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INSTITUTIONS—PLUS AND MINUS

THESE are days when our best critical intelligence is looking closely at institutions—government, industry, the schools, the churches, science—and finding in them most if not all of the causes of our troubles. The books recently given attention in these pages are mostly of this sort—studies of war, of education, of financial policies, of the conduct of business, of the departments of government. For the most part, the analyses and judgments seem accurate—and conclusive. The lag and ineffectual efforts in behalf of remedies are being made plain to thoughtful readers, getting them ready—for what?

At one level of generalization, the answer seems simple enough: we need to simplify our lives. Yet we are bound to suspect that simplification, while it may *sound* easy, inevitably brings us into encounter with the vast complexity of our life-support systems and a painful realization of the almost absolute dependence of masses of people on the complicated structures of the services we would like to simplify. This calls for a more than critical look at the institutions of modern society.

Two books would be useful. One, *The Federalist Papers,* exhibits the enterprising intelligence of the most capable of the Founding Fathers of the United States, men who were intent on devising political institutions as tools for a new sort of society, a society less likely to repeat the errors of the past. Its writers, especially Alexander Hamilton and James Madison, were both well read and sagacious, and had ample experience of the strengths and weaknesses of human nature. Most of all they were animated by social vision and the desire to serve the best interests of their countrymen. It is generally agreed that in the formulation of the great documents of the American Revolution such men became responsible for some of the major achievements of all history—the creation of needed and widely copied political institutions. (The level of intelligence involved is well illustrated by Catherine Drinker Bowen's *Miracle at Philadelphia* and Judge Florence Allen's *This Constitution of Ours.* A reading of Hannah Arendt's *On Revolution* would amplify appreciation of the genius of the Founding Fathers.) Then, to go with *The Federalist Papers,* one ought to read Alexis De Tocqueville's *Democracy in America* for recognition of what the Americans did with the tools provided them by the Founders, during the first forty years of the life of the Republic.

That is one way to think about the institutions which, once a part of human vision, are now, almost without exception, sources of disillusionment and feelings of impotence.

Another quite different approach to the subject is provided by Laurens van der Post in *The Dark Eye in Africa* (1955), in his discussion of the Mau-Mau activities in Kenya, then so horrifying to the civilized world. Van der Post draws the attention of his readers away from their immediate shock at the atrocities involved, speaking of what happened to the Kikuyu people of Kenya.

> The white man has first discredited the African way of living and dealing with the forces of nature about and within, and then obliged him increasingly to live in a way which rejects the institutions, customs, initiation rites and rituals by which, for centuries, he has struck a balance with those overwhelming aspects of nature which are incomprehensible to reason and quite beyond conscious control and rational articulation. I do not want to imply that it was necessarily bad that this African way of living was discarded. It was inevitable in the nature of things that sooner or later it would either have to die of itself or else be rejected by the Africans themselves before they could move on to something more complete. But what is deplorable

> is that having discredited this ancient way of living we have not put an honorable alternative in its place.

Why didn't we? Because, first of all, this never occurred to us. Moreover, where is the conqueror who thinks in this way, or, for that matter, knows what to do? But ignorance, as we know, is no excuse. Ignorance may lessen the guilt of moral wrong but it will not suspend the practical effects. As van der Post says:

> No community can be left indefinitely outside in the night of the human spirit, in the beast-infested jungle which lies beyond the conscious fortifications which civilized culture raises for *us* in life. If a community cannot get within the protection of those fortifications by fair means, then it will do so by foul.

He is writing of a very different world from eighteenth-century Europe, but there are parallels. *Rights* are for the politically aware the equivalent of what van der Post calls "protection," and both the Declaration of Independence and Tom Paine's *Common Sense* give the character of a beast-infested jungle to the presumptions of the British monarch and his government in relation to the colonists. The "foul" means which the latter chose was revolutionary war.

Van der Post continues his analysis:

> If civilized reason and conscious strength will not aid it (the community), then animal cunning and brute force will. Having then destroyed the cultural defenses of the Kikuyu people, it was imperative that we should give them the protection of our way of life and free access to our own institutions. It was all the more imperative in the case of the Kikuyu because they are one of the most intelligent African peoples. But having destroyed their natural defenses, we then denied them our own. Having taken away their way of life we then made it impossible for them to acquire any other. Having supplanted their law by ours, we then gave them no right to live as our law demanded but rather forced them to drift suspended in dark acceptance of a state of non-being. That is something that no human race can do and survive.

Every colonizing European nation has this sort of accounting to answer to. For the most part, the white man's burden is of the white man's making.

