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THE BIRTH OF A MOVEMENT

[This article is based on a tape recording of a talk given last summer, in Cheltenham, England, by Jayaprakash Narayan, the Indian Socialist leader who abandoned politics to join the Bhoodan movement of Vinoba Bhave—Editors.]

DURING the war, in 1941, Mahatma Gandhi started a movement which he called Individual Civil Disobedience. He did not think that there was justification, then, for a mass movement of civil disobedience. But he did not wish to let go unanswered the challenge which the British Government of that time had thrown to India when it said on the one hand that it was fighting for Freedom and Democracy and on the other hand was persistently denying freedom and democracy to India. Therefore, as a matter of protest, Gandhi launched this Individual *Satyagraha*. That is, only those who in his view were qualified enough and equipped enough morally to offer *Satyagraha*—to offer Civil Disobedience—would be allowed to do so. He had drawn up a fairly long list, and on that list the first name was that of Vinoba Bhave. He had selected him as the first *Satyagrahi* out of all his thousands of followers. The second name on that list was that of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, our Prime Minister. This might give you an idea of what Mahatma Gandhi thought of Vinoba.

Vinoba is no longer a young man—he is 64 years old. He is a man who, in the tradition of ancient India, would be considered to have renounced the world—a concept which I find the West does not understand. What does it mean, this renouncing the world? Vinoba has no home, no property, no family; he is what we would have called in the ancient days a *rishi*, a seer. He is a deeply religious person, a man of God, a person who considers whatever he does to be in the pursuit of spiritual ends rather than of any social, economic, or political ends. He is also a deeply learned individual, very erudite; a great Sanskrit scholar. You know we have many languages in our country; he knows them all, including Tamil. It is a great achievement. He wanted to study the Koran, so he learned Arabic; he is a deep student of the Bible (not in Hebrew of course, but in English); he knows French well enough to read, and at present is learning German from a German girl who happens to have joined his entourage.

Vinoba Bhave has started a movement that may be described as an extension of the work that Gandhi himself was doing in India, a work which was interrupted by his assassination. This movement originated in somewhat dramatic circumstances. More than seven years ago, early in 1951, Vinoba was travelling on foot in an area that had become very disturbed on account of Communist guerrilla activities. The Communists were trying to establish a foothold for themselves—a small Red China as it were—from where they could operate and expand outwards and gradually establish themselves over the whole of India, much in the fashion in which Mao Tse Tung had operated in China. The government of India was hard put to it trying to suppress this violent guerrilla warfare. During the day, the Communists would hide in the hills and jungle (that whole area is rather hilly and covered with forest) and at night they would swoop down on the villages and commit murder, arson, and loot. In this way they had been carrying on for many months. Vinoba felt that he should go to this area to give the people the message of non-violence and love. It was a very courageous thing to do. The government of India offered him armed protection, which he refused, and with his small band of workers, not more than half a dozen, he went from village to village on foot, speaking wherever he went.

One day, after his evening talk in a fairly large village, an old untouchable from the back of the

audience got up, placed his palms together and said, "Sir, this is all very well, this talk of *Ahimsa*—nonviolence; I understand all this, and we are not against it. But here, Sir, we are, the landless people of this village, and there are the landowners, sitting around you." (It is always so, that the prominent people sit on the dais and the common people in front and below!) So this old man said, "These are the rich landlords around you, who have hundreds and thousands of acres of land. We till their fields and it is by *our* labour that they are so wealthy and rich, while we ourselves do not have even a decimal of land. Therefore, Sir, we want land for ourselves."

This old untouchable threw a challenge to Vinoba. "You are talking of nonviolence, of love. Well, here is a problem before you. Can your love, your philosophy of nonviolence, solve this problem? Communists are hiding somewhere around this village who are trying to take the lands from the landlords by the sword and distribute it to the landless. It is the philosophy of violence that we see in practice right before our eyes, and you have come to preach nonviolence to us. Well, how are you going to solve this problem through nonviolence?" The old man didn't say all this, but the very fact that he got up, made a reference to the landlords and their thousands of acres, and that they, the landless, were the people who were producing all the corn, meant all that I have said to you just now. It was a challenge to Vinoba's preaching of nonviolence. I do not know what you or I would have done, even though we had the deepest faith in nonviolence. Well, neither did Vinoba know what to reply. To gain time he asked the old man, "How much land do you want?" Now that old *Harijan* was not speaking for himself alone so he didn't reply immediately. He was quite serious about it all, and when Vinoba put the question he had a little consultation with his companions. After two or three minutes he got up again and, again with palms touching, said, "Sir, we want eighty acres of land." Eighty acres is not much land. It was a very modest demand, but Vinoba had no land to give him. He had no land in his pockets—in fact he has no pockets, he dresses as Gandhi dressed, in a loin cloth. Without hoping for anything to happen, Vinoba turned to the people around him and said, "Have you gentlemen heard what this old man has said? You have so much land, hundreds of acres, perhaps some of you thousands of acres. Do you think that all this land is yours? It belongs to you today. Perhaps it belonged to your father and grandfather at one time. But do you think for that reason this land belongs to you? Did you create it? Did your forefathers create it? Is it not God's creation? Have not all the children of God equal share in it?" And so on in that vein he spoke for a few minutes. Then he said, "Is there anyone among you who is prepared to fulfill the demand that has just been made?"

