

THE BURDENS OF THE UTOPIANS

WHEN Arthur Morgan was a boy of ten or eleven—the time was about 1888—growing up in the small town of St. Cloud, Minn., he noticed that when people gathered on street-corners to talk, they didn't say much worth listening to. The local newspaper was no help, its contents being about the same. Troubled by this impoverished level of community life, he decided to do something about it. St. Cloud had a fine public library—gift of the governor of an eastern state—and young Arthur had already spent considerable time there. He made extracts from the good reading he was familiar with and sent them to the town newspaper. At first he had to pay for the space they took, and he raised the money for this by growing and peddling vegetables. After a time the editor realized that the boy had no commercial motive so he printed the extracts free. This effort in behalf of community culture went on for several years. When, in the last year of his life (Morgan died in November, 1975, at the age of 97), his secretary, Margaret Ensign, who repeats this story, asked him if he remembered any reactions or comments on his efforts, he replied, "None."

At some point in his long and productive life, Morgan realized that he was some sort of utopian. He wanted to change things for the better. Anyone who feels a call to do this and works at it as hard and as consistently as Morgan did is likely to be regarded as a utopian, earning both appreciation and ridicule for his efforts. Morgan experienced both, the ridicule coming at a crucial time in his career, but it would be difficult to find a more undiscourageable man in all the years of American history.

Morgan's interest in the idea of Utopia and utopian efforts probably grew out of a more fundamental interest which claimed his attention early in life. The question he sought to answer, from boyhood to old age, was: What shapes

human character? He found out for himself that family and environmental influences were primary in affecting the development of the young, but he also realized that the externals of the environment were not as important as the moral qualities "held in solution," so to speak, by community. The importance of community lay, for him, in its capacity to preserve, nourish, and transmit these qualities from one generation to the next. It was natural for the question to arise: Can a community with high capacity for these functions be planned and established in the world? All Morgan's books, you could say, were ways of exploring this question, and of attempting some partial answers.

Naturally, he was drawn to the works of the great Utopian writers. He found the books of Edward Bellamy so powerful that he wrote a full-length life of the author of *Looking Backward* (Edward Bellamy, Columbia University Press, 1944), and soon after published *The Philosophy of Edward Bellamy*, as giving light on the inspiration behind Bellamy's career. Motive is indeed the mysterious heart of the matter. What, we may wonder, caused Arthur Morgan to make his life a focus of efforts for general human good? Why did study of the formation of character become the central project of his career? What energized him to gather the resources sufficient to take over and resuscitate the moribund Antioch College in 1921? The clues to answers to such questions are sparse. Heredity and environment provide little if any light. It is safest, probably, simply to say that Morgan was a self-made man—he was certainly self-taught—and that the best explanation we can have of his life is a brief remark about himself in one of his Antioch commencement addresses: "Since boyhood I have had the prophetic urge; that is, I have had an emotional bent toward the conviction that the manner in which I live my life

may perhaps have a significant influence on the long-time course of human events."

The study-work program at Antioch, while it served obvious practical purposes, was conceived by him in larger terms. The alternation between college studies and work on a job in the community combined principles with practice—practice under the conditions of actual life that the student would sooner or later encounter in the world. From this fusion of thinking and doing, Morgan maintained, comes a "philosophy and pattern of life . . . the result of conscious and orderly effort," which "will be quite different from unplanned and unreflective reaction to the chance impact of the world and of society." Providing hospitality to this development was Morgan's conception of education: "Stimulating interest in the building of a philosophy and a pattern for living is the highest function of higher education, and perhaps the one most neglected." This was Morgan's idea of what Antioch ought to be doing. He once told his students: "It does not take many people to overcome a great many who have no purpose. There are enough people at Antioch to turn upside down the spirit of this country."

In retrospect he said:

If Antioch has fallen short of the greatest possible degree of success, I believe it is because of our failure to arouse aspiration and will, and the resulting failure to mobilize all the spiritual forces of life and to completely commit them to a great purpose.

This theme seems implicit throughout his writings, and it appears in its most clarified and distilled form in his small book, *The Long Road*, first published by the National Home Library Foundation (financed by Louis Brandeis) in 1936. There he wrote:

A relatively small number of persons, determined to work out the necessary implications of a good design of life in relation to the social order, both in ideas and action, with out limitation or compromise, might achieve a pattern of living of great value, which would have general and friendly, even if imperfect, reception. The possibilities of

freedom, of good will, of beauty, and progress in our society are so far beyond present realities that mild amelioration of the present defects of prevailing character is not enough. We need action that is as radical in many respects as that of the founder of the religion many of us profess. Such radical departure from prevailing custom will at first be limited to relatively few persons.

