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THE END OF THE AGE OF POLITICS

A RECENT letter from a reader concerned with "Ivory Towers Revisited" (MANAS, June 19) assigns to the editors a point of view which is somewhat wide of the mark, so that a second time around on this subject seems in order. This reader writes:

> "Ivory Towers Revisited" was very interesting for me. Your view, that the individual must recognize within himself good and evil and confront *this* and cast out the evil before we can have a true civilization, is so utterly pessimistic an outlook that I, despite my own discouragement with the contemporary scene, am somewhat taken aback, fearing that you are right. At the same time, I begin to note in myself with acceptance of the idea that you may be right, a more peaceful state of mind. . . . In such an acceptance lies, of course, the danger of resignation and abdication, with all their concomitants and synonyms. . . .

Let us at once say that MANAS by no means advocates concentrating on private purity, and letting the world go as it will. "Ivory Towers Revisited" was an endeavor to point out the extreme difficulty, these days, of "taking a hand in history." It did not say that taking a hand in history is and must be a Bad Thing. It proposed that, thus far in the twentieth century, we have acquired only "indisputable evidence of what *not* to do," and, on the positive side, it noted that the anarcho-pacifist conception of social action at least avoids the train of evils which accompany and follow the violent struggle for political power.

While MANAS is not politically motivated, it does have a point of view on political enterprise—a view that might be expressed, in part, by Edmund Burke's observation: "Constitutions must be defended by the wisdom and fortitude of men. These qualities no constitution can give." We should probably regard with sympathy a political movement embodying recognition of this principle; but, looking about today, we find no such movement, save, perhaps, for the anarcho-pacifists, and these, as was remarked in "Ivory Towers Revisited," are largely engaged in resistance movements, and not in the problems of positive administration and the dispensing of what we commonly refer to as "justice."

How do you get "wisdom and fortitude" in politics—or "virtue," as Socrates might have said? We know of no formula, least of all a political formula, for this. You get them, we suspect, by seeking them, and the quest for wisdom, fortitude, and virtue is the subject matter of the Platonic dialogues. You do *not* get them from a political struggle for power, in which lying, bribery, misrepresentation, double-talk, and irresponsible attacks on your opponents are the standard if not openly approved methods of winning elections. The political struggle for power also includes war, for in Clausewitz' often-quoted phrase, "War is the continuation of policy by other means."

Does this mean that past political struggles for the good society which involved violent revolt and war were both fraudulent and futile? This is not our view of the matter. In the case of the French and American Revolutions—which may be taken together, despite considerable differences—there were manifest wisdom and fortitude in the thinking of the revolutionary leaders of both countries. The great constitutional documents of the eighteenth century are owing to those leaders. But without politics, it will be said, the revolutionary principles of the eighteenth century would never have been triggered into action. This is of course obvious, but what must be added is that those principles were compromised just to the extent that the power their inspiration gave to the national leaders was abused. The excesses of the French Revolution were not applications of wisdom and fortitude, but their opposite. And the study of the operations of self-interest in power in

the years following the American Revolution gives an equal if less bloody confirmation of Burke's view.

This being the case, why should we speak tolerantly of the struggle for power in the eighteenth-century revolutions, and show no interest in it, today? Our answer is that the freedom-loving men of the eighteenth-century had far less reason to be skeptical of political power than we have today. Those men had never *had* political power. They took over from kings and absolute monarchs. Further, the instruments of violence and coercion were mere playthings, in those days, compared with the weapons of the present. Since that time, we have had nearly two hundred years of instruction in the social and psychological consequences of violence. Great and good men could then contemplate the use of military methods as a *limited* means to the attainment of a desirable political objective—an objective which, once realized, would permit the re-establishment of rational procedures in the resolution of differences among men, parties, and nations.

We gravely doubt if great and good men of the present can contemplate the use of violence and coercion with the same optimism and equanimity today. We doubt if they can contemplate it at all.

How, then, is evil to be subdued and justice to be established? We have no answer to this question, nor has anyone else, so far as we can see—no answer, that is, beyond the methods employed by Socrates. This is the epoch, it seems to us, in which it is necessary to admit that we no longer know how to cope with the problem of the forcible suppression of evil. We are far from suggesting that there is no way to cope with the problem of evil. We are suggesting only that the familiar means of coping with it have gotten out of control—so far out of control that we no longer dare to use them while we remain in our right minds. This seems to us a common-sense interpretation of the past twenty-five or fifty years of history and a reasonable explanation of the deep anxieties and confusion of present-day politics and international relationships.

Given this impasse, then, what can we do? We can seek fortitude and wisdom, since it is the absence of fortitude and wisdom which has made our politics ineffectual and has betrayed our constitutions.