But here we are concerned with the declining course of institutions for which we, and no invader, are to blame. In the nineteenth century and the early part of the twentieth, we honored Horace Mann for the design and establishment of the public schools to replace the sectarian institutions that preceded them. In our own time: we blame them for many of the weaknesses in our society. Reform after reform is attempted, but they do not alter the schools. The only notable alteration that we know of is that accomplished by the parents, with the inspiration of John Holt and some others, who are teaching their children at home. The colleges blame the high schools for the inadequate preparation of those who go on to "higher education," having to add numerous "remedial" courses to the curriculum. The universities have become "multiversities" subject to periodic revolts by students who find it easy to disorganize places of learning which were originally organized on the basis of service and trust, yet places for which today the students can think of no alternatives. The autodidacts are the only ones who really solve this problem, having the determination to learn to teach themselves.

There is quite a lot about the condition of the schools and universities in *"Surely You're Joking, Mr. Feynman!"* a delightfully informal autobiography by Richard Feynman, theoretical physicist now at Cal Tech who during the war worked on the bomb at Los Alamos, loves teaching, and later worked with Hans Bethe at Cornell where he taught mathematical methods of physics. Later, wanting to see something of the world, and especially South America, he accepted an invitation to spend a summer teaching physics in Brazil. So he learned a little Portuguese and when the time came flew to Rio, where he was to teach. His students were future teachers who had already had a lot of courses.

For Feynman the experience was shocking. He found that the students had memorized what the textbooks said, but had no idea of the actual *meaning* of the words they had learned.

When they heard "light that is reflected from a medium with an index," they didn't know that it meant a material *such as water.* They didn't know that the "direction of the light" is the direction in which you *see* something when you re looking at it, and so on. Everything was entirely memorized, yet nothing had been translated into meaningful words. . . .

I taught a course at the engineering school on mathematical methods in physics, in which I tried to show how to solve problems by trial and error. It's something that people don't usually learn, so I began with some simple examples of arithmetic to illustrate the method. I was surprised that only about eight out of the eighty or so students turned in the first assignment. So I gave a strong lecture about having to actually *try* it, not just sit back and watch me do it.

After the lecture some students came up to me in a little delegation, and told me that I didn't understand the backgrounds that they have, that they can study without doing the problems, that they have already learned arithmetic, and that this stuff was beneath them.

So I kept going with the class, and no matter how complicated or obviously advanced the work was becoming, they were never handing a damn thing in. Of course I realized what it was: They couldn't *do* it!

One other thing I could never get them to do was to ask questions. Finally, a student explained it to me: "If I ask you a question during the lecture, afterwards everybody will be telling me, 'What are you wasting our time for in the class? We're trying to *learn* something. And you're stopping him by asking questions'."

It was apparently no use. He couldn't get through to them. Finally, when Feynman was about to go home to the U.S., they asked him to give a final talk on teaching in Brazil. He agreed, provided he could say anything he liked. "Sure," they said. "It's a free country." He began by telling them—with not only students but professors and government officials in the audience—that *"no sci*ence is being taught in Brazil!" He explained that while they had a lot of texts and held a lot of classes, they couldn't *do* any physics.

Then I held up the elementary physics textbook they were using. "There are no experimental results mentioned anywhere in this book, except in one place where there is a ball, rolling down an inclined plane, in which it says how far the ball got after one second, two seconds, three seconds and so on. The numbers have 'errors' in them—that is, if you look at them, you think you re looking at experimental results, because the numbers are a little above, or a little below, the theoretical values. The book even talks about having to correct the experimental errors—very fine. The trouble is, when you calculate the value of the acceleration constant from these values, you get the right answer. But a ball rolling down an inclined plane, *if it is actually done,* has an inertia to get it to turn, and will, *if you do the experiment,* produce five-sevenths of the right answer, because of the extra energy needed to go into the rotation of the ball. Therefore this single example of experimental 'results' is obtained from a *fake* experiment. Nobody had rolled such a ball, or they would never have gotten those results!" . . .

Finally, I said that I couldn't see how anyone could be educated by this self-propagating system in which people pass exams, and teach others to pass exams, but "nobody knows anything."

The concluding paragraph of this chapter seems worth repeating.

Since I had gone to Brazil under a program sponsored by the United States Government, I was asked by the State Department to write a report about my experiences in Brazil, so I wrote out the essentials of the speech I had just given. I found out later through the grapevine that the reaction of somebody in the State Department was, "That shows you how dangerous it is to send somebody to Brazil who is so naive. Foolish fellow; he can only cause trouble. He didn't understand the problems." Quite the contrary! I think this person in the State Department was naive to think that because he saw a university with a list of courses and descriptions, that's what it was.