When he put this question he had no hope that anyone was going to answer. He just put that question because he felt there was nothing else for him to do. And lo and behold; Someone gets up from the ranks of the landowners, puts his palms together and says, "Sir, I am so and so and have five hundred acres of land. We are six brothers; I am head of the family; on behalf of my brothers and myself, I am prepared to give a hundred acres for these landless people."

Vinoba was dumbfounded; he was completely speechless. Here were these untouchables demanding eighty acres of land, and here was a landlord coming forward to give a hundred acres—twenty acres more than was wanted. That night, Vinoba did not sleep. All night long his mind was working, and from within a voice came again and again and said, "This is the answer. You have been roaming about these villages for so many days, trying to find an answer to the Communist violence. Here is the answer. From tomorrow, you will go on throughout the length and breadth of this country: you will walk from village to village asking for land, and giving the land that is given to you to the landless." Vinoba had a programme of nonviolence—and he didn't stop to picture whether it would ever succeed.

As a young man I was a Marxist. Even though I joined Gandhi and the national freedom movement, and went to prison, I kept on saying that we would not succeed in winning our freedom merely by going to prison. This great, powerful Empire could not be overthrown by this method. Well, you saw what happened. I do not say that the whole credit for what happened ,goes to Mahatma Gandhi alone. Part of the credit goes to you British people, your leaders, and undoubtedly to your government of that time. But you will all agree that a great part of the credit goes to Mahatma Gandhi. I am quite sure that if India had followed the traditional methods and used violence, perhaps even today we would not be free, and it would be very difficult to compute the cost in bitterness and hatred. So although it might occur to other people, it never occurred to Vinoba to ask whether the problems of exploitation, poverty, and inequality could be solved in this fashion, by going to the people and persuading them that what they had belonged to others also. From the next day, Vinoba started on a trek that still continues—after more than seven years now—walking every day from eight to ten miles, maybe twelve miles some days, and talking to the people. When he started, there were not more than half a dozen people with him; now there are thousands in practically all parts of India. In these last seven years, Vinoba and his co-workers have been able to collect in this partial gift manner more than four and a half million acres of land.

As compared with the land that is needed for all the landless people, this is not very much, but if you know what land means to the peasant, and how deeply he is attached to it, you will appreciate that it is nothing less than a miracle that four and a half million acres have been given away for the asking, without any kind of coercion being used. True, maybe half this land is not worth cultivation and distribution (perhaps it may be put to some other use, such as pasture), yet this land, too, was at one time the personal property of some landlord, and he felt persuaded to surrender his ownership. The other half, I have no doubt, is fit for cultivation and much of it has already been distributed to the landless people. Ours is an agricultural country, and eighty per cent of the people still live in the villages, so you can imagine what this movement means for India. It might mean nothing for Britain, but in India it is one of the biggest things that has happened since Independence—*the* biggest thing, I should say.

The movement arose by the surrender of *part* of a person's land, but in the course of time many developments took place, of which the most important is what we call *Gramdan.* Suppose a landlord has one hundred acres of land and he is persuaded to give ten acres to some landless families in his village, that would be what we call *Bhoodan,* the earliest phase, by which name the movement is still known. But then as the idea spread and the people understood it, and a new kind of moral climate was created in the rural areas, *partial* sharing developed into *total* sharing, and we now have something like four thousand villages in which land has ceased to be individual property and has become communal—the property of the whole community.

In China, in Russia, and in other Communist countries, you know what happened in the wake of collectivisation. In Russia alone twenty million people were liquidated in one way or another. Now, in four thousand Indian villages, much more has happened than forcible collectivisation brought about. If the farmers in all these Communist countries were given the option to choose between collectivisation and their own individual farming, I don't think there is much doubt that the vast majority would choose the latter. All this process of forcible collectivisation has produced very little change in their minds and hearts, and you have instances of it in Yugoslavia, Poland and Hungary. Just at present, I am afraid, China is preparing a terrific drive for collectivisation. Probably Mao wants to complete in a couple of years what Stalin took ten years to finish. And what the cost of it will be God alone

knows. I think, in a way, Imre Nagy has paid with his life for the Chinese collectivisation drive.