We did not, we repeat, in "Ivory Towers Revisited," reject the idea of taking a hand in history, but called attention to what seems the futility and danger of taking a hand in the ways that men have used during the past two hundred years.

Within the space of the present generation, only one man has offered a creative contribution to the problem of taking a hand in history. That man was M. K. Gandhi. For India, Gandhi was the man of the hour, and he may be the man of the century for the world. An originator in politics as great, perhaps, as Gandhi, and as instrumental for American freedom as Gandhi was for India's freedom, Thomas Paine, wrote at the time of the American Revolution:

> An army of principles will penetrate where an army of soldiers cannot. It will succeed where diplomatic management would fail; neither the Rhine, the Channel, nor the ocean can arrest its progress, it will march on the horizon of the world, and it will conquer.

Gandhi set marching an "army of principles." From Montgomery, Alabama, from South Africa, and from dozens of smaller "conflict situations," such as, for example, Koinonia in Georgia, we hear the echoing rhythm of the tramp of that army. Nobility and exaltation are qualities easily found in the human embodiments of those principles. They may not be great men, but their principles are great, and they may become great men in living by those principles.

Fortitude and wisdom will make history, can change history, after which politics and constitutions are only confirmation and detail. Even fortitude without wisdom can make history

of a sort. The stripling boy, Emmett Till, being only fourteen, had hardly had time to acquire wisdom, but he was already a man of fortitude. He could be murdered, but he could not be made to fear. This is something the people of the South will be unable to forget. This is something people everywhere are bound to *respect.* Courage commands respect, and respect is one of the foundation-stones of enduring government and constitutional justice.

The most important development of our time is that a few men are now *looking* for alternatives to violence and coercion. No one, of course, will let himself be quoted to the effect that he *prefers* the use of violence to maintain "order" or to control evil. The argument always is that violence is only a "last resort," to be applied when all other methods have failed. So long, however, as the hole-card in the game of politics is ready and willing violence, no one will really bet on anything else. If violence is the last resort, then threat-of-violence will be the next-to-the-last resort. Obviously, there can be no half-hearted alternative to violence, just as no one can half-heartedly win a war. That is why the alternative to violence must be whole-hearted, or "extreme," as its critics like to complain.

What is the positive of the negative, "non-violence"? That is the question for which we should be seeking an answer, and until we have an answer, there is little point in the attempts of men to "take a hand in history." But we do know that fortitude and wisdom will positively modify for good whatever men do, in whatever way seems best to them, in relation to current and future history. That we *can* do, in these days when history is dictating to men, instead of the other way around.

But what about "the danger of resignation and abdication, with all their concomitants and synonyms" of which our correspondent speaks?

If you stay out of the movements dedicated to "changing history" by political means, who can tell whether or not you have abdicated to some "ivory tower," in placid resignation to irresponsibility?

No one, of course, can tell much about your state of mind, unless you explain it yourself, and someone is willing to listen. But why all this bother about what other people think? Are you satisfying them, or yourself? Are you responsible to them, or to yourself? Isn't this, essentially, what the great hue and cry about "conformity" and "other-directed" people is all about?

You certainly can't free yourself from the weaknesses of conformity by conforming to a program, minority *or* majority, that you aren't quite able to believe in.

It is true, of course, that those who have believed with all their conviction in the struggle for political power as the sole means to the good life—and who, for the most part, have been pretty snobbish and contemptuous toward all who do not share that view—will find themselves without drive or animation in a world where power has become an impossible or insane objective. For the truly political person, both anarchist and totalitarian societies are social vacuums which give him nothing to do. In the totalitarian order, he *can't* do anything—either he "obeys" or he gets shot. And in the anarchist order no one is interested in power, which has become a forbidden word.

But while the anarchist order is still among the remoter dreams of social idealism, the vacuum created by total governmental authority comes close to being "just around the corner," and it is this looming horror of absolute power and absolute control—at once the full realization of the politics of power and its *reductio ad absurdum*—that brings despair and frustration to the political person of today. No longer can he imagine himself in the role of the Man of Destiny who will sweep out the exploiters and install the righteous in the seats of authority. Every time he dreams in these terms, a dark, mushroom-like shape obliterates the vision. For the man who completes the logic of the politics of power, there

will be neither the righteous nor the unrighteous—only the dead.

That is why, for the man with his eyes open, loud political enthusiasms have a tinny, hurdy-gurdy sound. They belong to a lost youth, to the adolescence of the modern Power State, when the means of violence were still limited, when it seemed possible to employ both the rational means of conference and discussion and the non-rational means of military force. It is not the realists who talk glibly, today, of "tactical" versus "strategic" nuclear weapons, and who are sophisticated in the mathematics of "calculated risk." The people who talk this way are overgrown children, living in the past. The realists of our time are rather those who are unsure of themselves, and filled with wondering.