In short, the institution of government, here at home, has learned to adapt to self-deception and to weakness instead of to intelligent candor and to strength. This is a characteristic of institutions in decline. If accepting mediocrity means security—not rocking the boat—you do it if that is the common practice, the way to get along.

But that was in Brazil! someone might say. Well, see what Prof. Feynman (a Nobel Prize winner in physics) has to say about the textbooks

used in the California public schools, and his failure to accomplish much of anything to change the system by which they are selected, causing him to resign from the commission on which he had agreed to serve in a moment of public spirit. He is describing an infection which is worldwide, although more acute in some places than in others. (For pleasing contrast and ground for encouragement, see the article, "Large and Little School Teaching," by Lauro Martines, a professor of history at UCLA, in the Spring 1985 *American Scholar*. He describes the differences between teaching at Reed College in Oregon, and the University of California in Los Angeles, and both places come off well. Then, in the same issue of the *Scholar,* see Marjorie Rosenberg's "A Sad Heart at the Department Store" on the disgraceful cultural decline in the quality and character of people in the retail business in America—a major institution.)

Well, there is too much easily available material on the trouble with our institutions to give more space to criticism, stimulating though it might be to read the devastating comment one can find.

What about remedies? Is there a way, as one founding father hoped, to make our institutions self-regenerating? From what we have read on this difficult subject, we have learned that it isn't a political problem at all, although it is usually so regarded and so treated. In *The Long Road,* both the shortest and quite possibly the best book Arthur Morgan wrote, the author tells of a conversation he had with H. G. Wells at a luncheon. Wells declared that America must make a far-reaching choice: "You must decide whether you are going in for big business or little business." Morgan replied, giving the analogy of the diversity of plant-size in a forest, saying that all sizes of business should have a place. He developed the analogy at length and concluded: "Let the essentially big remain big, the essentially middle-sized remain middle-sized, and the essentially small remain small; let each respect the effective functions of the other, recognizing that size may not determine enduring quality."

Wells could not agree, and he added, "America must decide between individualism and socialism." Again Morgan dissented, saying:

> I hope that America is not going to make that decision. America likes to use different kinds of social organization. America likes communism. In many respects we serve everybody alike regardless of his resources. Our fire departments are communistic. We serve everyone alike from public funds. Our public school system is communistic. There also we not only serve the public from public funds, regardless of relative financial contributions, but we compel children to take the schooling offered. Probably half of all state and local taxes in America are levied for communistic purposes.
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> We have state socialism in our country. Look at all the great municipal water supplies where government is in business. Our great irrigation systems are socialistic. America is not afraid of communism and America is not afraid of socialism, except as some people hold them up as terrible menaces. America also believes in democracy; we elect officers to represent us in government.
>
> On the other hand America is not afraid of other forms of social organization; America is not afraid of autocracy, of aristocracy. You have here a great university (the University of Chicago). Unless it is governed differently from most other great endowed universities, it is autocratically managed, and a little group of men who are its trustees choose their own successors. Yes, we have long-time, self-perpetuating autocracies in the management of many of our endowed colleges and universities. Yet I find liberals from all over the United States coming to places like this to study. You will find as great regard for academic freedom here in this autocratic institution as in the supposedly more democratic state university. America is not afraid of autocracy so long as autocracy has a social purpose.
>
> America is not afraid of despotism. One of the most absolute of industrial despotisms has been the Ford automobile industry, controlled by two men, and yet America has not frowned upon that great organization. To the extent that social-mindedness and sound economics have been evident, America has been rather proud of it.

Americans, Morgan told Wells, judge their institutions by their service to society, not by any abstract theory of social organization. But Wells, as might be expected, went back to England and said that America had no philosophy of government and was just "drifting along."

Morgan was in no sense complacent about American life. But he refused to accept formula solutions. He had learned that the solvent for making all the forms of social organization work well, in their distinctive functions, is the presence of good and intelligent human character in each one. He knew this empirically as well as intuitively, from wide practical experience. He spent his long and busy life studying the modes of the formation of character and recorded in his books what he found out. He was an unclassifiable man, because he looked behind the superficial causes of America's problems, seeing what would work, and also what could not be made to work. We might add that Gandhi, too, was an unclassifiable man. The foolishness of claiming him for any political sect or ideology is made clear by Horace Alexander in *Gandhi Through Western Eyes*, in the last chapter. (A new edition of this book has recently become available.) Both Morgan and Gandhi saw institutions as tools, and as effects, not causes, of the qualities of human beings. It is time their wisdom was put to work.

