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WHAT IS GOOD FOR MAN

THERE are in general three ways to look critically at our times. We can look at other classes or groups, to try to see what is wrong with them, and point out their responsibility for the troubles of the world. That is one way. Then, we can look at our own civilization as a whole—as, for example, modern students of "popular culture" such as Bernard Rosenberg and Dwight Macdonald are doing. The third way is to look at ourselves, which is really to look at individual man, in an attempt to understand the qualities which all men have in common. There is the distinct possibility that the findings of the other two ways will remain inconclusive so long as they remain unrelated to this third approach.

The explicit or implicit purpose of all critical thinking is to throw light on the ultimate question of *what is good for man.* The question is of course complex, requiring many answers at many levels, but unless all these many answers have some conscious relation to an ultimate norm or value—however general or even speculative—they will suffer from obscurity and conflict with one another. No doubt we must add that a certain amount of conflict and obscurity among views on this all-important question is not only inevitable, but actually desirable, to avoid dogma and a superficial simplicity, yet we surely want no more confusion than is dictated by the nature of the problem.

Take for example some of the answers returned about what is good for man, when "man" is identified with some particular social grouping or type of political organization. Dozens of books published within the past ten years have looked at these answers and found them ridiculous, contemptible, and on occasion evil. There are books which attack the "adjustment" concept in education and social psychology. Books of another sort attack the conclusions of those who define the good of man in military terms—the recent volumes of C. Wright Mills, *The Power Elite* and *The Causes of World War III*, are good examples of such criticism. Another category includes the books which examine the assumptions and practices of totalitarian political thought, usually as typified by Soviet Russia. Then there are the books critical of "business" philosophy, such as William Whyte's *The Organization Man* and Vance Packard's *The Hidden Persuaders.*

Except, perhaps, for the Packard book, all these examinations and criticisms are of ideas which have been more or less honestly presented as defining the conditions of human good. They all establish some kind of *norm* as the good, and this norm is defined in terms of social or socio-economic relationships. The norm, in short, is a collectivist norm, whether the collective which makes the unit embodying the good is a classroom, a corporation, or a socialist party. The good is whatever creates what is supposed to be a fair and upward-and-onward atmosphere in the unit.

The point, here, is that in these theories *man* is not the unit. The unit is man-arranged-with-other-men and held in that relationship according to the nature of the *collective* unit.

It is hardly necessary to remind ourselves that practically all the arguments for collective norms of the good of man insist that their ultimate service is to the individual, but the actual good of the individual is given only symbolic or rhetorical attention. The real effort, in these systems, is to make the collective unit work smoothly, and if an individual seems to obstruct its operations or mar its harmony, he is held to be sick or inherently a "bad" part that must be reshaped or gotten rid of in one way or another.

The only collectivist argument which fails to give even symbolic attention to the good of the individual is the argument for the Communist system, under which the individual is allowed virtually no identity at all. This is sometimes explained as a neglect which is necessary during a great revolution and which must be extended into the post-revolutionary epoch when the foundations of a new society are being laid. In this view, individual good seems to be regarded as a limited value which may possibly be realized in the distant future, after the species has learned the basic lessons of collective good, and when there is no longer a likelihood of spontaneous mutation by any individual into counter-revolutionary or other deviationist tendencies.

Why do we resist these collectivist definitions of the good? Basically, we resist them because they interfere with our humanity or what we say is our humanity. We resist them because they interfere with our freedom or what we say is our freedom. Some men, we are obliged to admit, resist them for bad reasons or for fraudulent reasons, while others object on the solid grounds of human individuality. The justifiable conclusion is that resistance to collectivist norms of human good is sound, but often confused. The confusion is illustrated by the expedient political rhetoric which is heard when a spokesman for the "American Way of Life" declares that he can see an ally in a manifestly fascist social system, hoping to strengthen the military and diplomatic front against the collectivist norm of Communism. This happened in 1957 when, after visiting with General Franco in Spain, U.S. Secretary of State Dulles announced that Franco was a true representative of the "Free World."