This, fundamentally, was Morgan's Utopian program—the establishment, in the wilderness of modern life, of oases of character; or, as he put it—"islands of brotherhood where men of like purposes can strengthen each other." It is to be especially noted that his dream was of a process, not a picture of some final destination. Toward the end of *The Long Road* he wrote:

We must begin far back, in the slow, thorough building of character which will be tried out in the realities of everyday living, and which by aspiration, disciplined by open-minded, critical inquiry, will mature a philosophy of life reasonably adequate to the present day. As that quality of character is matured, it will result in leadership that will . . . give concrete expression in everyday life to a new vision of the quality that life may have. When that vision is clearly expressed and clearly defined the people will gradually receive it as their own, and we shall in large measure have found the solvent for the complexities and limitations of government and business—and of human life itself. The long way round, of building character, in the end will prove to have been the short way home to a good social order.

The question of what sort of social arrangements would be most inviting to the development of character was inevitably in the foreground of Morgan's thinking. From the time of a daydreaming vision he had when he was seventeen or eighteen—in which he saw vividly in his mind an ideal community of parents, teachers, children, all living together, studying, learning, making things, inventing, supporting themselves together by agriculture, crafts, and trades—he worked to fill out the concept of good community life; yet always, at the same time, he endeavored to put some aspect of the community ideal into immediate practice. As a leading flood control engineer, he organized large projects employing thousands of workers. He regarded these projects

as social as well as engineering enterprises. It became his custom to plan appropriate living quarters for both single and married men, and on the Miami Conservancy District project he provided free night schools for the adults at four of the dams under construction, with elementary schools for their children. He encouraged systems of local government for the workers and instituted a program of health and accident insurance. This was back in 1915.

When Morgan was appointed by President Roosevelt to head the Tennessee Valley Authority, he secured the President's agreement that politics would be excluded from all hiring policies—a commitment that was not honored, leading, in later years, to Morgan's resignation from TVA—but at first Morgan was able to carry out his policy of hiring local people who lived near the projects (in Tennessee and adjacent states) and to train them for often highly exacting jobs. From the beginning Morgan conceived the development of the TVA labor force in community terms. As he says in *The Making of the TVA* (Prometheus Books, 1974):

In order to provide more jobs in a period of severe depression, the working day was reduced to five-and-one-half-hour shifts, with two shifts for each part of the work. Thus there was time to train many people in many forms of household skills and activities. Such training was made more desirable by the manner of settlement of the mountain areas. Parents and growing children moved from their early cabin homes, where few skills were known, to their new cottage homes, where they needed to learn the arts of living. There had also been few cultural relationships in most mountain homes. A four- or five-hour period of social life with various arts and activities helped to enlarge and enrich the lives of formerly isolated people. Learning to make gardens, to raise poultry, to make furniture and clothing, and to take part in social activities enlarged the lives of those involved and was greatly appreciated by them. Whole families made it a practice to work and learn together. The contempt some people higher up in the TVA expressed for such activities was misplaced.

Under Morgan's guidance, the TVA broke the tradition of not allowing blacks to do work above

the menial level. Black employees were hired commensurate with their ratio to the regional population, and a black sociologist was retained to manage a training program for these workers. In the general education program there were classes in machine shop, welding, wrought-iron blacksmithing, electrical work, carpentry and other woodworking. Master craftsmen were brought in to teach crafts from such centers as High Point, North Carolina, and Berea, Kentucky. A model dairy farm was developed at Norris, the TVA-built town, and close by a poultry farm demonstrated good practice in raising chickens. The education in agriculture included forestry. One of the men who helped to organize these activities said:

Much of the training had a social effect. In the crafts work, for example, a man and his wife could do something together. The children also joined in. They might work in one part of the shop and the father and mother in another. They had something to talk to each other about. It was a family-building place as well as a product-building place. I know of no other construction job on which such an opportunity was offered. There is nothing like participation in interesting and productive activities to reduce the occurrence of undesirable types of action.