REVIEW
ABDUL GHAFFAR KHAN

ON December 31, 1929, the Indian people declared their moral independence of the British Empire. In the words of M.K. Gandhi:

> The British Government in India has not only deprived the Indian people of their freedom, but has based itself on the exploitation of the masses and has ruined India economically, politically, culturally and spiritually. We believe, therefore, that India must sever the British connection and attain complete independence. We hold it to be a crime against man and God to submit any longer to a rule that has caused this fourfold disaster to our country.

This resolution of the Indian Congress went on to say that the people would withdraw, so far as they could, "all voluntary association from the British government," and would prepare "for civil disobedience, including the non payment of taxes." It was held that by such means, "without doing violence even under provocation, the end of this inhuman rule is assured."

Three months later Gandhi warned the British viceroy, Lord Irwin, that unless he "opened a way for a real conference between equals," nationwide civil disobedience would begin in nine days. There being no response from the viceroy other than an acknowledgement of Gandhi's letter, on March 12 Gandhi left his ashram and began a twenty-four-day march to the seaside village of Dandi where, on April 6, he picked up a pinch of sea salt from the beach. This was in violation of the law restricting the making and selling of salt to the government monopoly—the government's second largest source of revenue. Salt, in a tropical country, is as essential as water. Everyone was affected by the British law and everyone was able to break it. The salt law, Gandhi saw, was an ideal symbol of British tyranny, one that the simplest peasant could resist.

In the recent book, *A Man to Match His Mountains* (Nilgiri Press, 1984)—the story of the life of Abdul Ghaffar Khan, the Pathan nonviolent hero of the Northwest Frontier Province of India—the author, Eknath Easwaran, describes the impact of Gandhi's decision:

> A monsoon of resistance broke over the country. In open defiance, Indians by the millions made, sold, and bought millions of pounds of illegal salt. It was the unmistakable gesture of a people who had declared themselves free and were now beginning to act like it.
>
> By the end of the month, India was convulsed by revolution. The British had never seen anything like this—no government had in all of history. Their armies and police beat down the unarmed crowds with *lathis* (steel-tipped staffs), raided Congress offices, confiscated property, and eventually arrested every major political leader except Gandhi, assuming that the movement would collapse from under him. Meetings were banned and newspapers shut down. One hundred thousand people ended up in jail.
>
> But the storm only grew. Every arrest or beating only brought forth new resisters. Finally, unable to bear the mounting criticism from London, the viceroy arrested Gandhi on May 4. Gandhi went with one simple message for his countrymen: to carry on the struggle with complete nonviolence.
>
> They did carry on, and they remained nonviolent.

Meanwhile, in the Frontier Province, where the Khyber Pass, famous gateway to India, is located, and where the hitherto warlike Pathans lived, excesses of British brutality began on a scale "Indians had never seen before." In Peshawar, the capital city, "almost the entire population had broken the salt laws." Khan had organized a nonviolent Pathan army, called the Khudai Khidmatgars, pledged to harmlessness, but the British were simply unable to believe that the feuding Pathans, their most formidable enemies throughout the conquest, could be nonviolent. Easwaran writes:

> What alarmed the British—and stunned Indians—was the nonviolence of the Pathans. No one expected it, and the British were clearly unnerved. "The British feared a nonviolent Pathan more than a violent one," Khan wrote later. "All the horrors the British perpetuated on the Pathans had only one purpose: to provoke them to violence." Much of the government's extreme behavior during the months that followed can be understood only as attempts to

> goad the Pathans into breaking their nonviolent vow. If they broke down and retaliated, the British would be back on familiar ground.

A detachment of troops came to Utmanzai, Ghaffar Khan's home town north of Peshawar, and the commander ordered the Khudai Khidmatgars to remove the red shirts they wore as uniforms. They refused. One after another, they were beaten and stripped, but with a result the opposite of what the British desired:

> Where Khan had been able to recruit only a thousand or so Khudai Khidmatgars, British repression and effrontery converted eighty thousand men and women to the movement by the end of the summer. Undaunted, the government tried other methods. Martial law was declared in August and the province was placed completely in the hands of the military. Khudai Khidmatgars were stripped and flogged and made to run the gauntlet through cordons of soldiers who prodded them with rifles and bayonets as they passed. One enterprising assistant superintendent, a Mr. Jameson, had volunteers stripped and physically humiliated in public, then thrown into nearby cesspools. For some the strain was too great. They chose suicide rather than break their vow of nonviolence.

None of the British attempts to break the spirit of the Indians had any effect.

