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A LEGITIMATE INDIVIDUALISM

COLLECTIVISM, according to dictionaries and encyclopedias, is the central doctrine of socialist theory, which holds that welfare has meaning only for groups. The argument has reason behind it, since human good, it is said, is in virtually all ways dependent upon social good. The human is a social being who gains fulfillment only in society. The individual, then, is defined as no more than a part whose interests depend upon society, whose good cannot be realized except in a good society. It follows that individuals who reject this view must be controlled or eliminated because of their anti-social tendencies.

This, we may say, is historical thinking. The good society, should it ever come into being, will be an historical achievement. The makers of history, therefore, are the makers of men, and the highest good lies in knowledge of the laws of history. Such laws, once they are determined, have only to be facilitated and the good society will emerge. The individual is not an end in himself. He has value as a contributor to the political whole, the business of both law and education being to make this clear.

We think of such conclusions as being social in origin, yet they may have religious sources, as is shown by an observation by Jacques Maritain in *Freedom in the Modern World* (1936):

> It is to the credit of ancient Christendom that an injury done to the common good of the temporal order in its subordination to eternal values was felt to be of its nature a graver hurt than a more obvious wrong that affected it only in the order of temporal things. In one sense a State which was prepared to inflict death for the crime of heresy showed a greater concern for the good of souls and a nobler conception of the dignity of human society (thus centered on truth) than a state which only punishes for crimes committed against the body.

The force of this logic is apparent on every hand. Its modern application in public affairs is called "thought control." If everyone can be forced to agree on political truth, there will be no heretics and executions for deviation from it will not be necessary. Yet we know from history that heretics have both persistence and survival power, so that the executions go on and on. Within this century the supposed scientific revelation of biology that heredity determines character, and nearly everything else, led to "blood purges" and obligatory sterilization. Racism claims both religious and scientific justification.

The ground of such policies lies in two basic assumptions, both Aristotelian in origin. Aristotle maintained that membership in the social organization—the State—exhausts the potentialities of the human being. This is equivalent to saying that we have no individual destiny, only a political destiny. He also maintained that there is no knowledge without public verification. He restricted knowledge "to the sphere of cogent inferences from acknowledged premises," using materials obtained through sense perception. Only the objectively certain is truth, which means, in effect, that no one has a right to be wrong. The political implications seem clear enough.

Is there no other social theory? "Individualism" is now a fighting term, with anarchist rather than political implications, yet we have a qualified individualism in the political theory called liberal democracy. The Bill of Rights attached to the Constitution of the United States is a manifesto of what most Americans regard as legitimate individualism. There is an idealistic as well as materialistic ground for this legitimacy. What we speak of as "freedom" is held to be an absolute human value, to be reduced only voluntarily by the individual as a matter of common sense. The constitution or the hypothetical "social contract" is the form taken by that reduction. We agree to obey the laws that we

(by hypothesis) make. This is the individual's recognition of his relative dependence on society and admission of its necessities. There is also love of one's fellows in community, but since love cannot be legislated into being, it does not form a part of political theory, despite the fact that there could be no society without it.

The American Republic is a state of this sort. As Judge Florence Allen said in *This Constitution of Ours* (1940):

> The farmers believed that government belongs to men, and not men to government, and because of this they believed that men had a right to criticize the government. They held with Socrates that the government should be prodded by criticism as by a gadfly, and with Mill that both the individual and society require the enlightenment of unfettered human inquiry and are robbed if deprived of it.

Thus in principle and doctrine Americans are a nation of free individuals, uncoerced save by their own decision, responsible to themselves before any other authority. Such, at any rate, is the conception. Yet the resulting arrangements led to a problem which, since it arose from the variability of human nature, and not from any law, has had little attention in political theory, although careful and calculating consideration from those able to turn the variability to their own gain. We take one account of that problem from Louis J. Halle's *The Ideological Imagination* (Quadrangle, 1972):

> For many individuals, the loneliness and responsibility constitute too high a price to pay for personal freedom. (This, surely, is what explains the appeal, for the solitary man who wrote the *Social Contract*, of the imagined state that relieves the individual of his individuality, reducing him to a mere cell in the body politic.)
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> The free individual feels himself, moreover, too small to cope with the immensity of the world in which he finds himself. Alone, he is no more than a mite in a maelstrom. Because his individual identity seems so insufficient, he feels the need to adopt, by association, another identity that represents the greatness and power he lacks. In ancient times, a man who was nothing became great, in his own esteem and that of others, by being able to say: *"Civis Romanus sum."* [I am a Roman citizen.]

