abraham Maslow imply a beginning for scientific inquiry in this direction.

Einstein participated in the ambivalence of his age, when it came to choosing between war and peace. He acted as an individual, as he felt compelled to act, pressed by his human feelings, without *theoria* to transcend the contradictions into which those feelings led. He didn't set up to

be a "leader" in this area, but others made him one. Probably they shouldn't have done so. He claimed no authority as a peacemaker. He was just a man who followed his heart, and its instructions were not grounded in the deep consistency upon which he relied in his thinking about morally neutral physics.

Perhaps we should simply say that if more men lived lives of the general moral thrust and quality that were natural to Einstein, there would be an end to war. He remains a great and tragic figure, one whose nobility was undiminished by anything he did. The pain in his life was born mostly from compassion, and there are but few others of whom this can be said.

## CHILDREN

### . . . and Ourselves

#### LONDON TEACH-IN

IN January, 1972, the English magazine, *The Ecologist*, published *Blueprint for Survival*, the work of a group of scientists and others who outlined an action program to save the planet from ruin or destruction by its human inhabitants. *Blueprint* had the endorsement of thirty-three scientists and the qualified approval of 180 more. Within six months nearly 100,000 copies of that issue of the *Ecologist* had been sold, and *Blueprint* was translated into a number of languages and distributed throughout the world. There were attacks and criticisms which claimed that the problems outlined in *Blueprint* were either exaggerated or nonexistent, but the positive influence of the publication, subsequently available as a book, was far greater than the effect of any objection offered. One notable result of its appearance was the formation by the students of Queen Elizabeth College, London, of the Movement for Survival. In May, 1972, these students organized a Teach-In for Survival, to which they invited spokesmen of the changes proposed in *Blueprint*, and also advocates of related changes. Defenders of mainly technological solutions were also represented. The keynote address was given by Edward Goldsmith, editor of the *Ecologist*.

There were some fifteen participants in the Teach-In, including Michael Schwab, student chairman of the Movement for Survival and editor of the report (published in 1972 as *Teach-In for Survival* by Robinson & Watkins, London). Dr. John Davoll, chemist, and director of the Conservation Society, led off with a statement of "the predicament." The biosphere of the earth, he said, has been subjected to growing strains by the expansion of human activities. Man has applied technology in ways that increase the yield of the biosphere, but at a level that cannot be sustained. This high production, in other words, "was

obtained by a progressive deterioration of the basic unities of the system." Example: Technology applied to irrigation made it possible for agriculture to feed a much larger number of people, but "when salinisation of the soil took over, the yields fell suddenly and the population collapsed."

Technological advance led to the exploitation of fossil fuels and the rewards of increased productivity generally accelerated development. Population growth was spurred by the sudden economic expansion, while per capita consumption of materials and power vastly increased. Such trends become very difficult to stop or to slow down, even when it is seen to be desirable. Dr. Davoll makes this summarizing comment:

To examine large-scale technology as a process on earth, one has to recognise that, unlike the natural process of the biosphere, technological processes tend to be essentially one-way. Instead of cycling materials, they amount to a conversion of resources into waste products. These waste products may also function as pollutants interfering with the natural cycles of the biosphere and potentially altering the composition of the atmosphere on which the global temperature depends, since this in turn depends on the amount of solar radiation absorbed and re-radiated through the atmosphere.

The important things to note in this system are that pollution, although it has attracted the greatest attention, is not necessarily the greatest danger. In addition, one has to recognise that agriculture, which formerly appeared to be a largely cyclic process, accompanied, perhaps, by a slow deterioration, has now become closely linked to one-way processes of technology—that is to say, in modern agriculture one may well use as much energy in raising the crop as there is food energy in the crop once produced. The other point to note is that all the processes of technology tend to be interrelated and that people who isolate particular problems for solution frequently overlook this. For example, when one mentions the question of possible exhaustion of resources, it is pointed out that, in fact, low grade ores and even granite do contain vast quantities of minerals. Nevertheless, in order to extract these minerals one accompanies the extraction by a much greater degree of damage to ecological systems and

also by an increase of pollutants. Thus an isolation of particular areas can be misleading in giving an impression that things are much simpler than in fact they are.