> This time, nothing—not even jailing Gandhi—worked for the British. Leaders came from nowhere and the movement surged with invisible momentum. All across the subcontinent, strikes, picketing, meetings, parades, and innumerable acts of open disregard for British rule continued throughout the fall and winter of 1930. And Indians remained nonviolent.
>
> At the end of the year Lord Irwin invited Gandhi to Delhi to discuss a truce. It was the first time the British had officially recognized Gandhi and his movement. They knew they had no choice.

Irwin and Gandhi met, negotiated, and signed an accord, which pleased almost no one, but Gandhi knew that a basic step of progress had been made—the beginning of the end of imperialism. The British had finally encountered a kind of determination they could not control except by killing. And that did not last, because others came forward to die. Easwaran tells of a time when Pathans had gathered in a Bazaar to protest the arrests of their leaders. Armored cars arrived to suppress them. According to a Congress Inquiry report, the Pathans were not armed, but the troops were ordered to fire on the crowd. "Several people were killed and wounded, and the crowd was pushed back some distance." The people agreed to disperse if they were allowed to remove the dead and injured, and the armored cars went away. But the authorities refused to agree and ordered a second firing, which continued, off and on, for over three hours. In one of his books Gene Sharp described what happened:

> When those in front fell down wounded by the shots, those behind came forward with their breasts hared and exposed themselves to the fire, so much so that some people got as many as 21 bullet wounds in their bodies, and all the people stood their ground without getting into a panic. . . . .
>
> The Anglo-Indian paper of Lahore, which represents the official view, itself wrote to the effect that the people came forward one after another to face the firing and when they fell wounded they were dragged back and others came forward to be shot at. This state of things continued from 11 till 5 o'clock in the evening. When the number of corpses became too many the ambulance cars of the government took them away (and burned them).

Who was this Abdul Ghaffar Khan—"Badshah Khan," the Pathans called him, King of Khans—a man able to inspire them to such un-Pathan-like behavior? He was born in 1890 to a father who had himself begun to move in another direction, who practiced forgiveness instead of retaliation, a well-to-do landowner who made no enemies and avoided feuds. His mother was a devout Muslim who had great faith in her youngest son—"a pure, truthful boy." Like his older brother, Khan Saheb, Ghaffar attended the Mission School at Peshawar, gaining great respect for the English Reverend who was devoted to the welfare of the Pathan boys who came to him for education, preparing them to attend the Punjab University. Khan for a time thought he might stay

on at the school as a teacher, but the offer of a career in the Guides, an elite corps of Pathan and Sikh infantry led the young man, now six foot three, weighing over two hundred pounds, to join this distinguished branch of the British service. He was granted a commission, but soon after saw the arrogance of the British officers in their relations to Pathans and walked away from the army.

For a time he went to another school; then, with great regret, he turned down an opportunity to go to England for a higher education, as his older brother had done. He did not go because of his mother's strong objection. He worked as a farmer on his father's lands. But he had learned the idea of service to others from the Englishman in his first school and decided to give his energy to overcoming the ignorance, poverty, apathy, and violence of the Pathan people. He would start a school, then schools. The schools were popular and began to exert an influence. This did not please the British, who saw that a literate Pathan was a man ready to struggle for independence. Ghaffar worked for Pathan improvement and education under cover, for a time, but he did not like that. After a night spent in prayer in a small mosque, which may have included what people call a "religious experience," he resolved to serve God. "And since He needed no service, Ghaffar would serve his children instead—the tattered villagers who were too ignorant and too steeped in violence to help themselves." This was a course he then followed for seventy years. He set about reopening the schools.

These were the years in which he first heard about Gandhi's work and principles. At once he saw the point of nonviolence and truth. Meanwhile the Pathans had come to love and admire him, calling him "Khan of Khans." Then the British arrested him and sentenced him to three years in prison at hard labor. Released in 1924, he returned home to find the school he had begun there flourishing.

And so, as the years went by, Abdul Ghaffar Khan became Gandhi's colleague, working with him for freedom, truth, and peace. He is still alive, living under the rule of Pakistan, the Islamic state which, with Gandhi, he had opposed at the time of India's liberation. At the present writing Khan is ninety-five years old, incurring the wrath of the Pakistani government as he had outraged the British.

COMMENTARY
NO OTHER WAY

ON page seven a founding father of our republic is quoted as expressing the hope that we would be able to make our institutions "self-regenerating." One may ask, is this really possible, and if so, how?