The best and most articulate criticism of collectivist norms comes from artists, writers, and educators. On the whole their objection has an intuitive origin. That is, they sense more acutely than others the confinement of individuality by the norms of collectivism, and they feel it sooner, before the pressure becomes great enough to arouse the population in general. Bernard Rosenberg's *Liberation* article (quoted in last week's Review) is a good example of the angry resistance of an intelligent man to the collectivist norms found in American liberal arts colleges and in corporate enterprise. What do these norms offend against? Mr. Rosenberg doesn't exactly say, in a positive way, but he would probably be glad to adopt Jacques Barzun's criterion of the good, so far as intellectual activity is concerned. According to Barzun, the virtues which make the intellect what it is are unity, concentration, communicativeness, and knowledge of itself. Mr. Rosenberg was prevented from practicing these virtues in his teaching job in an American college and in his research job with an American corporation.

In short, when given full power of decision, systems founded on collective norms frustrate human intelligence and stultify creative expression.

But what can we say about the human individual, in order to make more explicit the elements which should shape the norm of individual human good? We don't have so very much information about individual good, as contrasted with the great stores of data that have been assembled concerning collectivist doctrines of the good and about collectivist societies.

For information about the human individual, we have three conventional sources: philosophy, political theory, and medicine. We could add theology to these three, but theology is very little more than philosophy which has been compromised by a merger with some particular collectivist argument, so that it had better be left out. The point of looking to these sources is not to look up an "authority" on what a human being is, but to examine what has already been said, in order, if possible, to amplify and perhaps give order to our primary intuitions on the question.

Philosophy is a constant resource. The Platonic tradition declares that man is a self-moving unit, as distinguished from other units, such as units of matter, which are moved from

without. Descartes proposed that man is a *thinking* unit *(Cogito, ergo* sum) . Leibniz revived from Neoplatonic thought the idea of the *Monad* as a unit of consciousness, man being, in this view, a self-aware monad.

These brief statements, while helpful only as starting-points, may suffice as the contribution of philosophy. They are chosen for their manifest consistency with the intuitive ideas of those who revolt against collectivist norms.

Political thought is not of great help except at a similar primary level. The American political tradition establishes the conception of individual freedom but (properly) leaves its ends—life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness—undefined.

For the third source, medicine, we might have substituted psychology, but since psychology enters into practical and functional relationship with the good of man only in medicine, this seemed the better term. Medicine gives attention to human ills at two levels—body and mind. Medical study of the body is predominantly study of the body as a thing in itself. That is, while the relationships of the body with its environment are an obvious part of medical concern, including nourishment, sanitation, and the entire field of preventive practice, the body and its proper function are the main objects of study. This is not the case with the mind and the emotions. Far more than the body, the *psyche* is defined in terms of its relationships. Nobody is ready, as yet, to offer much of a definition of what the *psyche* is, in itself. And for the most part, what we know about the psyche is stated in the terms of psychopathology, the data being drawn from the casebooks of psychiatric and psychoanalytical practice.

We are obliged to say, therefore, that medicine is not ready to supplement the brief utterances of philosophy concerning what man is. So far, it is helpful only in regard to what he *does*, how he behaves. Psychological medicine remains vague in relation to the question of how he ought to behave, except for behavior which falls into the categories of manifest ill-health, such as neurosis and psychosis. In fact, practitioners of psychological medicine would probably become indignant if they were challenged to tell us exactly what man is. We can, they would say, recognize the symptoms of obvious malfunction, but we are not priests. Our job, they might add, is only to try to help keep human beings able to think for themselves, so that *they* can decide who and what they are, and where they want to go.

This seems a reasonable position, yet our problems are not especially diminished by such psychiatric common sense. One way of stating a major problem which remains is by a comparison of physical with psychological medicine.