The great question before us today is, What sort of a society is a society which renounces violence and every aspect of the intent to do harm? In such a society, how would you go about meeting the problems which used to be "solved" by violence? When you do away with violence, what else do you do away with? What must we learn to do without, and what, on the other hand, will we gain, to take its place?

What might the word "security" mean in such a society? On what will or can authority be based?

Even if thinking of this sort seems ridiculously impractical, we are compelled to consider undertaking it, since the alternatives to this sort of thinking are even more impractical.

We have come a long way from the Aristotelian conception of Politics. As Werner Jaeger remarks in his study of Aristotle's thought:

> Here for the first time the antinomy between state and individual becomes a scientific problem, though as yet only in a very restricted sense, since it is only the philosophical ego, . . . that may have interests higher than the state's to represent. For the ordinary citizen who is simply the product of the reigning political principles there is no such problem in the ancient world. His membership in the state exhausts his nature.

Today, the Power State threatens to move in totally on our lives. On the other hand, for those whose notions of good and evil are essentially political, and whose natures are "exhausted" by political issues and considerations, the prospect of a life without politics has *nihilistic* implications. Take away politics, and nothing is left!

We submit that the world of today—a world dominated by the absolute power of nuclear armament and the corresponding perfection of military organization—is a world which has drained all moral or *human* meaning from traditional politics, which is the politics of power. This means that, if we are to stay alive and remain human, we shall have to develop the content and value of our living in a region beyond or outside the politics of power.

From the time of Aristotle until the present, we have been "political animals." The verdict of current history is that we must now learn to become something else.

REVIEW
AN END TO QUARRELING

THE DEATH AND REBIRTH OF PSYCHOLOGY, by Ira Progoff (Julian Press, 1956), is an epoch-making book. Perhaps it would be better to say that it is an epoch-*revealing* book, since the epoch Dr. Progoff writes about was made, very largely, by four men—Sigmund Freud, Alfred Adler, Carl G. Jung, and Otto Rank. But to bring the achievements of these men together within the covers of a single volume and to explain their meaning for our time and for the future is so impressive an accomplishment that the book itself becomes something of a climactic work in the completion of this epoch, and a portal to the new thinking that is bound to result.

Dr. Progoff is a Bollingen fellow who has pursued studies of this sort for years. His earlier volume, *Jung's* Psy*chology and its Social Meaning*, is now a standard work. A review of his present volume might have been called "Beyond Psychology," since this title of Otto Rank's last and posthumously published book sums up the principal thesis of *The Death and Rebirth of Psychology*. It was Rank who saw that the depth psychology of the great founders of psychoanalysis ought to be regarded as a "transitional" approach to the problems of human beings, and who was compelled both by his own genius and by the logic of his inquiry to see in psychology, not a "study" or a region of research, nor even a form of "therapy," important as this has been and will continue to be, but a life to be lived. Some quotations will be helpful to illustrate the meaning of this. Dr. Progoff's first paragraph generalizes the content of his entire volume:

> Although it began as part of the protest against religion, the net result of modern psychology has been to reaffirm man's experience of himself as a spiritual being. Despite its conscious intention, the discipline of psychology recalls the modern man to an awareness of his inner life, thus reestablishing the ancient religious knowledge that man's fundamental accomplishments began within himself. This is a paradoxical outcome of the work of Freud, and it has the broadest implications for our time.

In his last chapter, Dr. Progoff summarizes the contribution of Rank:

> With Rank, depth psychology finally became capable of understanding itself in perspective. It could see its transitional role in history, and it could perceive that the fundamental problems of psychology are intimately connected with man's search for a meaning in life. Freud had a vision of this, blurred but growing stronger in his later years. Adler and Jung saw it more sharply, each with increasing depth. Rank, however, brought the implications fully into the open where they could be faced squarely beyond all unconscious hedging. If psychology is to fulfill the purpose inherent in its historical existence, if it is to enable the modern man to find the meaning of his life, it can do so only by guiding him to an experience that is beyond psychology.

To represent this book accurately, it should be said that it is far from being a treatise on the "search for meaning" in any terms familiar from the great religious and philosophical traditions. It is rather a coming to self-consciousness of this search, in the terms of modern psychology, and a historical account of *how* the founders of depth psychology fought their way to this conception through the wilderness of modern man's psychic and intellectual life. It is, then, a rediscovery, in our time, as Dr. Progoff says, of "the ancient religious knowledge."