By propagating this philosophy of Love and Truth (because it is the truth, whatever the economists or others may say), and persuading people that they should live together as one family, it has been possible to convert thousands of people and bring about a nonviolent agrarian revolution of the completest kind in these 4,000 villages of India. This philosophy asserts that whatever we have is a trust, and should be held and used as such, whether it be land or other kind of property, or whether it be skill, knowledge or experience. It is a trust that we hold for our fellow human beings and for our community. It is not meant for our personal enjoyment alone: we have a share in it, but only a share.

When I talk about these things to Westerners, the inevitable question is, "Are these things practicable?" Well, I do not know. It is for you to decide whether there is a *need* for this philosophy of life to be practiced in the West. And if you decide that there is a need, then the way you apply it is also for you to decide.

Mahatma Gandhi never tired of emphasizing that although it is necessary to improve society and to change the social, economic, and political institutions of society, these changes will not mean very much unless man himself changes. Institutions are run by men, and unless men, too, change and improve, mere external improvements will not take us very far.

I told you just now that I was for many years a Marxist, and as a Marxist I was an "environmentalist." That is, I believed that if the environment was changed the individual would change, because the individual is a product of his environment. In psychology I was a "behaviourist," as all Marxists are—or should be. We were the product of our environment and therefore I believed that once capitalism and feudalism were abolished, and the private profit motive eliminated from life, everything would be all right. You would have the good society, and the good man, and everything. Trotsky talked of even the cooks becoming Platos and Aristotles in a Communist society. That was the dream!

We have all seen the ideals fading away one by one, and the idols breaking. I saw it, and it was a very difficult process for me to live through. I saw that in Russia there was this tremendous revolution the like of which history had not seen before. Capitalism and feudalism were destroyed from the roots, and the private profit motive was destroyed. But what happened? Did the good society emerge? Did the good man emerge? Nothing. All the ideals of Communism—or at least what I consider to be the ideals of Communism—seem to me to have been buried fathoms deep under the Russian soil. The very people who made the revolution became, after the success of the revolution, thirsty for one another's blood; and blood flowed on the streets of Moscow and other cities like water. And that is still going on.

And I saw what was happening in the democratic countries that were trying to create a socialist society. I found the ideals of socialism were becoming fainter and fainter. Nationalization at one time used to be such an exciting and promising slogan. But today we find bureaucracy! We find that the relationships between the producers, the consumers, the management, and other sectors of society have become frozen. There is no *socialism* left in the life of the people.

Socialism for me was always a way of life. It represented a set of values to which we owed allegiance voluntarily and which we tried to put into practice in our lives. These values we didn't see developing anywhere as a result of merely institutional changes, whether economic or political.

I do not know if you in the West are faced with the same problems as we are—the problems of socialism, democracy, the cooperative movement, industrialization. We are concerned with these problems because we are at the

crossroads in India. Which way do we go? Do we follow the West? Do we industrialize in the same manner? Do we accept the same ideals of life for ourselves? I personally shudder to think that we would go the same way, follow the same path. There must be something wrong in the foundations, in the very springs of civilisation, that in the course of a lifetime there should be two world wars. There must be something wrong somewhere, must there not? And is it not necessary to find what this is? And now we are in the midst of this cold war and one doesn't know what will happen. Millions and millions of people throughout the world are living in fear. I think the American people live more under fear than any other people in the world. Although there is perhaps as much fear in Russia as in America. Friends, I am not a Westerner, it is not my job, nor would you be prepared to take it from me for a moment, to criticize Western civilisation; but as an Easterner and an Indian, I cannot but think of these problems so that I may decide for my own country which way we should go.

Mahatma Gandhi insisted that while there has to be a social revolution, the starting point of that revolution must be man himself. It is only through a *human* revolution that we can have a social revolution that is meaningful. And therefore he always said that he was a *double* revolutionary and that his revolution was a double revolution—internal as well as external—human as well as social. Without the internal revolution, the external is meaningless.

Now, you have in Vinoba's movement an example of this double revolution. In these 4,000 villages there has been an external change. Land has ceased to be individual property and has become common property. The village community in an assembly decides what is to be done with this land—whether it should be farmed collectively as a single unit, or whether it should be reallocated on some just basis among the members of the community who are prepared to farm the land. The whole decision as to what should be done is in the hands of this small village community. This is an economic revolution of the most fundamental nature.