In furtherance of the original vision of TVA, Morgan introduced far-reaching reforms in forestry practice, conservation, and land use. There was development of craft industries such as ceramics, of agricultural and food production cooperatives, and a program to stamp out the malaria caused by the breeding of mosquitoes in marshy regions in the areas affected by dam construction. Unfortunately, most of these undertakings were curtailed or abandoned due to the attacks made on Dr. Morgan by David Lilienthal, who was scornful of Morgan's ideas, calling them "welfare work" and "basket-weaving." Morgan was condemned as an impractical "idealist," and the other directors of TVA voted that he must abandon his "vagaries" in behalf of a better life for the people in the region,

and confine his efforts to engineering. Looking back at this period, Dr. Morgan says in his book:

Mr. Lilienthal referred over and over again to my non-engineering activities by names implying that they were busywork, but for many persons they made the difference between a good and a poor quality of life, and the cultural carry-over from such work made a marked difference in the life of many TVA families. A large engineering project may be looked upon narrowly as a purely economic process, or it can be seen in terms of its widest possible effects on the lives of the people concerned. Mr. Lilienthal contrasted engineering in a business sense with what he termed "welfare work." But large-scale civil-engineering projects, unless they are guided by a quality of human intelligence and overall concern, may prove to be somewhat hollow.

It is embarrassing to think that we live in a society which obliged a man like Arthur Morgan to "defend" this kind of thinking and acting. Fortunately, the spirit of Morgan's undertakings was so strong that in some cases it survived such attacks. In 1971, the annual TVA report to the President and Congress pointed out that the industrial growth in the Tennessee Valley, made possible by the TVA, has resulted in a strengthening rural population, "countering the national trend toward the creation of giant metropolitan clusters with all their myriad ills."

What he attempted to do through TVA was the practical side of Morgan's efforts to realize some modest utopian goals. Meanwhile he continued his studies. Work on the biography of Edward Bellamy led him to investigate the social system of the Inca civilization of ancient Peru, and this, in turn, involved him in study of Thomas More's *Utopia*, a work which, it became evident, was largely based on the order established by the Incas. Then came his book, *Nowhere Was Somewhere* (University of North Carolina Press, 1946), written to supply evidence for the idea that supposedly utopian "romances" are commonly based, sometimes in large measure, on actual past societies. He was concerned to show that such arrangements and harmonies are not visionary and impractical:

It is a telling comment on the cynical critics of the foremost utopias of English-speaking peoples, More's *Utopia* and Bellamy's *Looking Backward*, that their appraisals of "impossible" and "contrary to human nature" have been applied to pictures of society which were generally true descriptions of actual societies operating with a high degree of effectiveness, over a vast area, and for a long period.

Why write about the sources of utopian works? For two reasons. One, they are not airy, literary imaginings, but portraits of social systems that have proved their practicability and merit. Second, they are the foundation of much social change and reform. The American Constitution, Mr. Morgan shows, was the "offspring of utopias." There is evidence that Harrington's *Oceana* (1656) was the favorite reading of John Adams, and that Madison may have drawn on this work more extensively than on Montesquieu. The later influence of *Looking Backward* is immeasurable. Morgan notes that Adolf Berle, one of the most intimate and longest lasting of Roosevelt's confidential advisory group, was brought up on *Looking Backward* as his family's "Bible." Morgan says:

This man's [Berle's] personal expressions of economic policy correspond to the philosophy of *Looking Backward* to a degree which seems to preclude mere chance. Striking parallels may be drawn between *Looking Backward* and various important and detailed elements of New Deal Public policy. It may be said with considerable force that to understand the long-range implications of the New Deal one must read *Looking Backward*.

Morgan concludes his introduction to *Nowhere Was Somewhere*:

The trouble with human society has been, not too much attention to utopias, but too little. Had the quest for a good society been more universal, more objective, more critical and discriminating, then the crude social systems presented to the world by popular heroes would seem naive and unconvincing and would not gain the credulous loyalty of great masses. Where utopias have been held in highest and discriminating regard, there society has been at its best. A knowledge of the history and characteristics of utopias is essential to anyone who would take part in the refashioning of political, social, and economic

institutions. They constitute one of the greatest reservoirs of human experience and aspiration.

Two other chapters in this book have great importance. One is "The Golden Age," concerned mainly with ancient Greek versions of the mythic time in the distant past when men lived, as Hesiod said, "with hearts free from sorrow and remote from toil and grief," and "beyond the reach of all evils." There was no "private property" in those days, nor any need for it, since each shared with all others. But memories of the Golden Age, Morgan suggests, are not all myth, since there are numerous survivals of ancient ideal practice in the customs and moral attitudes of so-called "primitive" peoples. Stefansson's account of the Eskimos of the Coronation Gulf in northern Canada provides convincing evidence of this, and there is additional testimony in reports of life among the Hottentots and the Arapesh of New Guinea. Today, thirty years after Morgan wrote this book, we have an embarrassment of riches concerning the excellences of primitive community life. Anthropologists such as Robert Redfield and Stanley Diamond have shown that the social "morality" of past tribal societies, built into their customs and everyday habits, puts modern man to shame. These social scientists are joined by psychologists and psychiatrists such as Trigant Burrow, who point to the spontaneous sharing and fraternity which existed before strongly individualistic and objectivizing consciousness took control of modern life. There may be a close relation between the myth of the Golden Age as universal tradition and the actual life of ancient mankind, suffused with innocence and natural goodness—before, we might say, "the fall."