In dealing with the body, the physician seldom has to do without some kind of pain as a symptom of the disorder he is trying to locate and correct. It is fair to say that pain is an infallible evidence of physical disturbance or malfunction. But is this true in psychological medicine?

If a man has a physical pain, he goes to the doctor for help. The doctor diagnoses the ill and endeavors to remove the cause of the pain. If he does so, the patient is said to be cured.

A man with a psychological pain or disorder may not feel obliged to go for help to a practitioner of psychological medicine, but he is likely to seek a diagnosis somewhere.

And now we are landed in the middle of nowhere, so far as actual certainty about the diagnosis is concerned. All human beings feel psychological pain. All human beings seek release from their psychological pain. But what causes the pain?

We could break off the discussion here and point out that with this question we have reached the beginning of Buddhist philosophy, suggesting that no more need be said. The cause of pain is the first proposition of Buddhist teaching; its cure, the elimination or control of desire.

But for modern man, at least, this would be gross oversimplification. Even if true, the

proposition is over-simplified. Even if we remind ourselves of the report that Freud regarded Buddha with the greatest of admiration from the psychological viewpoint, we must still go over the ground for ourselves.

Between the time of Buddha and our own time stands the searching psychoanalytical criticism of the theological explanation of human suffering, and while Buddhism seems to avoid the major objections to most of the defects of theology, too much is involved in this criticism for it to be easily set aside.

Let us take Brock Chisholm as spokesman for psychological medicine, since he has been more outspoken than most of his colleagues, and since his eminence in the field is unquestioned. In a paper concerned with the foundations of world peace from the psychiatric viewpoint (his William A. White Memorial Lecture), Dr. Chisholm asks:

> Can we identify the reasons why we fight wars, or even enough of them to perceive a pattern? Many of them are easy to list—prejudice, isolationism, the ability emotionally and uncritically to believe unreasonable things, excessive desire for material or power, excessive fear of others, vengeance, ability to avoid seeing and facing unpleasant facts and taking appropriate action. These . . . are all well known and recognized neurotic symptoms. . . . Even self-defence may involve a neurotic reaction when it means defending one's excessive material wealth from others who are in great need. . . .
>
> All psychiatrists know where these symptoms come from. The burden of inferiority, guilt, and fear we have all carried lies at the root of this failure to mature successfully. Psychotherapy is predominantly, by any of a variety of methods, the reduction of the weight of this load. Therefore the question we must ask ourselves is why the human race is so loaded down with these incubi and what can be done about it.

Dr. Chisholm has no doubt about the explanation:

> What basic psychological distortion can be found in every civilization of which we know anything? . . . The only lowest common denominator of all civilizations and the only psychological force capable of producing these perversions is morality, the concept of right and wrong, the poison long ago described and warned against as "the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil."

Dr. Chisholm soon makes plain that he is against "morality" primarily because of the psychological burden the idea of "sin" places upon human beings:

> We have been very slow . . . to recognize the unnecessary and artificially imposed inferiority, guilt and fear, commonly known as sin, under which we have all labored and which produces so much of the social maladjustment and unhappiness in the world. For many generations we have bowed our necks to the yoke of the conviction of sin. We have swallowed all manner of poisonous certainties fed us by our parents, our Sunday and day school teachers, our politicians, our priests, our newspapers, and others with a vested interest in controlling us.

Now comes the longest sentence in Dr. Chisholm's essay, loaded with all his feeling of conviction:

> Misguided by authoritarian dogma, bound by exclusive faith, stunted by inculcated loyalty, torn by frantic heresy, bedevilled by insistent schism, drugged by ecstatic experience, confused by conflicting certainty, bewildered by invented mystery, and loaded down by a weight of guilt and fear engendered by its own original premises, the unfortunate human race, deprived by its incubi of its only defenses and its only reason for striving, its reasoning power and its natural capacity to enjoy the satisfaction of-its natural urges, struggles along under its ghastly self-imposed burden. The results, the inevitable results, are frustration, inferiority, neurosis and inability to enjoy living, to reason clearly or to make a world fit to live in.