But let no one sigh and ask, *"Why* did they have to be so *difficult* about it?" The fact is that these four men carried the whole weight of modern culture on their backs while making their rediscovery. They made it, that is, not merely for themselves, but for their time. And they made it, therefore, conclusively, for the world, which may: now be said to stand at a new starting-point in its moral and intellectual history.

There are two senses in which a book of this sort should bring "an end to quarreling." First, it should put a stop to quarreling about which one of the depth psychologists is the "best" or the "most important." Arguments on this question are really irrelevant and constitute an impudent neglect of

the stature of these men, who, despite personal difficulties with one another, were fundamentally devoted to the truth and not to personal glory. In the work of each one is shown the courage to face the truth and to alter his views, at cost of much personal pain. They had their human fallibilities and "weaknesses," but in the perspective of history they stand out as men of great courage and intellectual integrity, more than anything else. When Dr. Progoff shows a Freud or a Jung seeking more profound meanings, and suffering limitation from some inward cause, the reader does not find this a belittling description, but another instance, however homely, of the Promethean struggle. Progoff writes to honor these men in the only way they can be honored—by exploring the further implications of what they found out. More than any one else, the reader comes to feel, these four men exhausted the ideologies and attitudes of the half-century in which they lived and worked, assimilating these elements of contemporary experience into a systematic approach to human phenomena, and making it possible for their successors to transcend the past.

The second sense in which this book should mean an end to quarreling is in relation to the "authority" of the several disciplines which compete for sovereignty, today. There is the argument between science and philosophy, and between psychiatry and religion. To Jung is owing the explicit resolution of this controversy. At least, we may take its resolution from Jung, as expressed by Dr. Progoff:

> Jung came at length to a conception of the "self" as the source of all the tendencies and potentialities of human nature. Working with the Freudian hypothesis of the unconscious depths, he was led to a view of man that placed the category of the "unconscious" in a more-than-psychological perspective. He realized that the very fact of human personality carries "metaphysical" overtones. Man's psychological nature suggests something transcendent of which the psyche is but a partial reflection. Across the centuries, man has been driven by an insatiable yearning to find the transcendent meaning of his life and to participate in it. Jung regarded this unconscious striving as a fundamental fact of the human spirit, so fundamental that he claimed that modern psychology is not entitled to call itself "empirical" unless it takes it into account.

A further paragraph will show how Jung felt the weight of his culture upon him, while illustrating Dr. Progoff's method of evaluation as well:

> At first Jung felt that his "scientific" role required him to interpret man's spiritual nature in strictly psychological terms; and he did this mostly by reducing spiritual experiences to the "archetypal" symbols of the "collective unconscious." In his last years, however, Jung found that his psychological hedge was a flimsy and artificial protection, for the psychologist cannot stand apart as an impartial observer of man's fate. He too is involved as a human being, and if he does not come to grips with the ultimate spiritual problems of his life, his psychology will be nothing more than academic talk. Impelled by this awareness, by his personal need, and by his desire to enlarge the vistas of psychology, Jung struggled toward an experience of his own. Finally, in the intensely personal, quasi-religious work that he wrote at the age of 76, his commentary on God's *Answer to Job*, he went far in the direction of a metaphysical encounter with "reality" as "reality" is reflected in the Bible. But even then Jung did not overcome the intellectual habits of his analytical psychology, and his failure vitiated his religious experience.

Our point, however, relates to the last sentence of the first of the two paragraphs quoted above. If psychology is to be *scientific*, Jung contended, it must take as primary the striving of man to know himself and the meaning of his life, and attempt to fulfill it. If Jung is right here and it is difficult to see how anyone can hold him wrong—then the primary fact of human experience is the reality of man-as-philosopher, as searcher for truth. All other facts are distorted without recognition of *this* fact; nor can there be symmetry and balance in human perception unless the perceiver has himself *engaged*, more or less consciously, in this central human quest.

This, then, is the meaning of science, religion, and philosophy. There is no particular

sovereignty among them; all are expressions of the search. Accordingly, the scientist who finds an opposition in philosophy is either a very bad scientist or he knows only bad philosophy. And so with religion, also.