The other chapter deserving attention is "Beyond Utopia," which shows that the material plenty adorning practically all the literary utopias is *not* the essential characteristic of an ideal society. Material abundance may win attention and gain readers, but this attraction is something of a fraud. Yet because so many people are in want, or feel their lives to be insecure, utopian writers feel constrained to promise fulfillment of

elemental needs. As Morgan says: "To present a clear picture of a society in which these needs would be securely met is to make a moving appeal to the spirits of men." He adds, however:

So rarely is it the lot of men to fulfill all their obvious needs and desires that seldom are they without immediate pressing wants, and seldom does the question arise as to what would be the value of living if all these needs should be securely filled. . . . Even to raise the question implies an impractical vein in the questioner. Yet a discussion of utopia which does not look beyond utopia is sadly incomplete. It may even be true that until one has looked beyond utopia, and thereby has seen it in its larger setting, his view of utopia will be so out of perspective as to be misleading.

All the real burdens of the utopians are implicit in this concluding sentence.

REVIEW

THE RULES OF HEALTH

FIVE hundred years ago the thought of Western man was preparing for a long, acrimonious, and indecisive argument in which the contestants would attempt to decide upon the one, true religion. This unfruitful debate wore itself out, and was replaced, some three centuries later, by the argument concerning the one true form of government. Today discussion of both these unsettled questions continues against the background of the idea of scientific certainty, which has had a devastating effect on all conventional religions, and a toughening effect on power politics. Other arguments now moving into prominence involve large areas of human concern such as education, economics and medicine, with, fortunately, admissions of uncertainty having frequent expression.

Quite possibly, the stage is now being set for a renewal of the argument—or quest—about religion, but this time at another level of discourse. The inquiry, we may suspect, will proceed in different terms because of vast areas of "reality"—even if relative reality—given progressive definition by the sciences. Whatever we may think of the scientific undertaking, our minds have been modified by scientific assumptions and modes of thought as well as by the impact on our lives of the numerous applications of scientific knowledge. It seems likely that until we have a better understanding of what science is, and what relation it has or ought to have to "true" religion (supposing there be one), the organization of thought about religion may need to await a time of greater maturity. Meanwhile, there are some humbler objectives.

What, for example, is the one true diet?

To ask this question is to dive into a large sea of present-day research. In the "Medical Testament" of a panel of British doctors, quoted by Lady Eve Balfour in *The Living Soil* (Universe Books, revised edition, 1976, \$15.00), there is this statement, based on the findings of Sir Robert McCarrison, a leading British nutritionist:

It is far from the purpose of this testament to advocate a particular diet. The Eskimos on flesh, liver, blubber and fish; the Hunza or Sikh, on wheaten chapatis, fruit, milk, sprouted legumes and a little meat; the islanders of Tristan de Cunha, on potatoes, seabirds' eggs, fish and cabbage; are equally healthy and free from disease. But there is some principle or quality in these diets which is absent from, or deficient in, the food of our people today. Our purpose is to point to this fact and to suggest the necessity of remedying the defect.

This at least may be said, that the food in all these diets is, for the most part, fresh from its source, little altered by preparation, and complete; and that, in the case of foods based on agriculture, the natural cycle is complete.

Animal and vegetable waste-soil-plant-food-animal-man.

No chemical or substitution stage intervenes.

Quite evidently, given natural surroundings, health has little to do with wealth, and good diet does not depend upon elaborate scientific knowledge, although considerable scientific knowledge, it seems, has been necessary in order for us to find this out.