The schools, no doubt, have the greatest need for self-regeneration. What is a school? It is a place where parents send their children to be "educated." The parents are either too busy to undertake this task or they don't feel competent to teach their children. Yet until the academic subjects such as mathematics and the various sciences became part of education, schools were not needed. The young learned in the home environment what they needed to know for living in the world. But when advancement in life seemed dependent upon having skills few parents could convey to the young, the teaching profession came into being. Like other callings such as the professions, teaching acquired its own special language and techniques. In time, even the things most naturally learned from parents in the home became "subjects" taught in the schools—matters such as personal hygiene, diet, preparation of meals, exercise, and philosophy of life. Parents became less and less responsible for transmitting to the young their own attitudes and feelings about such things. Some parents, not all, felt relieved, by the "freedom" so provided.

But if our object is to make the schools self-regenerating, they must be relieved of tasks which—at least in theory—are much better performed in the home. This would make the work of the schools entirely legitimate, because really necessary, and earn for teachers the respect to which they are entitled but have now largely lost.

So with all the other institutions, starting, say, with government. To make government self-regenerating, we would need to take back numerous responsibilities that have been delegated to it by citizens who prefer to give all their energies to other pursuits, usually making or trying to make more money.

In other words, virtually all the faults of our institutions, including the endless offenses of bureaucracy, are our own—depersonalized and writ large. Applying the remedy—resumption of responsibility—will not only take time, it will be painful. But there is no other way.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves

THE MAGIC OF "WE"

IN an article in *Fellowship* for January-February of this year, Narayan Desai, a major figure in the Gandhian movement, tells what it was like to be a child growing up in the Satyagraha Ashram, which Gandhi had founded and where he lived, across the Sabarmati Rivet from the city of Ahmedabad. Desai's recollections go back to the time when Gandhi and others had been able to institute a national boycott of non-Indian manufactured articles. Desai relates:

> A friend of our family had sent some toys for me from Bombay. There were plenty of places to play in the ashram, but few toys. So we were always happy to get them. But to our misfortune, the toys sent for me were foreign-made. At that time, the national boycott of foreign goods was in full swing. Bapu himself had instituted this, to stop the draining of India's wealth by industrial nations. So when the toys arrived, Bapu confiscated them before they ever got to us.
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> Our "secret police" informed us that some toys had been sent from Bombay for Babla, and that Bapu had hidden them. We prepared to take up arms against this gross injustice. To launch our struggle, we decided to send a deputation to Bapu. Since the toys had come in my name, I was selected as spokesman.
>
> Our delegation arrived at the cottage Bapu was then occupying. My father (Mahadev Desai), who was Bapu's chief secretary, was sitting as usual at Bapu's side, writing. Other ashramites were there as well.
>
> I fired the first volley: "Is it true that some toys have come from Bombay?" It helps to extract a confession of fact from the opponent before the war commences in earnest! Bapu was just then busy writing. But he looked up from his work and said, "Oh it's you, Babla. Yes, it's true about the toys."
>
> "Where did you put my toys?" In the second volley was the inquiry into the whereabouts of the goods.
>
> "They're over there on the shelf," said Bapu, pointing. The goods were not hidden at all. And there was a whole basketful of them!
>
> "Hand over those toys!" When justice is on your side why beat around the bush? But then Bapu began to set out his own argument.
>
> "You know the toys are foreign-made, don't you?" If Bapu himself had set up the boycott of foreign goods, how could ashram children play with foreign-made toys? That was Bapu's line of reasoning. But at our age, how could we understand such things?
>
> "I know nothing about Indian or foreign. I only know they're my toys, and they've been sent here for me. So you must let me have them." I asserted my rights. I was sure Bapu would not deny me my rights. But suddenly Bapu gave the argument a new twist.
>
> "Can we play with foreign-made toys?" In that word "we," Bapu played his trump card. In just one sentence Bapu had placed me and him on the same side of the fence. As I was losing my right to play with those toys, Bapu was giving up his own. And the moment it was shown to me that my opponent had shared that right, the responsibility he had taken on became my own as well.
>
> Where did our arguments vanish? Where could our delegation makes its stand? When the enemy himself sides with you, the contest becomes completely unbalanced.
>
> "We have ourselves launched the boycott of foreign goods, and if we play with foreign toys here at home . . ." But Bapu didn't have to pursue the argument. Seeing their spokesman unnerved, the other members of the delegation were already slipping away.

The ashram had its rules, some of them seeming harsh, that Gandhi had made and applied. He could be seen as the patriarch of a large, extended family. But in Narayan Desai's recollection and, he thought, that of the other children, Bapu "was completely different. For us children, he was never the stern disciplinarian, never the dictator. To us, he was above all simply a friend."