The debt of the thought of the future to Otto Rank seems very great. We say the "future," for Rank seems not to have been either understood or appreciated by his contemporaries. This man's penetrating socio-historical understanding placed the cycle of depth psychology in the context of its intellectual environment, showing even more explicitly what Jung contended. Rank's full theory is needed to understand his comments correctly, but at least the mood of his approach is conveyed by the following:

> Psychology, one can say, was born of death, the death of old beliefs that once gave meaning to man's life. The negativity of psychology is most clearly shown in the fact that it "explains" man's beliefs—but it has no beliefs of its own. Psychology is capable only of explaining, but not of believing. "For," Rank says, "the psychological ideology has never been alive. It came into the world, so to say, with an old mind." It "was produced from the neurotic time and corresponds to it." . . . "How presumptuous, and at the same time naive," he said elsewhere, "is the idea of simply removing human guilt by explaining it casually as 'neurotic' !" . . .
>
> What Freud did, in effect, was to "analyze" the beliefs of the spiritual era as they occur in modern individuals and "reduce" them to sexual origins. Freud then added the "diagnosis," phrased in his "scientific" medical terminology, that any person who evaluated his sexual and related experiences by the criteria of the old, to him outmoded, spiritual beliefs was, by that very fact, "neurotic." The experience of guilt with its profound historical roots in man's nature was thus expected to disappear when the psychoanalyst exclaimed his magic medical word.
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> Seen in this light, such healing effects as psychoanalysis may eventually achieve do not derive from a truly therapeutic method. They are the result rather of the reconstruction that psychoanalysis presents of the individual in the terms of its own ideology. "Psycho-analysis," Rank says, is "psychological knowledge only to a minor degree it is principally an interpretation of old animistic spiritual values into the scientific language of the sexual ear."

Rank regarded modern psychology as essentially iconoclastic: "It destroys illusions and ideologies, which can no longer withstand its progressive self-consciousness. It becomes progressively unable to maintain even itself, and finally, as the last natural science, ideology, it destroys itself."

Rank's constructive contribution lies in his conception of the "urge to immortality," which he finds to be the ultimate motive in human life. Here, "immortality" is not to be conceived in a doctrinal sense, but rather as representative of ultimate or transcendent *value.* Rank is not opposed to immortality as possibly an "objective" reality or process, but his interest in it is rather as the dynamic of human action. This conception receives its greatest development by Rank in his idea of the artist as one who, in modern times, corresponds to the "hero" of the legendary past.

A wide influence may be expected from this book, which opens the way to an entirely new view of psychology. As Dr. Progoff puts it:

> Depth psychology is in a unique position, for at the point in the foreseeable future when it will finally establish its position as the fundamental science of man, it will do so by validating the very opposite of the materialistic view of life that was the premise of the natural sciences in a day gone by. It will then, in all likelihood, open a psychological road toward the view of the universe emerging from the new physics. . . . The ultimate task of the new psychology is to re-establish man's *connection to life,* not superficially in terms of slogans or therapeutic stratagems, but fundamentally and actually as an evident fact of modern existence.

COMMENTARY
MILLER'S THERAPY FOR WRITERS

THERE'S not much use in trying to give an account of the work of Henry Miller for those who have not read him. The flip comment on Miller is that he is the "bad boy" of American letters, which is less than meaningless. For simple characterization, the best thing that might be said of Miller is that he has known all his life the secret of good writing. Whether or not he has always done good writing, or used good judgment in it, we leave to others to decide. We'll settle for unmistakable evidence of the fact that he knows how.

His latest book, *Big Sur and the Oranges of Hieronymus Bosch* (New Directions, $6.50), illustrates the fact that a good writer can make writing about *anything* interesting and on occasion valuable. In Miller's case, whatever he writes about concerns Miller's semi-private universe—a place of striking honesty, whimsy, delight, and considerable confusion. Most of Miller's fans—and they are many—would like, we suspect, to live in that universe themselves, or a similar one of their own.

There are conventions in Miller's life, but they are all strictly of his own making, compounded partly of poetry and imagination. The other ingredients are Miller's affair: after all, a man is probably entitled to tramp through a manure pile now and then, especially if manure piles seem to him a more candid part of the landscape than phoney towers devoted to celebrating the cosmetic respectability of our time.

The last third of *The Oranges* has been already noticed in these pages (it appeared as a paperback, *The Devil in Paradise*—see MANAS, Sept. 6, 1956). The rest of the book is a Milleresque account of his life at Big Sur and of some of his friends and acquaintances there. The descriptions doubtless have a paradisiacal focus; one gets the impression that the inhabitants all feed on some kind of honey-dew and as a result grow into kinship with Lord Dunsany's characters (meeting them in the flesh would probably dissipate the magic, although they might replace it with some of their own). But that is Miller. What we have prized in this book is its asides, like the following counsel to young writers:

> What few young writers realize, it seems to me, is that they must find—create, invent!—the way to reach their readers. It isn't enough to write a good book, a beautiful book, or even a better book than most. One has to establish, or re-establish, a unity which has been broken and which is felt just as keenly by the reader, who is a potential artist, as by the writer, who believes himself to be an artist. . . . The writer who wants to communicate with his fellow-man, and thereby establish communion with him, has only to speak with sincerity and directness. He has not to think about literary standards—he will make them as he goes along—he has not to think about trends, vogues, markets, acceptable or unacceptable ideas: he has only to deliver himself, naked and vulnerable. All that constricts and restricts him, to use the language of not-ness, his fellow-reader, even though he may not be an artist, feels with equal despair and bewilderment. The world presses down on all alike. Men are not suffering from the lack of good literature, good art, good theatre, good music, but from that which has made it impossible for these to manifest. In short, they are suffering from the silent, shameful conspiracy (the more shameful since it is unacknowledged) which has bound them together as enemies of art and artists. They are suffering from the fact that art is not the primary, moving force in their lives. They are suffering from the act, repeated daily, of keeping up the pretense that they can go their way, lead their lives, without art. They never dream—or they behave as if they never realize—that the reason why they feel sterile, frustrated and joyless is because art (and with it the artist) has been ruled out of their lives. For every artist who has been assassinated thus (unwittingly?) thousands of ordinary citizens, who might have known a normal joyous life, are condemned to lead the purgatorial existence of neurotics, psychotics, schizophrenics. No, the man who is about to blow his top does not have to fix his eye on the *Iliad*, the Divine *Comedy*, or any other great model; he has only to give us, in his own language, the saga of his woes and tribulations, the saga of his non-existentialism.

Miller takes his own advice—this is exactly how he writes—but with an irrepressible joy in life added. Somehow, Miller has grasped the essential elements of the human situation and has learned the futility of complaint. The task of the soul is "to choose an arena in which to stage its agonies." To know this is to find the only peace possible for human beings. But this peace is no mournful and quiescent affair. In Miller's words:

> Such is the picture which doesn't always come clear through the televistic screen. The negative, in other words, from which all that is positive, good and lasting will eventually come through. Easy to recognize because no matter where your parachute lands you it's always the same: the everyday life.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves

NOTES IN PASSING

AN instruction folder provided for teachers in the Los Angeles area has the title, "Self-Selective Reading." Here is further evidence that the public schools are attempting to compensate for some of the "neglect" children may suffer at home. Some paragraphs of explanation indicate the sort of individual attention a child may receive from a teacher who is willing to help children to do "self-selective reading":

> The term self-selection is taken to mean that children have the opportunity to choose the material they read during the regular period of reading instruction. This means that books of many types, on many subjects, and of varying degrees of difficulty are made available. The range of reading difficulty extends from beginning reading books to those beyond the known ability of the most competent reader in the group. Self-selection in reading is a method that gives the child an opportunity to respond to the environment of reading in his own way. It does not force him into a difficult book before he is confident that he can handle it nor does it require him to read material too simple for his interest and ability.
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> This type of program allows a child to use material of his own choosing, move at his own pace, in an atmosphere where how he moves is no longer public classroom concern, and he relaxes his defenses and begins to feel the security of accomplishment. He dares to tackle reading far beyond his abilities and succeed in very satisfying ways.

This last sentence brings to mind the fact that there are intellectual struggles—even "hardships"—which can be salutary for the child, and here, perhaps, both parents and teachers have been remiss. Many children give full attention only when something is difficult intellectually—a little bit beyond them, and therefore both tantalizing and challenging.

An account of what the teacher must do, if "self-selective reading" is to succeed, indicates how much time and thought must be given to "new education" attempts of this variety. Parents who imagine the liberal approach in education allows the teacher to sit back and "take life easy" should ponder the following:

> *The Teacher's Role*
>
> 1. She must provide an adequate range of books, easily available.
>
> 2. She assumes a new role of guide and stimulator rather than tester and director. She learns to know the child in a friendly way not possible in a reading group. She can learn more fully than any test results can give her, how much is really being accomplished.
>
> 3. She continually observes the children to ascertain individual needs and adequate records of pupil performance. Records she may keep:
>
> File card for each child.
> Record of each title and level of the book.
> Record his plan for reading and reporting.
> Record words he needs most help with on another vocabulary card.
> Check vocabulary cards weekly. Plan separate word activities when needed.
>
> 4. The teacher plans *with* the children rather than for the children.
>
> 5. The major role of the teacher is to supply nurture for growth. As an educational philosophy the point of view of growth stresses the ability of all persons to make gains in the direction of desirable personal and social goals, even though all may not attain the same eventual level.