Dr. Davoll proposes a cut-back on the technology which interferes severely with the biosphere, and adopting a limited technology which integrates with the cycles of the biosphere. He also indicates the impossibility of extending the extravagance of living standards and high material consumption of the "developed" nations to the 7,000 million people he believes will exist at the end of the century. In other words, the goals of industrialism will have to undergo change.

What may be the most interesting contribution for the American reader was the address of Jimoh Omo-Fadakah, a Nigerian development economist and an associate editor of the *Ecologist*. His topic was "Lessons from the Non-Industrialised World," and he began by saying:

The first thing I wish to do is to quarrel with the terminologies "developed" and "developing" countries. There is no such thing as a developing country for that matter. The terminology is misleading. I prefer to use the words "industrialised" and "non-industrialised."

Many people seem to assume that poverty is the prerogative of the non-industrialised countries. Nothing is further from the truth. The only thing is that the scale of poverty is greater in the non-industrialised countries. As I am interested in the alleviation of poverty in general, I think the industrialised countries can learn a lot of lessons from some of the non-industrialised, which are making bold efforts to restructure their societies in an attempt to solve their problems.

Having said this, the speaker launched into a description of the village society and economy of Tanzania, in which the local communities undertake all their own developments—build their own schools, their dams for irrigation, their hospitals, and make their own local economic and political decisions. The emphasis is on the use of men, not money.

As a result of decentralisation of all activities, there is no unemployment in Tanzania; the technologies used in the village are labour-intensive, nobody is starving in the country—the villages grow enough food to feed their members; food production is keeping pace with population increase, there is no drift from rural to urban centres.

No one looks hungry or unhappy. Men and women wear simple dresses. On balance, the type of society envisaged is a conglomeration of self-supporting, self-reliant, self-sufficient, and self-financing small scale communities.

Mr. Omo-Fadakah next discussed how the methods in use in Tanzania would help to solve some of Britain's problems. He pursues this analysis at some length, then says:

It is obvious from what has been said that for this to happen there will have to be the invention, promotion and application of alternative technologies at the village level for relatively "closed" economic and political communities. The requirements will be technologies that are cheap enough to be generally accessible to everyone, and which will help men and women to achieve independence from bosses; technologies that will help people to become their own employers or members of self-governing cooperative groups working for subsistence and local market, and which would result in a systematic decentralisation of population, of accessibility of land, of ownership by the means of production, of political and economic power.

The new technologies should be suitable for small scale application. Small scale operations, however numerous, are less likely to be harmful to the environment than large scale ones. Besides, people organised in small communities are more likely to take better care of their natural resources than large anonymous companies.

The argument continues, touching on reforms in education, problems of welfare, and showing that healthy small communities are a source of social and moral stability, strengthening the basic relationships among human beings.

Prospective readers of *Teach-In for Survival* would do well to obtain a copy of *Blueprint*, also. Both make fine educational tools. The address of the *Ecologist* is 73 Kew Green, Surrey, England.

## *FRONTIERS* On the Nature of Man

IN 1928, When Abraham Maslow was an undergraduate student at the University of Wisconsin, he wrote a vehemently one-sided paper attacking Emerson's idea of the Over-Soul. He misread Emerson, supposing that he regarded the Over-Soul as "*outside* of man, governing and controlling him like a personal God," and charged him with believing in "the stock in trade of a New England minister." Maslow's teacher, Max Otto, pointed out that these statements were unfounded, but he admired Maslow for his vigor, suggesting that he unite it with accurate knowledge. Interestingly, however, Maslow contended in this paper that he had himself had "the mystic experience," but that it did not lead him to the idea of the Over-Soul. "I experienced," he said, "a blind groping for something, an overwhelming sense of unsatisfied desire, a helplessness which was so intense that it left me almost weeping." Then he added that at the moment of the mystic experience "we see wonderful possibilities and inscrutable depths in mankind."

In *A. H. Maslow: An Intellectual Portrait* (Brooks/Cole Publishing Co., Monterey, Calif., 1973, \$5.75), Richard Lowry suggests that this youthful ecstasy gives the key to Maslow's later career in psychology, in which intensive study of "wonderful possibilities" and "inscrutable depths" was combined with insistent hardheadedness and toughminded skepticism. This book will have further attention in weeks to come; here we are especially interested in the development of Maslow's conception of the human being, as revealed by entries in his "GHB [Good Human Beings] Notebook," which Mr. Lowry includes as an appendix.