Lady Balfour has been a practitioner of this sort of science. Drawing on the now classical researches of Dr. McCarrison and of Sir Albert Howard, the founder of the organic gardening movement, she shows in her own classic, *The Living Soil*, how, step by step, the high incidence of disease in modern civilized countries is due to *faulty food*, and that poor food results from several causes—bad choice, deterioration in its nutritive value because of processing, transport, and storage, and, most of all, poor soil. Her book is mainly devoted to the methods now known for restoring the soil so that it will grow nutritious food. Much space is given to the 30-year cycle of research conducted in England (the Haughley Experiment) which demonstrated the self-sustaining qualities developed by the soil when organic methods are used, and the high nutritive value of the resulting produce. It became evident during the course of the research that this focus on health—health of the soil, of plants, and of animals and humans—created a sort of investigation quite different from the usual agricultural experiments. As Lady Balfour says:

Most agricultural research tends to be mainly concerned with techniques for increasing quantity production without taking into consideration the effects which such techniques have in disrupting the biological cycle in soil-plant-animal-man; disruptions which could have a profound effect in factors upon which the health and fertility of the biological cycle depend. Medical research, as already pointed out, tends to concentrate on causation of specific diseases, and ignore conditions requisite for health or wholeness as a positive development process.

These biases, we may note, originated with two famous chemists, Liebig and Pasteur. They have had the effect of departmentalizing and narrowing both agricultural and medical theory and practice. The idea of wholeness in nature and man dropped out as a result. In *Nutrition Against Disease* (a Bantam paperback), Dr. Roger J. Williams shows how modern knowledge of nutrition was blocked and delayed by Pasteur's doctrine that only microbes cause disease. It has taken almost a century for the importance of vitamins to be recognized, and there may be many more years before there is much real understanding of the complex network of interdependencies and reciprocities which supports human health. In societies, this network includes socio-economic factors such as concentration of population in urban areas, which determines marketing techniques and also the processing and refining methods which are pursued out of regard for economy and efficiency in meeting the carefully managed demands of the mass consumer market.

In a recent book by two doctors, *New Hope for Incurable Diseases* (Arco paperback), the authors, E. Cheraskin and W. M. Ringsdorf, point out that while there are those who, through lack of money, suffer from under-nutrition, a much larger proportion of the population are subject to malnutrition. Starting with the quality of the soil, the quality of the food consumed by quite affluent people may be downgraded in several ways. Shipping food thousands of miles commonly reduces its nutrients, and preserving additives may have a similar effect. Freezing, followed by thawing, brings nutrient loss, and the wrong sort of cooking will produce further loss. There is little difficulty in recognizing the "fit"

of this critical analysis of the American diet with the British "Medical Testament."

Writing on "Whole Diets," Lady Balfour looks at five such healthy populations—those named by Dr. McCarrison plus certain Chinese and indigenous North Americans—to see what common factors may underlie their extraordinary health:

All five groups have good air to breathe, but that cannot by itself be the secret of their health, or our own hill and country dwellers would have health to compare with theirs, which, unfortunately, they have not.

The only discernible common factor, other than good air, seems to be that the diets of all five groups are "whole" diets in the full sense of the word. That is to say: (a) every edible part contained in the diet is consumed, (b) in every case the foods are grown by a system of returning all the wastes of the entire community to the soil in which they are produced. For the sea, too, is a "soil" in this sense, supporting its teeming population by means of the rule of return—the everlasting cycle of life and decay; (c) all the foods are natural unprocessed foods; (d) the diets start before life begins; the parent is as healthy as the child.

There is a complete and continuous transference of health from a fertile soil, through plant and/or animal to man, and back to the soil again. The whole carcass, the whole grain the whole fruit or vegetable, these things fresh from their source, and that source a fertile soil. Herein appears to lie the secret. If this be true, then the answer to our question . . . would appear to be that any diet is a health-promoting diet so long as it conforms to these three rules, and the first of these is a fertile soil.

If we can generalize from this conclusion, we might say that modern man can be healthy only by doing what is right and *knowing why*. This, it seems, is the difference between ourselves and those others who show the way, and from whom our nutritionists have learned so much.

COMMENTARY

WHAT DEFINES US AS HUMAN

THE puzzle of how to apply Vinoba's counsel—"Set the children to work in the fields"—in a country like the United States, where only about five per cent of the population actually work in agriculture, has the beginnings of a solution in Arthur Morgan's Antioch study-work program, which was based on the same educational principle. Young people active in practical activities require no justification of their theoretical studies when the science they learn can be turned to the solution of problems encountered at work in the world. The union of theory and practice is the foundation of Morgan's program of education, also of Vinoba's. It is a mistake, Vinoba says, to think that life-knowledge can be had in any school. And Morgan maintained that only through the combination of thinking and doing could the foundation be laid for development of a philosophy of life.