Prof. Halle muses:

> Every society must, it seems to me, provide for those individuals who are not prepared to bear the burden of freedom. In fact, every society does. Anyone who has served in the lowest military ranks knows how many soldiers have adopted the profession to escape the burden. In an army the individual is fed, clothed and sheltered (the army is his shepherd, he shall not want, and, by making the decisions for him, it spares him from having to determine the conduct of life for himself. Many privates feel themselves happiest where they are, and would resist promotion.

This analysis is profoundly true and profoundly neglected. It is neglected because it amounts to a deep embarrassment to democratic theory, since it reveals that a great many people are not, as we say, "ready" for self-government. What should be done for (or about) these people? A democracy cannot do anything for them except by compromising itself. Carlo Levi wrote of this problem, completing the manuscript of a book, *Of Fear and Freedom*, in 1939, but for obvious reasons it could not be published until years later—until 1950, when it was brought out in this country by Farrar, Strauss. The book is an examination of the kind of organization—religious or political institution—that undertakes to relieve humans of the pain of responsibility by redefining it in acceptable (easy) terms. It was Levi's idea of human development that we all begin as parts of an anonymous mass and that our lives provide opportunity to *become* individuals. The task of each one is to become free, and that means to accept the burden of making decisions. The one who does not decide things for himself remains or falls back into the anonymous mass. (Levi's book was of course a symbolic account of religion and politics in Italy during the time of Mussolini.) "Everybody," Levi wrote, "is born from chaos and to chaos may revert; every man leaves the mass in a process of differentiation, and in this shapeless mass may lose himself again." How does he lose himself?

> Wherever the mass is really anonymous, incapable of naming itself and speaking, the sacred language of the state replaces the names, which have lost their meaning, by its own religious and symbolic names: these are numbers, tickets, banners, armbands, uniforms, badges, insignia, identification cards, ritual expressions of the fundamental idolized uniformity, and of the idolized uniform organization. Where the spoken word is made possible by the very nature of the mass, it is useless to speak about the freedom of speech; the law's intervention may at most sanction the non-existence of free speech, and prevent its possible beginning. Those places where there is speech, the high and low Parnassi of political poetry, solemn or vulgar, the parliaments, debating societies and public meetings, the *salons*, and shops and cafes, lose their functions of giving expression to social relations and disappear. Mass manifestations cannot be expressive: there is no place in them for diversity and thought—only for oneness of action; not action as freedom, but solely action as passivity, necessity, nature, the weight of undivided numbers: the plebescite.
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> Art grows into monotonous repetition, into a litany, or else it becomes a desperate and impossible groping for freedom, nostalgia or hope. The sense is lost of living relations, for they are replaced by a single relationship, which is symbolic and arbitrary. Cities grow by peripheral progression, like unicellular organisms, and spread through the countryside like a shapeless liquid. Culture, which consists everywhere and at all times of a universal and absolute ability to make distinctions, has no meaning at all, in the indistinctness of the mass. And thus, instead of culture, there stands its religious equivalent, a totalitarian, arbitrary will of confusion, which expands, as matter does, by propagation, and which is valid not as a value, but as a weight: *propaganda*, the culture of the masses.

Prof. Halle speaks of the substitutions offered by other organizations for the unending struggle to *be* an individual, to make one's own decisions.

> The function is also performed by communist parties and other conspiratorial organizations that put their members under discipline. Finally, it is performed in a lesser degree by those political movements that, although not imposing discipline, have the allegiance that their members give them out of the need to think what others think rather than think their own thoughts in the loneliness of their own minds.
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> The accelerating expansion and complication of modern societies in consequence of technological developments, has in itself been increasing the loneliness of the individual, the perplexity of his responsibilities, and the sense of his inadequacy. If it is to be expected that, in addition to managing his individual affairs within the individual sphere that is his, as a citizen he will also take responsible positions on the great matters of foreign and domestic policy which present themselves for national decision, then he cannot fulfill the expectation. Because freedom is not to be separated from responsibility, he has more freedom than he can exercise. He ends by giving it away.

But what, by contrast, would be the ideal of human behavior, forging an authentic individuality? Levi's reply to this question is absolutely abstract, yet seems perfectly accurate. An individual is born, he says, when "the two contrary processes of differentiation and undifferentiation find a common point of equilibrium and are coexistent in the creative act." He goes on to say that human achievement "blends at the very same moment individual riches and the treasures of universality—differentiation and undifferentiation: an activity most individual when intensely singular; born of freedom and necessity at once; understood by all men through man's common indistinct nature; transcending everyone, in as much as every man is a distinct, single self; but shared by everyone in the free process of individuation and consciousness."