There is no party in India today, neither the ruling Congress party of Mr. Nehru, nor the Socialist party, nor the Communist party nor any other party, that has the courage to say that if it were in power it would communize land and abolish individual ownership of land. The Communists would certainly like to do so, and many Socialists also, perhaps, would like to do so, but it is impossible for them even to speak about it now. If you take all the election manifestos and all the programmes of these parties, which all have their own agrarian programmes, and put them all together, it doesn't total up to very much; a few land reforms, redistribution of land, fixation of ceilings, uneconomic holdings of land to be made rent-free, and a few things of that nature, which are certainly not Communist or Socialist programmes. They are desirable land reforms, that is all; but a bourgeois government, a liberal Capitalist government may well carry through those reforms.

I am saying this so that you may appreciate what a tremendous revolution it means, at least in these 4,000 villages, for the landowners voluntarily to say, "Our lands belong to the village community, to everyone." Nor is the conception of community restricted to the village alone. I should like to emphasise this. The "community" embraces the entire world community of human beings. When Vinoba says, "This land does not belong to you alone, it belongs to the community," he has in mind not only the village community but also the British community, and the Russian community, the Pakistan community and the American community. The idea is that whatever is on this earth belongs jointly to the human family. I have a share in what you have, and you have a share in what I have. It is this philosophy which Vinoba is preaching.

Those of you who have been to India may know that we have various forms of greeting.

Most of them have a religious origin, although some are just mere social courtesy. During the freedom movement, a form of greeting arose which became very popular because Mr. Nehru and all the political leaders of India popularized it, the two words, "Jai Hind." "Jai" means "victory," and "Hind" of course means "India"—"Jai Hind," "Victory to India." It was the Indian equivalent of your "V-for-Victory" sign. During the past year, Vinoba has quietly introduced into our life a new form of greeting. After he finishes his evening talk, he folds up his hands and says, "Jai Jagat." "Jai" means "Victory," and "Jagat" means "the World." He is no longer talking of Victory for India; he is talking of victory for the world. And please imagine that he is probably talking to a group of villagers at a place that is perhaps thirty miles from the nearest railway station—a remote interior village where the people may not even know the names of all the Indian provinces. Maybe you will kind there people who have never travelled on a railway and have no idea what a city like Bombay looks like. Vinoba is now trying to give them this idea of world citizenship. "We don't belong to this little village, nor to this country of India, but to the whole world." And therefore, while the principle of communal ownership finds *practical* expression in ownership by the village community, the latter is really only representative of the whole *world* community.

We hope to extend this movement to every village in India. We have a total of 550,000 villages so you can imagine what a stupendous task we have ahead of us. We have succeeded only in 4,000 villages as yet, and we are not going to be content with applying this principle to the agrarian sphere alone. Already Vinoba has extended it to all spheres: *Buddhidan, Shramdan, Jivadan.* You see, "dan" is a Sanskrit word which means gift or sharing, and it is added to so many things. Suppose there is a doctor or a lawyer or a professor. He has "Buddhi"—knowledge, and he should make "Buddhidan," that is, he should share his knowledge with others. Whatever skill he has he should share—just as the land owner and property owner has to share. Likewise with "Sampattidan." Those who are *earning* something should share what they earn with others. This concept of sharing he has now made universal, but the fact remains that the emphasis today is in the agrarian sphere, because we are not very many and cannot do everything at once. But just as from partial sharing of land we have gone to communal ownership, so we have been thinking how in the fields of industry, commerce, and the professions, etc., we can go forward; from sharing of incomes to a new kind of industrial property, a new kind of industrial organization where there is human fellowship; and where, instead of impersonal rules and laws, human relationships bind and run the organization and govern its life.

We have not yet discovered the best way of doing this and we are hoping that, as a result of our tour in Britain and the rest of Europe, we may be able to find an answer. Several experiments are being made, here and on the continent also, in a new kind of industrial organization. I do not think that the perfect way has yet been found but perhaps these experiments may help us in our country to take a few more steps forward.

REVIEW
EMISSARIES OF DISTRUST

THE UGLY AMERICAN by William J. Lederer and Eugene Burdick is making a spectacular bid for review attention. Already a Book of the Month Club selection, the novel is being serialized by the *Saturday Evening Post*, and it may appear in a condensed form in the *Reader's Digest.* Though hardly notable as literature, *The Ugly American*—a story of U.S. folly in Southeast Asia—is a telling indictment of an all too typical ignorance and arrogance, carrying a more concentrated message than Wylie's *Innocent Ambassadors* and a sharper impact than the comments of Justice William O. Douglas on the same theme. The fictional form of this book is but a thin disguise for the pent-up feelings of the writers, which, in this instance, may serve a constructive purpose. As a reviewer for the Oct. 16 *Reporter* puts it, "One million of Americans will be taking this bitter but salutary pill." William Lederer has served for five years as special assistant to Admiral Felix Stump, Commander for military forces in the Pacific Area, and Eugene Burdick teaches political theory at the University of California.