What about "cultural" subjects? How can literature, art, and philosophy be related to action? This question appears indirectly in Vinoba's discussion:

There is no such thing as knowledge divorced from action. There is only one exception from this rule, and that is the knowledge that "I am, I exist"; the knowledge of the Self *is* divorced from action. It is beyond action. But all other knowledge is linked with action.

Self-knowledge reaches beyond all action because it is concerned with the meanings which transcend finite goals and all practical achievements. From self-knowledge, as Morgan suggests, comes the capacity "to mobilize all the spiritual forces of life and to completely commit them to a great purpose."

Self-knowledge might be regarded as the capacity to turn our problem-solving abilities in the right direction, since, as the applications of scientific know-how make clear, every practical power we have can be used for either destructive

or creative purposes. As John E. Smith put it in a recent issue of the *Yale Alumni Magazine*:

The most urgent problem of our time is posed by the awesome extent to which moral sensitivity and respect in the face of responsibility have eroded. The twin gospels of success and greed have literally dehumanized us by obscuring the one dimension of life which alone defines us as human—the ethical capacity for evaluating our conduct and for appraising our goals.

CHILDREN

. . . and Ourselves

CHOOSING OUR STEPS

WHEN does one begin to instruct the young about Evil? This question was raised recently by a reader in relation to the claim that most of the widely circulated material on the Bicentennial has amounted to an exercise in either naïveté or hypocrisy. The United States of today, it is said, is *not* in the hands of the people, but held fast in the grip of large corporations which control not only the wealth of the country but also manage its organs of opinion.

Well, the charge seems true enough. And it is argued, therefore, also with reason, that the operative part of the Declaration of Independence should be made to apply today. "When," it says, "a long train of usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object, evinces a design to reduce them (the people) under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security." A true celebration of the Bicentennial, then, would be to renew the Revolution by taking away the power of the corporations and giving it to the people. There are those who have plans for going about such a change.

But whatever the righteousness of this resolve, there is a great difference between 1776 and the present. Two hundred years ago the American continent was virtually untouched, and the despotism of the English king was exercised from afar, through agents who could be sent packing, and were. Today, the despotic rule of corporate finance comes close to being the economic nervous system of the United States—the only one we have. Changing this system will not be in any way like ejecting a few alien administrators. Called for, instead, is a step-by-step replacement of the *functions* of the existing system by more equitable and self-reliant means. How many of us are ready and willing to take

these steps? Actually, children can learn them, sometimes more easily than adults.

Where would such a process of replacement most naturally start? It starts with human attitudes—attitudes which free people of their susceptibility to the despotism of "things." (This is the only source of the power exercised by the corporations.) It means going back to the assumptions concerning what is desirable and good, which led to the despotism of money over life in America. John Schaar has described the origins of the present state of mind in America quite succinctly. He speaks of 1776:

The human material of this new republic consisted of a gathering of men each of whom sought self-sufficiency and the satisfaction of his own desires. Wave after wave of immigrants replenished those urges, for to the immigrant, America largely meant freedom from inherited authorities and freedom to get rich. . . . Millions upon millions of Americans strive for that goal, and, what is more important, base their political views upon it. . . . We have no mainstream political or moral teaching that tells men they must remain bound to each other even one step beyond the point where those bonds are a drag and a burden on ones personal desires.

What, then, did the Revolution of 1776 propose to do, for the first citizens of the United States? As Ralph Ketcham says in *From Colony to Country*, the Founding Fathers undertook to guarantee the "unalienable" rights of the people to enjoy their liberty and pursue their happiness under rules made with the consent of the governed. The proposal sounds right and entirely reasonable, but Mr. Ketcham asks: "What if the people, however organized to register their consent, agreed to an abridgment or suppression of one or all of those rights for most or even a few of the people?"

Understanding the American past is essential to understanding the American present, and this means recognizing, as Ketcham says, that "at the time of the Revolution not only were the details of the future government unsettled, but serious tensions were implicit in the words of the Declaration of Independence itself."

Is it really surprising that Americans have succumbed to the despotism of money? Or that tensions which at first seemed irritations—for a hundred years after 1776 you could escape them by "going West"—have multiplied a hundredfold, with oppressive presence in our lives?

The tensions are now generating widespread protest for the reason that the acquisitive drives in American life—there from the beginning—were greatly accelerated after World War II, largely through intensive sales promotion and the manipulation of consumer demand. This speedup of consumption, increasing the peonage of the people to things, has made the double threat of pollution and exhaustion of resources all the more ominous. But as an eminent representative of the existing economic system, Louis Lundborg, a former chairman of the board of the Bank of America, has pointed out, resistance to the idea of change is still characteristic of many Americans. "Most of my adult life," he said in the *Saturday Review* for last July 10, "I have seen and heard business men go into a state of apoplexy over any trend or movement that they considered a threat to what they have called the American Way of Life or the American Free Enterprise System."