What does that mean? Well, it might mean becoming a conscientious objector to war. It might mean what it meant for Gandhi when he said to the British, "You may take my life but I will not give you my obedience." It might mean taking inventory of one's opinions, eliminating, reshaping, or wholeheartedly adopting them, once again, after close inspection. It might mean standing up to be counted or standing aside and refusing to be counted. It might mean what Vinoba meant when he said, "the union of fitting knowledge with fitting ignorance is the nectar of eternity."

It does mean that there is always a right thing to do, that even the most forbidding circumstances provide a field of action. Even in a death camp, as Viktor Frankl said, it is possible to remain free. No one could compel him to hate the guards. Finally, it means that freedom is always a human production, the area of choice enlarging as we use the freedom we have, or becoming smaller as we fail to exercise our powers.

It also means that the more truly individual we become, the more universal is our attitude. Maslow put this well in *Toward a Psychology of Being:*

> Examples of this kind of transcendence are Walt Whitman or William James who were profoundly American, most *purely* American, and yet were also very purely supra-cultural, internationalist members of the whole human species. They were universal men not in spite of their being Americans, just because they were such good Americans. So too, Martin Buber, a Jewish philosopher, was *also* more than Jewish. Hokusai, profoundly Japanese, was a universal artist. Probably *any* universal art cannot be rootless. *Merely* regional art is different from the regionally rooted art that becomes broadly general—human. We may remind ourselves here also of Piaget's children who could not conceive of being simultaneously Genevan and Swiss until they matured to the point of being able to include one within the other and both simultaneously in a hierarchically-integrated way.

Is it conceivable that modern man is now in the process of outgrowing collectivist thinking? That instead of regarding progress as a "historical" achievement, we are ready to recognize that human flowering must first take place in individuals, who then, through their influence and example, bring about arrangements of society which encourage instead of preventing the relationships which are truly good?

This seems the germinal meaning of a rule expressed by Henry Skolimowski in his *Eco-Philosophy,* published (by Marion Boyars) in 1981. We, he said, *"make political statements not as much by the way we vote as by the way we live."* There is a similar implication in a statement by the biologist, Theodosius Dobzhansky (quoted by Skolimowski), who said in 1974:

> From Darwin's time until perhaps a quarter of a century ago, it was necessary to prove that mankind is like other biological species. This task has been successfully accomplished. Now a different, and in a sense antipodal, problem has moved to the fore. This is to establish the evolutionary uniqueness of man. In several ways, mankind is a singular, quite extraordinary product of the evolutionary process. Biological evolution has transcended itself in giving rise to man, as organic evolution did in giving rise to life.

What, through this transcendence, will take the place of the "struggle for existence"? An answer to this question is given by Skolimowski:

> Altruism is a part of our nature, a part of the human instinct. To recognize oneself as human is to recognize one's capacity for altruism. Societies which suppress altruism as a mode of social behavior end up torn with strife, like our present society. . . . All those theories of aggression which revel in the apparently destructive nature of man and which are purportedly based on evolution, seem to be quite oblivious to the work evolution has done through its altruism. . . . We could not live one single day, even in the meanest of societies, without altruistic behavior occurring all the time. . . . We make countless sacrifices because we think it is worth it. We make instruments of ourselves because we consider the cause worthwhile.

As we recognize this, become persuaded of it, are no longer embarrassed by our Promethean impulses, we become contributors to a society that will hardly need further attention. The "collective" will reflect the individuals who make it up.

Louis Halle, wondering how he would make a case for continuing human survival, in a plea before some Mysterious Stranger, decided that he would not claim mankind's material progress (which is historical) as a justification.

> I would, rather, point to Homer's *Odyssey,* to *The Trojan Women* of Euripides, to the great tragedies of Shakespeare, to Melville's *Moby Dick,* to Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address, to James Elroy Flecker's *Hassan,* to Thornton Wilder's *Bridge of San Luis Rey;* I would point to the masses and cantatas of Johann Sebastian Bach, to Mozart's *Coronation*

> *Mass,* and to Bruch's *Kol Nidrei;* I would point to the Aphrodite of Melos, to Michelangelo's frescoes on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel and to his "Pieta"; I would point to the integrity of Socrates, of Boethius, of Thomas More, and of Milovan Djilas. I would point to the fact that mankind's vision of the universe in which it finds itself has been progressively enlarged in the successive vision associated with the names of Ptolemy, Newton, and Einstein. In every case, and without deciding to do so in advance, what I pointed out as a reason for sparing mankind would be associated primarily with one individual, and only secondarily with the society to which he belonged.