The central idea of the *Ugly American* is that, despite the presence of helpful and principled people from this country who take a constructive hand in Asian affairs, it is the *average* of behavior of Americans by which America is judged, and this average is claimed to be incredibly low. In the opening chapter, Burdick and Lederer describe a meeting behveen a former OSS agent and a native Sarkhanese who had once saved the agent's life while working with him during the war behind Japanese lines. But when the native, Deong, puts in an appearance, he is holding a gun in his hand, determined to prevent this helpful American from introducing the healthful benefits of powdered milk to the natives. Deong has become Communist and, as such, he cannot afford to let such a project succeed if backed by American money:

> Colvin understood.
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> "Deong, you're a Communist," Colvin said.
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> "As if there were a choice," Deong replied softly. "Look,
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> John, you took me off the back of a water buffalo and taught me about the big outside world. And I learned that the side with the most brains and power wins. And, John, that's not your side anymore. Once it was, but not now. America had its chance and it missed. And now the Communists are going to win."
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> "Look, Deong, you trusted me once," Colvin said quickly. "I can tell you that our side is going to win. We've still got the power and the will."
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> "No, you haven't got the power or the will or anything," Deong said, and his voice was rock hard with assurance. "You've done nothing but lose since the end of the war. And for a simple little reason: you don't know the power of an idea. The clerks you send over here try to buy us like cattle. You people are like the fable of the rich man who was an idiot."

Lederer and Burdick are ingenious in devising situations to illustrate their thesis. Following, for example, is the report of a Russian Ambassador to Sarkhan to his superiors in Moscow, after witnessing the conduct of the small-bore politician who occupies the US Embassy:

> "The American Ambassador is a jewel. He keeps his people tied up with meetings, social events, and greeting and briefing the scores of senators, congressmen, generals, admirals, undersecretaries of State and Defense, and so on, who come pouring through here to 'look for themselves.' He forbids his people to 'go into the hills,' and still annoys the people of Sarkhan with his bad manners.
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> I note with concern, however, that the American press has been very critical of Ambassador Sears for his inability to counter the tricks we played on him with the grain ships. If these American press attacks continue, it is possible that in time he will be removed. It is to our advantage to have him remain here. Therefore, during the next week or two I will see to it that editorials in the local newspapers will praise him for being an understanding American and a brave fighter. I also suggest that Pravda attack him bitterly. This combination will be all that is necessary to convince the U.S. State Department and the U.S. public that Ambassador Sears is doing a superb job."

Lederer and Burdick have attached to their novel a final chapter titled "A Factual Epilogue" in which they say:

> It is not orthodox to append a factual epilogue to a work of fiction. However, we would not wish any reader to put down our book thinking that what he has read is wholly imaginary. For it is not; it is based on fact. It is our purpose here to give our reasons and our sources.
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> Although the characters are indeed imaginary and Sarkhan is a fiction, each of the small and sometimes tragic events we have described has happened . . . many times. Too many times.
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> Without pitting one Soviet soldier against one American soldier, the Soviet has won a staggering series of victories. In the few years since the end of World War II, Russia has added 700,000,000 people to the multitude already under direct rule. Its land empire has been swollen by about 5,000,000 square miles. In Asia alone, Communist arms have won wars in China, Indochina, and Tibet, and gained prestige and a restless stalemate in Korea. In Italy, Egypt, Indonesia, Cambodia, Laos, to name but a few, Communist parties have become strong contenders for power. In a recent poll taken in India, Chou En-Lai, the Chinese Communist leader, was a three-to-one favorite over President Eisenhower. In the Middle East our prestige has rapidly diminished while that of Russia has increased. In South America our Vice President has been spat upon and assaulted in a shameful demonstration of antagonism toward our country.
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> Even among the nations which have seemed committed to us there is a rising tide of anti-Americanism. We have been attacked by the press in the Philippines, Japan, and the Republic of China, as well as in those less firmly committed lands whose friendship we seek by spending large sums in foreign aid—Laos, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, and Pakistan. The fictional John Colvin's brutal treatment at the hands of his former friend, Deong, can stand for what has happened to America in Asia. The Communists got to Deong; the Americans did not.
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> If the only price we are willing to pay is the dollar price, then we might as well pull out before we're thrown out. If we are not prepared to pay the human price, we had better retreat to our shores, build Fortress America, learn to live without international trade and communications, and accept the mediocrity, the low standard of living, and the loom of world Communism which would accompany such a move.

Both in the novel and in the "Epilogue," the authors use the "who is going to win" approach. In one sequence in the novel, a Burmese journalist answers questions at a dinner held to honor the new American Ambassador. His argument is that the Americans lose out because ninety per cent of the Russian diplomats are "dedicated professionals." The journalist says "that the Americans could drive the Communists out of Asia," if they were equally well trained.