* * *

Sydney Gurewitz Clemens teaches little children before they are old enough to go to

kindergarten. This means three-year-olds and four-year-olds, mostly the latter. In the introduction to her book, *The Sun's Not Broken, A Cloud's Just in the Way* (Gryphon House, 3706 Otis Street, Mt. Rainier, Maryland 20712, 1983, $8.95), she says that she has worked with black four-year-olds in inner city settings for twelve years, eight of them in Hunter's Point, San Francisco.

This is a book for other teachers, but it is also for parents, who need to realize how much can be done to help small children by adults who are observant and watchful and *study* the children. An early comment gives the reader something to think about:

> While our homes are generally run for the convenience and comfort of adults, we can run schools to meet children's needs. The children learn this difference. Early in September, Amanda spilled some milk at snacktime and I told her to get the sponge from its place on the cart nearby. Together we tidied, cleaning the table and floor, and then I moved the damp chair away, replacing it with a dry one. Amanda put the sponge away and returned just in time to see me putting "her" chair at an empty table. She took this to mean that she was to sit alone away from the group. She rejoined us only after I told her she was welcome at her old place at the table, on a dry chair.
>
> The only way to deal with this kind of fear, since it's based on reality and experience, is to show children other alternatives. Your behavior can show children that there's another way a problem can be handled; there are different grownups in the world and they handle problems in different ways; and at our school we can be freer to make mistakes or take risks than elsewhere.

This book is filled with insight based on experience and common sense. For example:

> Susan called me a few days after her son Petey, in my class, began having tantrums. She said these had gone on ever since her husband, Ted, had left on a business trip. Had anything happened at the airport, I wondered. Well, not really, she said. Ted had told Petey, "You're the man of the house now, son. I want you to take care of your mother." My gorge rose. "Well, you tell Petey that *you're* going to take care of *him*! You're a grown woman and he's a little boy and he's terrified of the responsibility his father handed him." Susan told him that and the tantrums stopped.

Another story illustrates the kind of *attention* it is possible to give to a small child, and what may be the result.

> Since Millie's speech development was poor, and she seemed to be emotionally adrift, lacking adult support, we started right away to plan for the help she needed. The day she registered, I arranged for Katherine [an assistant] and me to meet with our social worker, Amy Williams, to plan Millie's first day at school. Worried that separation from her family would upset her, we saw to it that Millie would experience success from the start, that she'd hear speech modelled many times before she was asked to produce it, and that she would have time alone with Katherine or me each day.
>
> All of this was a little harder because Millie entered school in November, after other patterns were set, as children from disorganized families often do. We must be careful not to penalize them for the poor timing.
>
> Our log records Millie's progress during the year. We can't sort out which gains belong to her determination to survive and which to our program for her. Nevertheless, I feel joy when I read in the October 23 log that Millie, acting as my messenger and repeating my words, told Dinah I wanted her to come in and read, that on October 27 she said, spontaneously, "I'm done" when she finished a painting; that early in November, when I told her I didn't like something she'd done, she said, "I said I'm sorry," using language to try to ease a tense situation. I'm excited to read . . . that by December she was reading 12 words (family names plus monster, school, ice cream, bike, nice, orange, and dress. . . .
>
> By year's end Millie read 24 words. At graduation she recited a poem with the others, and because we had a record of her progress we know we helped Millie grow. When a grown-up helps free a child's intelligence it feels wonderful to them both. This joy transfigures a classroom. . . .

We could easily stop here, but another paragraph is too useful to leave out.

> Children like Millie, past the optimum point for learning something, have an arduous struggle. They need at least a safe space, where they can make mistakes without being devastated by them. And a

> grownup who encourages: "Oh, you didn't learn that. I didn't teach it well enough. Let's try again." These children require many repetitions of their lessons. They need to use painting, clay and block building to solve problems on a safe, nonverbal level before they try words.

Well, this year we've encountered two really fine books about teaching—this one and one published in England—also, by happy coincidence, by another Gryphon Press—Seonaid Robertson's *Rosegarden and Labyrinth*, on teaching youngsters art. Both writers know how to enter into the lives of those whom they teach. If we had to make a decision, we would say that books of this sort are probably the best of all now being published.

FRONTIERS

Some Innovators

BACK in 1930, when the first edition of the *Encyclopoaedia of the Social Sciences* appeared, Clarence Marsh Case said in his conclusion to the article on Conscientious Objection:

> The conscientious objector has always stood as a most difficult challenger of the political state's claim to absolute authority over its citizens. Conscientious objection is itself simply a special case under nonconformity, and heresy is another aspect of the same thing. The list of conscientious objectors therefore includes most of the intellectual and moral innovators in human history.