Such individuals, Halle says, must be given "a measure of independence from the accepted thinking of official establishments or of that alternative oppressor, the common mind." We cannot do without individual minds who question and dissent, so a balance must be sought. The balance lies, he says, in a freely developing, voluntarily maintained, determinedly unofficial culture.

> The common mind is indispensable to the functioning of any liberal society, for without it there would be social chaos which could be resolved only by a police dictatorship. The common mind is also necessary to the great majority that depend upon it for their inner happiness. The members of a society must therefore be brought up to a set of common norms that arise out of its traditions, are represented by its classics of literature, art, and music, and are communicated through a common educational system.

There are, then, the *good* conventions, the beneficent customs, the sustaining habits which remain *open* as a result of the liberating labors of rare individuals who, by *being* individuals, become the only socializing influence that is acceptable and welcome to people who are learning to think for themselves.

REVIEW
ALBERT CAMUS

IT is no doubt a form of self-indulgence for reviewers to complain about the scarcity of good books; it is—or ought to be—their job to *find* them; but there are nevertheless weeks when this seems very hard. In the MANAS library are a number of books (and writers) to which the reviewer turns (with some regularity) for sustenance and renewal, the test of such works being that you always find it in them. Such a writer is Albert Camus.

In his Introduction to Camus' *Resistance, Rebellion, and Death* (Modern Library, 1960), the editor and translator, Justin O'Brien, explains that in the last year of his life—he was killed in an automobile accident in 1960—Camus selected the twenty-three essays in this book as "most worthy of preservation in English." The subjects are "war and resistance in a Europe dominated by prisons, executions, and exile; the tragedies of Algeria and of Hungary; the horror of the death penalty; and the writer's commitment." These were the topics, but Camus really wrote about the dilemmas and paradoxes which haunt us all. He didn't, you could say, settle anything, except for himself, yet his way of examining issues and questions makes everything he wrote of value. He was an honest man who wrote lucid prose.

Here, for a beginning, we take the opening paragraphs of a talk Camus gave to the members of a Dominican Monastery (Latour-Manbourg) in 1948. They show his quality as both man and thinker:

> Inasmuch as you have been so kind as to invite a man who does not share your convictions to come and answer the very general question you are raising in these conversations, before telling you what I think unbelievers expect of Christians, I should like first to acknowledge your intellectual generosity by stating a few principles.
>
> First, there is a lay pharisaism in which I shall strive not to indulge. To me a lay pharisee is the person who pretends to believe that Christianity is an easy thing and asks of the Christian, on the basis of an external view of Christianity more than he asks of himself. I believe indeed that the Christian has many obligations but that it is not up to the man who rejects them himself to recall their existence to anyone who has already accepted them. If there is anyone who can ask anything of the Christian it is the Christian himself. The conclusion is that if I allowed myself at the end of this statement to demand of you certain duties, these could only be duties that it is essential to ask of any man today, whether he is or is not a Christian.
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> Secondly, I wish to declare also that, not feeling that I possess any absolute truth or any message, I shall never start from the supposition that Christian truth is illusory, but merely from the fact that I could not accept it. . . .
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> Having said that, it will be easier for me to state my third and last principle. It is simple and obvious. I shall not try to change anything that I think or anything that you think (insofar as I can judge of it) in order to reach a reconciliation that would be agreeable to all. On the contrary, what I feel like telling you today is that the world needs real dialogue, that falsehood is just as much the opposite of dialogue as is silence, and that the only possible dialogue is the kind between people who remain what they are and speak their minds. This is tantamount to saying that the world of today needs Christians who remain Christians. The other day at the Sorbonne, speaking to a Marxist lecturer, a Catholic priest said in public that he was anticlerical. Well, I don't like priests who are anticlerical any more than philosophers who are ashamed of themselves. Hence I shall not, as far as I am concerned, try to pass myself off as a Christian in your presence. I share with you the same revulsion from evil. But I do not share your hope, and I continue to struggle against this universe in which children suffer and die.

Having said this (and a few other things), Camus turned to his "assignment." Speaking of certain political executions, he said:

> What the world expects of Christians is that Christians should speak out loud and clear, and that they should voice their condemnation in such a way that never a doubt, never the slightest doubt, could rise in the heart of the simplest man. That they should get away from abstraction and confront the blood-stained face history has taken on today. The grouping we need is a grouping of men resolved to speak out clearly and to pay up personally. When a

> Spanish bishop blesses political executions, he ceases to be a bishop or even a man; he is a dog just like the one who, backed by an ideology, orders that execution without doing the dirty work himself. We are still waiting, and I am waiting, for a grouping of all those who refuse to be dogs and are resolved to pay the price that must be paid so that man can be something more than a dog.