So, quite evidently, there will be fear, pain, and conflict in attendance on any basic change. It seems equally evident that there will be the least pain and conflict where there is the most independence and the least fear. The responsibility of parents and teachers, then, does not lie in instructing the young in the numerous kinds of "evil" which infect the common life, but in introducing, insofar as we are able, the sort of life over which the power of evil is reduced by a change of taste and a lack of fear. The young will encounter the evil soon enough. Its protean forms are inescapable.

What can be said about education for independence (self-reliance)? For getting rid of or reducing fear? This may seem odd language to use in relation to education, but could any goal be more important than these?

Some reflections of Vinoba Bhave on Gandhian Basic education have application here. The following is taken from his article, "Education or Manipulation?" in the *Resurgence Reader, Time Is Running Out*:

Teaching must take place in the context of real life. Set the children to work in the fields, and when a problem arises there give them whatever knowledge of cosmogony, or physics, or any other science, is needed to solve it. Set them to cook a meal, and as need arises teach them chemistry. In one word, let them live. The children should have someone with them, but that someone should not belong to a special category called teacher, he should be a man living an ordinary life in the practical world. The man who is to guide children should conduct his life intelligently and be capable of explaining the processes of life and work to the children as opportunity arises. It is not education to fill children's heads with information, but to arouse their thirst for knowledge. Teacher and pupil both learn by their contact with each other. Both are students. True education is that which is experienced, tasted, digested. What can be counted and recorded is not education. . . .

Many people would agree about the importance of self-reliance in education. Self-reliance has a very profound meaning. There must be economic self-reliance through manual labor. Everyone must learn how to use his hands. If the whole population were to take up some kind of handicraft, it would bring all sorts of benefits; class divisions would be overcome, production would rise, prosperity and health would improve. . . . Education must be of such a quality that it will train students in intellectual self-reliance and make them independent thinkers. If this were to become the chief aim of learning, the whole process of learning would be transformed. . . . The present school syllabus contains a multiplicity of languages and subjects, and the student feels that in every one of these he needs the teacher's help for years to come. But a student should be so taught that he is capable of going forward and acquiring knowledge for himself. There is an infinite sum of knowledge in the world, and each one needs some finite portion of it for the conduct of his affairs. But it is a mistake to think that this life knowledge can be had in any school. Life-knowledge can only be had in life. The task of the school is to awaken in its pupils the power to learn from life. . . .

The fountain-head of all the world's conflicts is that knowledge has been separated from action. . . .

There is no such thing as knowledge divorced from action. There is only one exception from this rule, and that is the knowledge that "I am, I exist"; the knowledge of the Self *is* divorced from action. It is beyond action. But all other knowledge is linked with action. There is no knowledge without action and no action without knowledge. The two are one, this is not a question of technique, but is a fundamental principle of Basic Education. . . .

The purpose of this education is that the village as a whole shall solve the problems of its life by its own strength. The wealth and resources of the village must therefore belong not to individuals but to the village itself. Only then is it possible to plan for all children to have an equal chance at education.

Many aspects of Vinoba's program were a part of American life two hundred years ago, but we didn't know how precious they were. Now we are beginning to recognize that they were the practical foundation of the good we once enjoyed. If we were able to leave that life behind, we are able to go back to it, deliberately, with understanding. Living that life again will for us be a principled existence, but something that cannot now be achieved except step by step.

FRONTIERS

A Question of Legitimacy

FAILURE to understand the relationships between individuals and institutions—how institutions and establishments serve the general good—which means knowing what they are and are not able to do—is probably at the root of more than half the social problems of the present. Institutions may be regarded as the organs of society. No society can be without them. There is an obvious tendency, today, whenever some problem is recognized and defined, to create an institution to deal with it. Yet it is difficult to imagine a problem greater and more resistant to correction than the complex disaster which results from an over-institutionalized society. The waste, the pretense, the ineffectual and fraudulent busyness, and the frustration people impose on themselves through unnecessary institutions seem almost immeasurable. Obviously, we don't know enough about how institutions work, what they depend upon for efficient functioning, or how to judge whether or not they are needed. It seems fair to say that the best society will be the one with the least institutions, while those it has will be then superior indeed.