Brock Chisholm, best known to MANAS readers as a psychiatrist who was a former Director-General of the World Health Organization, some years ago addressed himself to the philosophy of education at an Asilomar mental health conference in northern California. Dr. Chisholm has encountered a fair amount of unpopularity from his unabashed comments on the destructive psychological effects of authoritarian religion, and it is apparent from this address that he likes to make the same point over and over again. Basically, it is Dr. Chisholm's conviction that "ready-made" beliefs block attempts to achieve psychological maturity. The function of the psychological sciences today, he feels, should be to provide a vantage-point of perspective on traditional beliefs—much as if the observer were a

visitor from another planet. In his Asilomar lecture (available as a pamphlet from the Mental Health Association of Northern California, 990 Eddy Street, San Francisco 7), Dr. Chisholm said:

> It would be useful for any of us to say to ourselves, "suppose I were to come in a spaceship from Mars or from Venus. If I were to come in a spaceship from another planet with knowledge of all the history in the world, of all the ideological systems, of all the religions, which mast of faith would I nail my flag to?" This is a difficult question but it is salutary for us to think in this way.
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> Would I adopt the religion that I happened to be exposed to in my childhood because I was born in a particular time and place, or would I look at all the religions in the world and say, can I adopt wholeheartedly any one of them in any stage of its development? Or must I set up a composite religion made up of a bit of this and a bit of that?
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> One thing is sure, if one can truly think that way, one will no longer be at the mercy of the accident of birth. One will be able to decide for oneself what to believe to fulfill one's needs and purposes as a world citizen.

As other psychologists have pointed out, the attempt to force children to accept a parental or community orthodoxy—to extend control over them by these means—often ends with precisely an opposite result. This leads to loss of confidence in the principle of "natural" authority, not realizing that the failure comes from founding authority on the inadequate grounds of tradition. Dr. Chisholm continues:

> The breakdown in public morality appears to rest on and develop from a loss of confidence in authority. Large elements of this breakdown would probably come from the fact that many children are taught as true, things which their parents no longer believe and have shown they no longer believe. This is confusing to a child and makes for many difficulties. It is an astonishing fact that many people who no longer believe what they are taught in Sunday school in the terms in which they were taught in Sunday school, send their children to the same type of Sunday school to learn the same things that they learned, in the same terms which they themselves no longer believe.
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> The effect of this queer situation of course is to make the children suspicious of authority, to disbelieve it, to make them lose confidence first in the sincerity of their parents and, as they grow older, to displace that feeling to other authority and to the government. The nation then tends to produce cynical people who have no confidence in their governments or the integrity of their public officials.

Dr. Chisholm is at one with Dr. Hutchins in the contention that a good educator must contrive to be in constant trouble—both within and without his profession: "It is clear that the teachers of the world, if the people are brave, intelligent and well-informed enough to support them, are going to have to carry the flag, are going to have to carry the great load of being unpopular, of fighting against certainties, of attacking absolutes. They are going to be called iconoclasts and heretics and all sorts of dreadful names." But the reason for carrying the "great load of being unpopular," in Dr. Chisholm's opinion, justifies any sacrifice undertaken:

> Is there any sense whatever in our continuing to believe anything simply because we were taught it when we were children? This is no good reason for believing anything. The only reason for believing anything is that it is valid in relation to our total experience and appropriate for the condition in which we find the world at the present moment. This is a new kind of world and there is no ethical or moral system that was intended for anyone in this world the way it is now and certainly no system of dogma or orthodoxy.

FRONTIERS

Thought Struggles to Be Free

THE MANCHESTER GUARDIAN, along with other British publications frequently noted in MANAS, provides a refreshing view of the transitions presently taking place in Communist countries. The British press gives the feeling of being considerably more enlightened than the American press, because simple "anti-Communism" seems to most British writers entirely inadequate as a means of discovering what really goes on in the world. A *Guardian* editorial for June 13, titled "Chinese Thaw," reports indications of a new intellectual liberality in China, with a lessening of authoritarian censorship. The *Guardian* editorial begins:

> During the last few months, changes have been coming over China. They may be lasting; they may be temporary. Nobody can yet say. But they have resulted for the time being in Chinese communism having a new look; and a problem for the West is to decide whether the new look is more than a superficial appearance, or whether fundamental changes of reality may be the outcome. The principal change has been the renewed emphasis on the need for tolerance—within fairly strict limits—of a certain freedom of movement of the human mind. "Let all flowers bloom together, let competing schools of thought contend." This is the anthem of the new movement. Obviously any Chinese intellectual who took this too literally would be in danger of finding himself quickly in the same prison which still apparently holds the heretic Hu Feng. Bounds must not be overstepped. But though any too dramatic intellectual corruscations may be promptly extinguished, and the regime will thus not be in danger from them, it may have exposed itself over the long run to change because of a new intellectual climate. In human society, attitudes may be as important as ideas. By tradition, the Chinese mind, though in one part Confucian and conformist, is in another part sceptical, mocking, and with a liking for a minimum of control. From the recent news which has come out of China it looks as if Mao Tse-tung and some of the other leaders of the Communist party have been stirred uneasily by the realisation of the violence which they have been doing to the Chinese spirit.