In his conclusion he said that he had been unable to track evil to its origin.

> But it is also true that I, and a few others, know what must be done, if not to reduce evil, at least not to add to it. Perhaps we cannot prevent this world from being a world in which children are tortured. But we can reduce the number of tortured children. And if you don't help us, who else in the world can help us do this?
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> Between the forces of terror and the forces of dialogue, a great unequal battle has begun. I have nothing but reasonable illusions as to the outcome of that battle. But I believe it must be fought, and I know that certain men at least have resolved to do so. I merely fear that they will occasionally feel somewhat alone, that they are in fact alone, and that after an interval of two thousand years we may see the sacrifice of Socrates repeated several times. The program for the future is either a permanent dialogue or the solemn and significant putting to death of any who have experienced dialogue. After having contributed my reply, the question that I ask Christians is this: "Will Socrates still be alone and is there nothing in him and in your doctrine that urges you to join us?"

In effect, on the same subject, Camus replied (in *Combat*, in 1948) to a question from Gabriel Marcel (philosopher and Catholic), who wanted to know why Camus had set the scene of his play, *State of Siege*, in Spain. Shouldn't a play about totalitarian tyranny rather be located in Eastern Europe, where the Communists rule? Replying, Camus said:

> I have stated as vigorously as I could what I thought of the Russian concentration camps. But they will not make me forget Dachau, Buchenwald, and the nameless agony of millions, nor the dreadful repression that decimated the Spanish Republic. . . .
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> You are not well-informed, Gabriel Marcel. Just yesterday five political opponents were condemned to death there. . . . You have forgotten that the first weapons of totalitarian war were bathed in Spanish blood. You have forgotten that in 1936 a rebellious general, in the name of Christ, raised up an army of Moors, hurled them against the legally constituted government of the Spanish Republic, won victory for an unjust cause after massacres that can never be expiated and initiated a frightful repression that lasted ten years and is not yet over. Yes, indeed, why Spain? Because you, like so many others, do not remember.

If he were writing *State of Siege* again, Camus said, he would still set it in Spain, since the judgment pronounced applies to all totalitarian societies.

> This is the way, and absolutely the only way, we can maintain the right to protest against a reign of terror. This is why I cannot share your opinion that we are in complete agreement in matters of politics. For you are willing to keep silent about one reign of terror in order the better to combat another one. There are some of us who do not want to keep silent about anything. It is our whole political society that nauseates us. Hence there will be no salvation until all those who are still worth while have repudiated it utterly in order to find somewhere outside insoluble contradictions, the way to a complete renewal. In the meantime we must struggle. . . .

Camus *did* struggle, on all the fronts of man's inhumanity to man. His intention here, as elsewhere, is to cause the reader to reflect on how he regards other people. What do we think of our fellow humans? How do we form judgments about them, and do we ever really know enough to do so? Someone might say that Camus formed a judgment of Marcel, and he did, but this was in behalf of reducing the harm in the world, not to endorse its increase. Most moving of all, perhaps, is his examination of capital punishment, titled "Reflections on the Guillotine." At the end he said: "There will be no lasting peace either in the hearts of individuals or in social customs until death is outlawed." He is surely right.

COMMENTARY
THE SOCIAL MYSTERY

THIS week's lead article leads to some musings about three terms—dependence, independence, and interdependence—their value and their inadequacy. Their value lies in the order they give to our reflections about the human condition, and in the metaphysical resolutions they provide for paradoxes and contradictions. But for living human beings, this ordering and resolution only sets problems more clearly; they do not solve them.

Our dependence is an objective fact. Consider the newborn baby: What could be more *dependent?* Then, consider the rebellious adolescent who insists upon doing things his own way—and *needs* to—until he learns by some sort of intuitive capacity to find balance in human relations: to gain interdependence through a subtle grasp of how independence need not be lost despite the countless ways in which we are dependent on one another.

Well, we can *say* this, but is saying it the same as knowing it?

One thinks of the elegant metaphysical account of human fulfillment given by Carlo Levi, and the contrasting description by Louis Halle of the "constituents" of a democratic society. Taken together they outline the reality of the will to freedom and the fear of freedom in combination in human life. It is difficult indeed to discuss the reality, meaning, and workability of this combination. How does one turn the contradiction between love of freedom and the need for security into a working equilibrium—an unstable equilibrium which is continuously achieving balance, losing it, and regaining it?