Maslow seems to have had two recurring questions or problems. First, how could he be sure that the persons he picked for study as self-actualizers were really "good"? Second, supposing his choices were sound, there would

still be the question: How representative of mankind are such unusual people?

Maslow decided it was more important to have a clear "normative" idea of human beings than a blurred conception of "average" man. If health is the goal, he argued, then normal man should be healthy man. He wrote in his GHB Notebook:

The notion I am working toward is of some ideal of human nature, closely approximated in reality by a few "self-actualized" people. Everybody else is sick in greater or lesser degree, it is true, but these degrees are much less important than we have thought. The self-actualized person is so different from all the others that we need a different theory of motivation, perception, emotion, thinking, values, humor, personality, psychopathology, etc.

We may use these people as synonymous with human nature in general because there seems to be no *intrinsic* reason why everyone shouldn't be this way. Apparently every baby has all possibilities for self-actualization, but most of them get it knocked out of them.

I think of the self-actualizing man not as an ordinary man with something added, but rather as the ordinary man with nothing taken away. The average man is a full human being with dampened and inhibited powers and capacities.

What might be called his "scientific" resolution of the problem was set down in January, 1946:

The type-specimen is the most perfect-in-its-own-kind rather than the most average. It would be the one who had most developed or actualized the unique potentialities of the species—the *finest* specimen of its type.

What does this mean for human beings? That a neurotic is less "good" because he isn't human enough? Because he falls short of the type-specimen? Because he doesn't fit the definition of the species "human being" (like an imperfectly pronounced word, an ungrammatical sentence)?

In any case we can be sure that defining the human species would be a supracultural affair, for it would have to be the *species* that we define.

It is as though Maslow, following King David, was constrained to ask, "What *is* man, that

thou art mindful of him?" although, quite naturally, Maslow addressed the question to himself, since he believed that the holiness attributed to God rightfully belonged to man, or to the potentialities he saw unfolding in man. Maslow's man, we see, became an idealized conception, a model or goal.

There is a curious correspondence between Maslow's ideal of self-actualizing man and the conception of man's nature proposed by Pico della Mirandola at the time of the Florentine Renaissance. In the opening words of his *Oration on the Dignity of Man*, in a kind of Creation myth, Pico suggests that the Deity, having made heaven and earth, and having peopled both regions with appropriate creatures, felt that his work was not complete—that there should also be an order of being capable of comprehending "the meaning of so vast an achievement." But all the archetypes were used up. Accordingly, man was uniquely designed, in the following fashion:

At last, the Supreme Maker decreed that this creature, to whom He could give nothing wholly his own, should have a share in the particular endowment of every other creature. Taking man, therefore, this creature of indeterminate image He set him in the middle of the world and thus spoke to him:

"We have given you, Oh Adam, no visage proper to yourself, nor any endowment properly your own, in order that whatever place, whatever form, whatever gifts you may, with premeditation, select, these same you may have and possess through your own judgment and decision. The nature of all other creatures is defined and restricted within laws which We have laid down; you, by contrast, impeded by no such restrictions, may, by your own free will, to whose custody We have assigned you, trace for yourself the lineaments of your own nature. I have placed you at the very center of the world, so that from that vantage point you may with greater ease glance round about you on all that the world contains. We have made you a creature neither of heaven nor of earth, neither mortal nor immortal, in order that you may, as the free and proud shaper of your own being, fashion yourself in the form you may prefer. It will be in your power to descend to the lower, brutish forms of life; you will be able, through your own

decisions, to rise again to the superior orders whose life is divine. . . .

Maslow could find no evidence for either "original goodness" or "original sin" in man, but only the potentialities of both. So, for his study of man, he chose the best people he could possibly find, and the climactic expression of human goodness, in its subjective aspect, he found to be the peak experience, which might be identified as dramatic evidence of the capacity to wonder at, appreciate, and even, in a sense, to "comprehend," the whole wide world and all it contains.