But is the "we can win" through training psychology sound? Lederer, particularly, may know that "John Colvin" and the eccentric."Colonel Hillandale" manifest human qualities which cannot be "trained" into existence. In any case, *The Ugly American* makes clear that wealthy citizens of the United States who travel for indulgence, and arrogant American officials, are the ones least likely to succeed in establishing rapport with the people of Asia. The story of Sarkhan is the story of many territories, both small and large, on the other side of the world, and we should be grateful to Lederer and Burdick for telling it so well.

COMMENTARY
MAN OF THE FUTURE?

READERS will perhaps be pleased to learn that the slow but steady growth of MANAS continues, that each year the number of paid subscriptions is greater than the year before, that most MANAS readers renew their subscriptions on time, and that even readers who drop out for a while often come back after a few months.

Most recent "challenge" to the editors is a letter from a new reader who has asked us to continue his subscription for twelve more issues, so that he can determine whether the paper has any "undesirable" tendencies, such as too fond a liking for alien political systems, etc.

What can we say to test this reader's judgment and try his patience a bit? Well, we can speak admiringly of Jayaprakash Narayan, whose informal talk before an English audience in Cheltenham was tailored into this week's lead article. We confess to an especial appreciation of Narayan's direct approach to the problems of India, and his simplicity of utterance. The Indian press of today is speculating about Narayan's future role in Indian affairs. It seems certain that if he should return to Indian politics, he will make it another kind of politics than the politics the West is familiar with.

Mr. Narayan writes as a former Marxist. It is pleasant to read a man who feels no compulsion to put on sack cloth and ashes because he once saw world affairs through Marxist spectacles. His motives as a Marxist were the same motives that he has today. The difference is simply that, today, he has learned from history that the Marxist program is no good for producing the kind of a society he wants. Reading Jayaprakash Narayan may help Americans to understand what Marxism has meant to Asian peoples, and why it has such a hold on the minds of so many millions. There is no point in being angry with them for accepting the Marxist view. For them, prospects are very like the prospects which confronted the old *Harijan* who asked Vinoba how he was going to help the landless peasants without the violence which the Communists proposed to use.

American readers will probably say, and rightly, that *our* problems are very different from those of the landless Indian peasants. Indeed they are. One could wish, in fact, that they were less different, since the simple need for land has a fairly obvious solution. We doubt if anyone can sum up the problems of the West in easily comprehensible terms. We doubt, in fact, that the problems of the West ought to be described in political and economic terms. The failure to define the problems of the West in appropriate terms—*moral* terms—is probably our chief difficulty.

This is not to say that a recognition of the real problems of the West would not have political and economic consequences. Great changes would no doubt ensue. But the changes would come because the people themselves had developed a *taste* for another kind of life, and not because of intensive political campaigning.

CORRECTION

Some weeks ago, in a brief review, the price of the paperback volume, *Facing Reality*, was given at $1.00 a copy. This was an error. *Facing Reality*, an analysis of the failure of the radical movement, with suggestions as to where new life is emerging in the struggle for social justice, is priced at 50 cents. MANAS readers who ordered the book from our review have been receiving two copies for their dollar. The publishers write: "The person filling the order, seeing the dollar, naturally assumed that two copies were being ordered. We want people to read the book and make it known to others, but we don't want them to think we are forcing them to pass the book along by sending them two copies." *Facing Reality* (noted in MANAS for Aug. 27, 1958) may be ordered from the Correspondence Publishing Co., 2121 Gratiot Ave., Detroit 7, Mich.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves
CORRESPONDENCE AND NOTES

Editors: Depressing statistics reveal that an increasing number of schizoids are occupying mental institutions today—people who, according to the doctors, are really just unable to cope with society. Why is this coping so difficult, and what care can be taken in the upbringing of children to afford protection—especially if one feels that the child, to become a fulfilled individual, must be something better than a conformist, must learn how to set his own standards in morals and philosophy?

A SIGNIFICANT announcement on the part of psychologists and sociologists during the past ten years has been that conformity to group standards does not bring emotional balance. One of the reasons is obvious: a person who *tries* to be a conformist will make an attempt to agree with every advocate of a point of view, and since so many points of view are in contention, loss of a sense of identity can easily result. Then there is the deeper psychological fact that the man in the "crowd" is "lonely"—because he cannot find *himself* as "a face in the crowd." He needs to stand off from the crowd frequently enough to form some opinion as to the relationship between the crowd and himself. He begins to build a core of individuality only by this means.