The feelings and thinking about independence and dependence are illustrated by Louis Halle. There are all those people—who is not in some way among them?—who can feel comfortable and secure only as they have assurance from the institutions of their time that their ignorance and inadequacy is not mortal sin, that there is blessedness in conformity. And then there are the heroic souls who will conform from a position of strength, not personally *needing* reassurance, but using the conventions to teach the right sort of independence of them. "Society" must accommodate both, but such a society will work only with an *unwritten* constitution—a contradiction in terms!

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves

GANDHI, THE DRAFT, AND ENEMIES

REVIEWERS' comment on the *Gandhi* movie continues to be worth quoting. In the March 15 *Friends Journal* (with a good picture of Ben Kingsley as Gandhi on the cover) Jim Bristol says:

> This superbly crafted production, beautifully and sensitively photographed, flows from event to event, from experience to experience, from realization to realization. It moves steadfastly on from Gandhi as a young British-trained barrister in South Africa, so proud of his sons because they "behaved like little English gentlemen," to his conviction that he must defy the unjust laws of South Africa, to his embracing of nonviolence—with almost spellbinding calls to fight injustice, but only with nonviolent methods. He tells a cheering audience that he will fight and die if need be, but he will never kill. "They can torture me, break my bones—even kill me. Then they will have my dead body—not my obedience."

This was the scene which led a MANAS writer to say (in the April 6 issue) that "what comes through to the audience is Gandhi's absolute fearlessness, showing, at last, it has become possible for a man committed to nonviolence to be admired as a modern *hero*—something we had not thought possible." Jim Bristol continues:

> How a great nation won its independence from a vast empire by non-violent fighting is vividly and believably pictured in this extraordinary film. And that Gandhi *fought* and believed in *fighting* is inescapable as is his deep and abiding commitment to nonviolence. Although we are indebted to many people for the creation of Gandhi, two are especially worthy of high praise—Richard Attenborough, the selfless and indefatigable producer/director, and Ben Kingsley, the Anglo-Indian actor who was able to convey so convincingly what was going on inside the man, who finally *became* Gandhi. Pandit Nehru had urged Attenborough in 1963 not to deify Gandhi; Attenborough and Kingsley avoided that pitfall, but I left the theater with the sure and certain conviction that Mahatma Gandhi was no ordinary mortal.

One light touch omitted in the film, but added to his review by Bristol, concerns Gandhi's clothing (or lack of it) when he appeared for an audience with the king of England. An acquaintance was aghast when he learned that Gandhi had worn his usual loincloth on that occasion. "Seeing the other's consternation, Gandhi hastened to reply with reassurance that 'the king had enough on for both of us'."

The *Gandhi* review in the *Friends Journal* is followed by an interview with Horace Alexander, a Quaker writer, now ninety-three, living in Pennsylvania. Mr. Alexander (author of *Consider India*) had known Gandhi since 1928 and had worked with him on numerous occasions. He relates:

> I was with Gandhi when he decided to spend Independence Day in Calcutta, where there was much violent conflict between Hindus and Moslems. This was in August 1947. A Moslem leader, Surawardy, had been a Gandhi opponent but finally agreed to spend Independence Day with him in Calcutta to prevent violence, and this was successful; people in the streets, instead of killing each other as they had for a year or more, were calling people of the opposite group "brother." The new viceroy, Lord Mountbatten, called Gandhi and Surawardy a two-man boundary force.
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> There was terrible fighting, however, on the border in the Punjab. . . . Finally, Mr. Gandhi undertook a fast to bring about an end to the fighting. I saw him for the last time the day before he began this fast, and remember him laughing with a little girl over a snapshot showing the two of them together. I was astonished when the fast began next day; my last memory of him is of a happy man laughing with a small child. A truce was reached so that he did break his fast, but many young Hindus were angry because they felt he was protecting their Moslem enemies, and he was assassinated a few days later.

Asked what he would have liked to see included in the *Gandhi* fiIm, Mr. Alexander said:

> I'd like to have seen Mr. Gandhi walking at the ashram with a group of children, as he did almost every day. He always walked fast—but especially when walking with the children!

To go from Gandhi to some items in *Peace Work* (for March—a New England publication issued by the American Friends Service Committee, 2161 Massachusetts Ave., Cambridge, Mass. 02140) seems appropriate. This issue begins with attention to registration and the draft, noting that at

seventeen, young men (who are really still boys, even children) are expected to "think for themselves" about "what you will do with your life and about taking other people's lives."

> Young men face a heavy issue—to register or not to register. Older people can help with support based on understanding of the issues. Joan Baez put it this way: "Your heart is the only thing which can tell you what is right and what is wrong. And after you have found out what you think is right and what is wrong, then you must know that you can say yes to what is right and no to what is wrong. And you young men and women, for instance, if you feel that to kill is wrong and to go to war is wrong, you have to say no to the draft."