What is a conscientious objector? He or she is one who refuses to do "something against which he holds conscientious scruples." In short, C.O.'s will not be a part of an organization one of whose purposes is to kill and which trains humans for killing. Today, as war becomes more and more terrible in its intent and consequences—and wholly irrational as in the case of nuclear war—the list of conscientious objectors is growing. More and more individuals resist conscription for military purposes, and more and more who have joined or been drafted are deciding that they cannot remain a part of the military.

A long article by David Freed in the *Los Angeles Times* for Feb. 7 of this year relates the story of some of these belated war resisters. One of them, Jerome Kohn, an ensign in the Navy getting ready to graduate from the Officers training school, made up his mind when the news came of the "conquest" of Grenada by U.S. forces in 1983. He told the *Times* writer:

> "The way everybody was jumping around and yelling how we beat up a few Cubans, I wanted to rip off my shoulder boards in shame," Kohn, 23, said. "That's when it truly occurred to me that what I was doing was wrong. That's when I knew I had to get out of the Navy."

He eventually did, as a conscientious objector.

Some figures:

> In the 12 years since the draft ended, more than 5,800 peacetime volunteers have been allowed to prematurely terminate their enlistment contracts and leave the military after declaring themselves morally, religiously or ethically opposed to war. About 15% have been junior officers like Kohn. Most have received honorable or general discharges, but usually not without considerable effort and anguish.

Why did they join in the first place? It needs to be remembered that most of them are little more than boys when they sign up. Freed says:

> Many volunteers who become conscientious objectors today are wooed into the military by promises of technical training, and they never fully realize until well after induction that they may be called on to fight, according to counselors.
>
> "One complaint I hear all the time from COs is that recruiters today describe the military in such non-military ways, that some people don't think about military issues when they sign up," said attorney Jon Landau. He is a former Army officer-turned-conscientious objector who works in San Francisco for the Central Committee for Conscientious Objectors.
>
> "You look at the military's advertisements on television during football games and all you see are kids talking to their dads about computers and funds for college."

After reading Freed's account of the ruthless treatment accorded C.O.'s to the first world war, it is a relief to learn that government policy has changed for the better. The article concludes:

> It was not until 1962 that the U.S. Defense Department officially allowed for the transfer of men opposed to combat and the discharge of those opposed to all military duty. It also marked the first time in U.S. military history that a conscientious objector—if he opposed war on religious grounds—could apply for and receive an honorable discharge.
>
> Eight years later, in a case involving a draftee bound for Vietnam, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that a person need not be religiously opposed to war to qualify for discharge as a conscientious objector. The high court held that a sincere and strong belief against all war could be considered religious for purposes of the law.
>
> Since then, hundreds of non-religious soldiers, sailors and airmen who enlisted in peacetime have

sought discharge from the service claiming moral or ethical opposition to war.

Such discharges peaked in 1971 when 1,984 of 4,381 applications were granted, but since then the applications have diminished:

They may increase again. There is talk of renewing the draft—a threat which plays a part in recent refusals to register. An editorial in *Fellowship* for last March notes that estimates "place the number of eligible men who have refused to register at 800,000."

One of these—one of the few who have been prosecuted for failing to register—a bearded 23-year-old named Andy Mager, represented himself in court, rejecting the counsels of friends who wanted him to hire a good lawyer who would use the "selective prosecution" argument. His story is told by Carolyn Toll in the same issue of *Fellowship.* When the time came for him to take the stand in court. he said:

> I am a Jew. I look back on World War II with horror at the millions of my people who were killed. Under the Nuremberg accords initiated by the US following that war, many Nazi war criminals were sent to prison for obeying orders. Under principles VI and VII of these accords, I have an obligation not to participate in the "planning, preparation, initiation or waging of war in violation of international treaties, accords and agreements." And this is true even if it means that I must disobey a law of my own country. . . .
>
> I believe that based on Article VI of the Constitution, which says that all treaties are the supreme law of the land, I have a responsibility not to register, in order not to be complicit in US violations of international law. I believe that my duty to register is negated by my belief that the US government is involved in violations of international law in its policies relating to Nicaragua. . . .
>
> Several courts during the Vietnam era said that the link between registering or being inducted and US violations of international law was too tenuous to allow this type of defense to be presented. . . . When will the courts hear the issue? Must we wait for 50,000 American lives and countless Nicaraguan lives to be lost before the US government is held accountable for its actions? . . .

Last February the judge sentenced Andy Mager to a three-year term, six months of it to be served in "a jail type institution," the rest suspended.