In dealing with acute manifestations of schizophrenia in emotionally disturbed children, Bruno Bettelheim discovered that the most seriously dislocated child-personalities would, in fact, attempt to conform to any standard of behavior set before them—whether by destructive friends of the same age, or by a counselor or psychologist. The final emergence of an embryonic individuality, when diagnosis and treatment were successful, often precipitated an active rebelliousness. But this kind of rebelliousness, even when leading to anti-social behavior not previously shown, was seen by Bettelheim to be an inevitable stage in the transition. So the child needs, most of all, the feeling that there are certain areas of decision in which he will be encouraged to practice self-determination. He needs, also, to "cope" with standards set up by the "group"—by the parent or by the teacher—and from this sort of coping he acquires confidence in his ability to follow a discipline. Even so, he must breathe the air of freedom even if his immature intentions or unbalanced actions, when exercising this freedom, are undesirable.

Behind all such considerations are those basic conflicts of our society described in Karen Horney's *Neurotic Personality of Our Time.* Even the child senses the over-all hypocrisy of a grown-up world which inveighs against violence on the one hand and avidly immerses itself in murder novels and TV suspense dramas—a world which pays lip service to the pacifism of Christ on the one hand and supports the policies which make for war on the other. This sort of disjointed ethos creates an atmosphere wherein the adult moves without confirmed conviction, enjoying himself as best he can while he runs up and down the ethical scale with a purely emotional orientation. The aimlessness and confusion of the majority of adults, the inconsistency of alternations between irreconcilables, reach the child by a thousand and one indirect means.

Psychologically, the child needs more than anything else an introduction to the attitude of philosophy—often best described as the willingness, and the growing capacity, to distinguish between knowledge and opinion. Adults who confuse opinion and preference with knowledge in their own evaluations fail to provide the young with even a temporary feeling of security, because the child will sense, even if he does not comprehend, the difference between genuine self-assurance and a merely blustering "faith." He also needs to sense that no opinion of his elders is to be given more than deference.

And by *not* "teaching the child to cope with society;" we may in fact be teaching him, in the best way possible, how to live in it. One MANAS

reader has asked for discussion concerning the question often put by the very young—"When will I grow up?" The most important answer, in our opinion, begins with the assertion that no one *ever* grows up completely, that the essence of living is to find points to grow from. The physical body "matures," as we say, but never, probably, as completely or perfectly as it might. The psychic, or what we might call the emotional self, takes a much longer time to come close to harmonious perfection—and even the coming close leaves endless room for further refinement. As for the "mature mind" of which Harry Overstreet speaks so eloquently, the process of maturation might be conceived as occupying eons of time—were the individuality, or "soul," able to continue its development after the death of the physical body.

What the child really wants to know, of course, is just how long, according to his conception of time, he will be debarred from making unconstrained choices and accepting the perils of what are usually called adult responsibilities. He desires to find out, in other words, whether there will at some time be a sudden passage from a period during which only conditional choices may be made by him, to one in which his choices carry unconditional authority. There is no such time, nor even an approximation of it, so great are the discrepancies between individuals regarding physical, psychic and mental age. This is a profound truth—that even the greatest and most mature human being who ever lived will find that his choices are not completely authoritative and his period of growing to the awareness of wider horizons not terminable.

The child is much more interested in problems of "authority" than the average adult realizes. As Robert Paul Smith pointed out so amusingly, there are times when a young child will have serious doubts about the competence of a mother or father who fails to be authoritative—and he wants confidence in them, desires to know that *somebody* really knows what he is doing. Many emotionally confused children would be less so in a society in which traditional disciplines were universally accepted and argument and debate respecting parental requirements regarding the young were virtually unknown. On the other hand, children who become "schizoid" may have suffered from too many harsh punitive measures. But parents who are so emotionally immature as to vent anger on their children, neither live in nor provide a context of consistency regarding discipline. And it is the inconsistency in such parents' relationships to their children which sometimes induces the extreme emotional tensions from which retreat to a dream world seems the only relief. Unpredictable emotional explosions of a violent nature in the home naturally lead in this direction—that of escape—and for children seriously affected by prolonged exposure, Dr. Bettelheim found that only an atmosphere of complete permissiveness would lure the child back to finding pleasure in contact with other persons. Finally, in those cases treated successfully, the period of extreme permissiveness was terminated when the child indicated *his* need for order and discipline.

There are, of course, many other causes of schizophrenia, but it is worth while to concentrate, in such a discussion, upon those failings in the adult world which may accentuate other emotional and mental disturbances.