The first article in *Peace Work*, by Linda Falstein, is on the expected draft. After attention to the government's selective prosecution of non-registrants, and the acquittal of some, this writer says:

> The draft that is being proposed will differ greatly from the '60s draft. Regulations call for registrants to receive induction orders before having any personal file with a draft board which would provide Selective Service with classification information. The deadlines for requesting deferment exemptions, or appeals for them, are very short—10-15 days. Men could find themselves not getting any pre-induction physical, and not being examined until the day of induction. If they have any physical problem that they felt would disqualify them, and if those are not recognized at the physical exam, they would be forced either to accept induction and hope to later obtain a discharge (a very difficult scenario) or refuse induction, which is the commission of a felony (another most painful choice). Deferments will exist only for hardship and the study or occupation of divinity. A new set of mechanisms for postponing induction orders is clearly called for. Once registered, actual induction is much closer and more likely than it was under the old law.
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> U.S. involvement in Indochina was possible without congressional authorization because of the draft. As presidents wished to escalate, they increased draft calls. Conscription removes the checks and balances on government that supposedly were mandated by the Constitution. The danger of such abuse is dearly accelerated in the nuclear age.

On the same subject—which has various facets—are the reflections of David McReynolds in the January-February *War Resisters League News.* Writing about the need to recognize and affirm the humanness of those called "enemies," he says:

> It is very natural for human beings to make their opponents into "total enemies"—it makes it much easier to kill them. It is hard to kill friends, easy to kill strangers, hard to believe that friends would betray us, easy to believe a stranger would do so.
>
> We (pacifists and war-resisters) are as guilty of this "totalization" of feeling as anyone else. If Reagan thinks the KGB sends the orders to us—and it seems he really does believe this—then he belongs to the same collection of fools that includes the KGB itself, which thinks that the CIA is organizing the peace movement in the Soviet bloc. But watch!—already, in writing about the need to humanize the enemy, I am terming Reagan a fool, and like most of us I am on the road to turning a man I disagree with into a "thing." You see how easy it is for us to act as if Reagan and all his co-workers were indifferent to human rights, lacking in decency? And isn't it easier for us to believe that the guerrillas in El Salvador are all brave and act from the highest motives, and to believe that everyone in the government is brutal?
>
> Pacifists know better—we just keep forgetting, and that makes us, also, human. The problem of humanity is that all people are a mix of good and bad. I won't get into a theological argument over whether there might not exist people who are "totally evil" or "totally good"—perhaps there are, but they are rare, and I doubt they exist.

Well, we have a working vocabulary for both types: saints and psychopaths. It's pretty hard to love a conscienceless psychopath, and perhaps one should qualify and say that it is possible to love the lost or almost completely suppressed humanity of a psychopath, but not his monstrous behavior. So with A.J. Muste's declaration, "If I can't love Hitler I can't love anyone." Here, too, some distribution or discrimination seems called for, since the statement *sounds* sentimental. One can actually love only the human potential, whether or not it appears in behavior.

The life of Gandhi, in his numerous and unending confrontations, gives instruction in such distinctions.

FRONTIERS

Time-Bombs and Seeds

A LONG, long time ago, someone (probably the Lynds, in *Middletown, U.S.A.* or a later work) drew a comparison between community life in America and the personal interests and passive habits of the people in an Italian town. The point was the dramatic organizational activity of the Americans—the numerous groups formed in behalf of special concerns, including good-doing. Another contrast suggests itself: between the Dark Ages of European history, after the decline and virtual disappearance of the classic civilization of Greece and its imitation by the Romans, and the present, in which there is also noticeable decline—in our case, of the industrial civilization which has been based on science and technology. The Dark Ages were a time of passivity and both loss and vulgarization of culture. There was little or no literacy, ruthlessly cruel fighting and killing, and coarsening and superstitious religious belief. As W. E. H. Lecky says in his chapter "From Constantine to Charlemagne" in his *History of European Morals,* "Credulity being taught as a virtue, and all conclusions dictated by authority, a deadly torpor sank upon the human mind, which for many centuries almost suspended its action."

Today, while there is plenty of media-induced torpor around and delusive "rising expectations" in the Third World (see Neil Postman's *The Disappearance of Childhood* and the closing chapters of Ivan Illich's *Celebration of Awareness*), ideas and movements for constructive change are bubbling up everywhere. Many of these "springs" are in North America, but we hear about them from all over the world, wherever the absence of political "thought-control" permits. Today, there are hundreds of people, even thousands, who have become thoroughly aware of the sense of what Robert S. Lynd said forty-four years ago in *Knowledge for What?:*

> We are slowly coming to realize that uncontrolled complexity generates chaos faster than it can generate order. The cultural lags that *laissez-faire* not only tolerates but augments are not incidental lapses from perfection which time will cure. Some of them are time-bombs which sooner or later go off and cause serious trouble.