What would be the best model of a society with ideal institutions? Doubtless the small community. All the arguments supporting the claim that small is beautiful would apply. "One of the most essential things we can learn from rude tribes," Edward Tylor said, "is how society can function without policemen." But we—fortunately, or alas—are not a rude tribe, and we need not only policemen but laws and courts to give them legality and instruction and to deal at another level with the problems that make policemen necessary.

In an essay, *The Court of Man*, Gerald H. Gottlieb, of the Court of Man Foundation, Inc. (9777 Wilshire Blvd., Beverly Hills, Calif. 90212), gathers evidence in support of the idea that the modern world needs "a world judiciary

that will be independent of States and empowered to render judgment upon those who misuse sovereign power." Such a court, the writer proposes—

would directly serve the world community. It would be constituted as a publicly obligated, but privately funded tribunal. Its judges would proceed to adjudicate meritorious complaints without waiting for the States of the world to consent to its existence and jurisdiction. (Such consent would be irrelevant because of the nature of the Court.) It would be modeled on numerous courts of history that are now largely forgotten—courts that were neither national nor international, but rather direct courts of community, a category of public legal forum which may be labeled *extranational*.

Wrapped up in this proposal are the factors which determine whether or not an institution will serve people well or ill. Such a court would begin by generating its own moral authority. As the value of its judgments became increasingly evident, a point would be reached where that moral authority could be turned into or supplemented by legal authority, with the consent of all parties (states) within its jurisdiction. Such developments, Mr. Gottlieb shows, are not without precedent. His essay, in fact, amounts to an introduction to basic education in the birth, growth, and role of institutions, pointing to the conditions necessary for their effectiveness.

An obvious question arises. Which should be obtained first: the institution or the conditions for making it effective?

Mr. Gottlieb partly answers by suggesting that the Court begin with moral authority alone. Effectiveness is not alone the power to enforce. Achieving stature in the opinions of mankind brings a measure of effectiveness. Law is not only coercive, it also educates. We could say, then, that a court—any court—is an agency for implementing the public will which grows out of pre-existing moral concern. And it is also an agency for increasing and establishing moral awareness. At issue is the play between these two functions.

The factors determining the priorities of these functions are hardly understood realities of human nature. So, when you can't settle mysteries of moral psychology, you go to history for the next best source of knowledge what men have done in the past. This is the foundation for Mr. Gottlieb's proposal—through the justice and integrity of their decisions, similar courts have passed from moral to legal authority. Such evolutions work.

In his first paragraph Mr. Gottlieb sets forth the need for an extra-national court:

Existing public courts are of two kinds, national and international, and both kinds depend for their jurisdiction on the consents and authorizations of States. In that sense States possess a virtual monopoly over law and judging. Although courts are able objectively to judge in most circumstances, a problem is presented where the conduct of a State itself is at issue. Unless there are in such cases independent courts available to the aggrieved plaintiffs, there can be no proper judging of State conduct, for self-judgment is the very negation of judgment under law. Where a State's bureaucracy has embarked on a program that is in violation of the law of human rights, or other branches of modern international law, and where the law-violating government dominates or significantly influences its own courts there is no effective judging to be obtained from those courts regarding these violations. Whenever a State's legal standards have been lowered to accommodate to the violations, the State's courts then have been impaired in a more general sense.

This seems entirely acceptable as common sense, yet we should like to look more closely at one statement—"self-judgment is the very negation of judgment under law." Judgment under law, in other words, protects the decision from the bias of self-interest. Self-interest invalidates self-judgment. This, we might say, is the rule of experience.

But the voice of experience has something else to say. Apart from lesser or ancillary claims, self-judgment is the moral justification of judgment under law. A man without conscience, or the organ of self-judgment, whatever his apparent behavior, will *never* submit himself in spirit to the rule of law. We must also say,

therefore, that self-judgment (the moral sense in humans) is the only real support of judgment under law, especially *in the long run*. Law is no more than an ordered consensus-expression of self-judgment. No court can exist or operate for long without it.

In terms of the concepts of government and political order, the moral strength of the courts—ultimately their legal authority—rests wholly on this popular legitimacy. How is legitimacy acquired by an institution? This, we think, is the basic question to be inquired into, and for grounding in the issues of this question we suggest a reading of John Schaar's essay, "Reflections on Authority," *New American Review* No. 8. A court lacking legitimacy tends to produce—again in the long run—the fierce rejection of even obviously needed rules or order. Mr. Schaar's contention is that the service of common self-interests is not sufficient to establish enduring legitimacy. Defining and then achieving the conditions of support of a "Court of Man" would appear to be the very first step toward realization of Mr. Gottlieb's proposal.