The first manifestation of the liberality occurs in respect to university policies and to the practice of literary censorship:

> The Chinese thaw is shown in several different ways. The classical thinkers of world history are once again being laid open to inspection in the Chinese universities, whether or not they can with any plausibility be regarded as precursors of Marxist theory. Speaking almost like Liberals, the Chinese leaders now say they have nothing to fear from books. If the doctrine in them is false, it will be eclipsed by the blaze of truth which comes from Maoism-Leninism. Keynesian economics and idealist philosophy can both now be studied because their obvious errors make the truth of Marxism shine more brightly. Nor is it only reading which is to become unofficial. Writers also are to have freedom. Authors are urged to let the blood course once again freely through their veins, and to make their minds supple. The report of a recent symposium of the Chinese Writers' Association is pathetic to read:
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> "The association [said the Communist writer-laureate Mao Tun] should assist writers and show concern for their welfare so that the latter will consider the association their home. Writers at present not only do not regard the association as a home. On the contrary, they regard it as a Government office. They also regard the small number of leading personnel of the association as rulers and the majority of association members as ordinary writers."

As the editorial points out, optimism about these tendencies is justified by the fact that they are occurring at a time when China has run into considerable economic adversity. In the past, when Russia has encountered similar problems, it has seemed necessary to the Russian government to become more rather than less oppressive. The Chinese, in other words, seem willing to experiment.

In addition, there is evidence that constructive experiment may occur within Russia itself. It may be questioned, of course, whether any totalitarian structure can sustain itself when it spreads itself out and becomes identified with the cultures of many lands. Would Nazi Germany, for example, after completing the conquest of England and Africa, have been able to maintain for

long its fanatical centrality of belief? Or would the Nazi policies have been gradually diluted by local reactions and opinions?

Not all the large-scale oppressions are restricted to Communist countries, as any student of the *Apartheid* policy of Southern Africa is well aware. James Morris, reporting from Capetown to the same issue of the *Guardian,* indicates that only a small minority there is carrying on the fight against inequality of opportunity and blatantly prejudiced segregation. But on June 7 the students and professors of Capetown University paraded through the streets as "witness to the truth." Morris' account strikes us as both pathetic and inspiring. No one save such courageous believers in the free life of the mind—and consequently the free life of everyone—will be speaking up against the *Apartheid* for quite a while to come, since both the major South African political parties are compromised on this issue. But let us quote from James Morris' "Professors on the March":

> South Africa is not in general a stylish country, but it is an unhappy one and therefore has its moments of nobility. One such occurred this morning when several thousand professors, lecturers, and students of Capetown University paraded through the streets of the city in protest against the Universities' Apartheid Bill which will forbid multi-racial university education in South Africa.
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> In almost any other Western country there might have been something ludicrous or theatrical in the nature of this demonstration. The two girls, all in white who led the students, smacked a little of drum majorettes. The air of implacable solemnity that froze every face might have been in Hyde Park or the Champs-Elysées, a trifle comical. Here, though, there was dignity to it all and courage and perhaps a trace of pathos. In a society fervently devoted to the principle of white supremacy and apparently reeling day by day towards autocracy, here was an assembly of people, young and old, with guts enough to declare their faith in equal opportunity and freedom of thought.
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> At the head of the procession, marching earnestly to the beat of a drum, were three elderly scholars in the robes of their distinctions—one red, one purple, one blue. One carried a shooting stick. All three walked with a grave determined rhythm that was in this sunny well-stocked city, very moving to see. Behind them came the professors and lecturers in their gowns, four abreast, arms swinging like some improbable but obscurely formidable battalion of irregulars; and far down the street behind them, interrupted only by three drummers, came the stream of students, men and women, with a Negro here and a couple of Malays there, here a girl in a flouncy, striped skirt, there a resolute bluestocking with her hair done up in what appeared to be silver paper.
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> Heedless or hostile the great public may be and dim the prospect of any immediate liberal renaissance in South Africa, but it is not a dictatorship yet. There are still brave gnarled professors with shooting sticks and muddled idealistic girls in taffeta skirts, and shop assistants more baffled than viciously prejudiced. And outside St. George's Cathedral, round the corner from the House of Assembly, a poster proclaims defiantly: "This church is open to welcome man and woman of *all races* to *all services* at *all times."* For once, so irrational is this milieu, sanity has to go into italics.

But sanity, courage, and the nobility expressed by any mind striving to be "free" in the hope of freedom of all men—these are qualities always legibly present, in their own special sort of italics.