That is the decline we have been experiencing, and a number of the time-bombs have already exploded, with many more in place, waiting for their fated moment to go off. One obvious response to this realization is the antinuclear movement of aroused people, grass-roots in origin in Europe and America. These people are confronting their own governments, governments which insist on a policy of "uncontrolled complexity" and believe in little else. How far sheer "protest" will take us in the right direction, no one can tell. Probably the most that can be accomplished by protest is a slowing down of the rush to self-destruction.

Meanwhile, there is another response, mainly by individuals who are determined to create oases of both community and moral intelligence, who are forming little groups, and going to work, mostly on the land. The reality of this effort seems the most impressive thing that is happening these days. Every week the mail brings to MANAS progress reports on what these people are doing, and propose to do. After thirty-five years of uninterrupted publishing, MANAS is on the mailing lists of dozens of these efforts, and is continually exposed to the active life, intelligence, inventiveness, resourcefulness, and hard common sense of the founders of such groups. Deliberately going against the grain of the society surrounding us all is an activity which develops these qualities. Today there are actually flowing and growing currents of change around the country. They were conceived and given their start at a level open to the initiative of individuals and small groups. These individuals have been applying the principle declared twenty or more years ago by Roy Kepler, pacifist educator. He said: Freedom is generated and enlarged by *using* the freedom we already have. This is probably the most

important principle of deliberated, constructive change.

The news that Ecology Action, a gardening group which attained worldwide recognition during the ten years of its life in Palo Alto, California, has obtained a new and larger site for its work—twenty acres near Willits, Calif.—makes appropriate a brief account of this effort, begun by John Jeavons in Palo Alto in September of 1972. Last year John, his family, and some Ecology Action staff moved to the Willits hillside farm, 170 miles north of San Francisco. Already classes are held for students, called "apprentices," intended to prepare young people to be teachers of the techniques of Biodynamic/French Intensive gardening. There are programs for one, two, and three-year students, all of whom work full-time. An Ecology Action pamphlet on apprentice possibilities says:

> There is a difference between the accumulation of ideas and the development of a system of understanding. The emphasis of Ecology Action's apprenticeship program is enabling the individual to develop a deeper understanding of how the various components of the method work together and to obtain a knowledge that is not only conceptual, but integrated into a demonstrable lifestyle. This knowledge evolves gradually through a learning process which involves an initial period of expansion as the apprentice is exposed to new ideas and new ways of looking at problems; a period of contraction as he or she synthesizes this knowledge into a simpler and more easily understood conceptual framework; and, finally, the application of an actual living demonstration of the understanding.

How did Ecology Action first get going? There is this account of its beginning:

> John Jeavons, a Yale graduate and former systems analyst for A.I.D., Kaiser Aerospace, Motorola, and Stanford University, noting the increasing concern for bringing food to people, decided to learn and then teach people how they can become causal for their own nutritional requirements. Met with skepticism because of the claim that one could grow more food in an alloted space using less resources than conventional food-growing techniques, for the next ten year his documenting and teaching the method (originally synthesized and brought to this country by the late Alan Chadwick) brought visitors from all over the world to the garden site at the Stanford Industrial Park in Palo Alto. The manual he wrote, *How To Grow More Vegetables than You Ever Thought Possible on Less Land than You Can Imagine,* to assist others who could not come to the gardens to learn, has been purchased by over 120,000 individuals and groups in almost a hundred countries.

Ecology Action has also published a Self-Teaching Mini-Series of pamphlets for beginning gardeners, and various other materials packed with useful information—all inexpensive. Latest publication is *The Seed Finder* by John Jeavons and Robin Leler, with 122 (8½" by 11") pages of information which gardeners soon find they need. It is a where-to-get-it-and-why book about seed companies "that stock the fast-disappearing home-garden varieties best known for flavor, or tenderness, or productivity or drought tolerance, or other qualities." The book grew out of lists compiled for their own planting. In its way, the book is an introduction to a world of people concerned with and active for intelligent ways of life. The illustrations are taken from a wonderful book nearly a hundred years old. *The Seed Finder* ($4.00, postpaid) and other Ecology Action publications are available from Jeavons-Leler Press, 5798 Ridgewood Road, Willits, Calif. 95490.