FRONTIERS

Alone in the Lonely Crowd

IN a practically unbelievable novel about the "big business" of miracle drugs—unbelievable because of the naked commercialism practiced by the pharmaceutical company which is the villain of the story—we found a passage that holds a key to some of the psychological mysteries of our time. (The book, for those who want to read a discouraging account of the medicine business, is *The Blue Chips*, by Jay Deiss, now available as a Bantam Giant.) In this passage, a distinguished researcher muses:

> "I get lonesome, too. I am an old man. I don't like the way things have changed for those whose greatest passion is to search for truths. I feel strongly the bitter irony of Einstein when he said that if he had his life to live over, he would have been a plumber. He was disillusioned because in America he found intellectual freedom only for himself—and he sought it for all. . . ."

This was a kind of suffering which, along with a few others, must have overtaken Albert Einstein. We don't know if he ever put it into words—words along the lines of the above quotation. Probably not; but in his life of hopes and ideals, he must have been heavily oppressed by the lack in America of a community to share those hopes and ideals. He had friends, of course; every great man finds a few kindred spirits; yet he was one of those who could hardly find much private enjoyment. The radius of his being went beyond merely private interests and pleasures.

There is not very much hospitality in the world, these days, for a man whose "greatest passion is to search for truths," or who seeks intellectual freedom "for all." This is a spirit which lives only in individual hearts. You can't "organize" it or perpetuate it with a foundation grant. The man who feels this way is a man condemned to live out his life in loneliness. He may, if he should be a man like Einstein, achieve distinction in some field of human endeavor, and thereby enjoy a kind of charmed life. But his fame will not prevent people from regarding him as something of an oddity. His immunity to the ruthless attacks of the enemies of all free minds can hardly make him happy. He knows that the tolerance he enjoys is for the wrong reasons.

Nothing is so devastating to a civilization as the dying out of even the memory of a life committed to the service of ideals and principles. It is not that no men of principle exist or will arise. There are always some of these about, but when there is no great tradition to be honored, the public at large becomes unable to distinguish between acts of principle and the confusing behavior of those who populate what may be termed the "lunatic fringe." There is a general loss of discrimination, and, in consequence, men of principle are sometimes driven into the lunatic fringe for any kind of companionship at all.

If a young man of talent, but wholly unknown, had said what Einstein had said—that he would rather be a plumber or a pedlar than a theoretical physicist—who would have listened to him? The likely response, today, would be, "Oh, you think you belong to the beat generation, don't you?" And there is a strong possibility that the comment would be just right. But that is the point: Our culture offers so few alternatives that we are unable to distinguish between an honestly disillusioned man of principle and a beatnik!

The difference, of course, is that an Einstein would doubtless become a very good plumber, or a socially useful pedlar, once he decided to go in that direction.

But why should a man of such capacities do anything like that? The immediate reaction is: What a waste!

But is it a waste? The implication of the choice is that the man making it saw more potentialities in obscurity than in eminence; more freedom in a private life than in a public one. The implication is that he found the ties of eminence too constricting, its obligations too oppressive. In the case of Einstein, he found himself involved in

the techniques of mass destruction—he, whose entire life had been energetically devoted to the cause of peace. And there were doubtless other oppressions of a less obvious nature.

This is not to overlook the vastly liberating effect on men's minds of Einstein's discoveries. People had a *feeling* for his work, without understanding it technically at all. They repeated his name with an astonishing sense of participation in the achievements of modern physics. From him was born a kind of reverence for the idea of *knowledge,* and out of this reverence grew universal respect and even love for this gentle, thoughtful man.

So, when such a man speaks of becoming a plumber or a pedlar, he is saying that the time has come to make first things first in human affairs. He is like Spina, in the novels of Ignacio Silone, who in the end saw that the currency of human communications had been so debased in his native Italy that there was nothing left to do but perform unexpecting acts of kindness. It was time to go back to the foundations of trust in human relations. Until the foundations were laid, once again, nothing worth-while could be built at the higher levels.

If more people saw *this* emergency, it would not be necessary for a man like Einstein to seem to go to extremes. He would find companions more easily, and a community of the spirit in which he could participate.

Nor could men like Bert Bigelow and Earle Reynolds be pressed by some moral force within themselves to sail little boats into the zone of nuclear explosion in the Pacific sea.

People, everywhere, are waiting, waiting, waiting for "something" to happen. And when it does happen, it is made to happen by so few that it seems almost ridiculous.

It takes considerable moral strength, it is true, for a man to do something that will attract the attention of the world without appearing ridiculous. Gandhi carried it off, but it took him many, many years. No one now speaks of him as ridiculous—not in public, at least—but there was a time when people did. Gandhi cannot be called ridiculous, now, because he found companions—people who were willing to risk ridicule and other things with him.

No one can say, today, what sort of action will produce a like response in America or elsewhere in the West. Perhaps the problem ought not even to be formulated in these somewhat dramatic terms. But the plight of a great man ;n our culture is a very real one. Just to recognize this situation is a step toward finding a remedy.