Since this question is so fundamental, we may as well go the whole way with Dr. Chisholm and quote another article in which he becomes even more specific. In a paper printed in *Science* for Jan. 14, 1949, he wrote:

> It may be claimed that all that is needed is the universal application of the ancient injunction to "love thy neighbor as thyself," which derives from the deep gregarious instinct of man and has been promulgated by most of the great religions. . . . The catch in this old and widely supported injunction is in the last two words. . . . very few people indeed can love themselves in a healthy natural way which tolerantly accepts all their own human urges as

> normal and inevitable aspects of the healthy functioning of man or woman. Most of us, by being civilized too early or too forcibly, have been driven to believe that our natural human urges are "bad," "not nice," "wicked," "sinful," or whatever the local equivalent may be. This is the dreadfully damaging concept of "original sin," which really only states that babies are not born civilized according to the local customs of the natives.
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> . . . Unfortunately, this is not understood by most children; they have been convicted of sin, believe they are "bad," and consequently deeply despise, distrust and even hate themselves. The anxiety engendered motivates the projection of these feelings of despising, distrust and hate on to other people, the neighbors, though usually distinguishable from oneself by some recognizable difference of race, color, creed, economic status, and politics.
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> The consequent aggressive feelings against such people are experienced as virtuous. It appears that a system which imposes an early belief in one's natural state, with its consequent inferiority feelings and anxiety, must be harmful to inter-human relationships and to the ability of the human race to survive in the kind of a world this has become.

Well, what is Dr. Chisholm's position concerning psychological pain? Most of it, he obviously thinks, is avoidable and unnecessary. Most of it, in his view, comes from twisted, moralistic judgments about human nature and good and evil. His analysis is so forceful, his diagnosis so accurate, his passion so justified, that one hesitates to differ with him at all, or qualify what he says.

Perhaps the thing to do, first, is to propose that he would doubtless accept and even insist upon the value of *ethical* thinking, as distinguished from morals, or *mores.* But whatever he would accept, he is manifestly animated by a deep ethical concern, and on this basis makes his own emphatic judgments concerning what is evil in human customs and moralistic prejudices.

But the question that he does not discuss, and which we should like to look at, is the possibility of an entirely different sort of pain—a pain caused to the soul by the confinements of small-mindedness and short-term objectives. There is the pain typified by the ordeal of Jesus in Gethsemane, by the sufferings of Prometheus on Mount Caucasus, and by the somber, solitary hours that seem to be the portion of every man of vision. What about *this* pain?

There is the pain of creative labors, known to every person who has attempted original work. This pain, one might argue, ought to be regarded as *normal* for every human being who endeavors to embody the full spirit of human possibility.

As for pain which has a "moral" quality in the best sense of the term, surely Dr. Chisholm would not have us abandon this, along with perception of the contrast between good and evil. Is not absence of the moral sense an element in the precise definition of the psychopathic personality?

If, on the other hand, his diatribe be limited to *authoritarian* morality, one can easily agree. If the sense of conflict arising from moral ideas is between one's "natural human urges" and a Calvinist code of behavior, then the argument belongs to Dr. Chisholm, but if there should be the kind of pain which results from inward decision on the basis of values which the individual has himself adopted, through private search and struggle, then we would insist that this kind of "morality" is indispensable to human growth.

The problem of intelligent criticism in our time, then, turns on the capacity to throw out arbitrary, external moral authority, while retaining and fostering the inward moral sense. And when a man experiences psychological pain, he needs to ask himself what sort of pain it is, and not seek only to get rid of it. The pain may be a hang-over from yesterday's psychology of "sin," but it may also be the way chosen by his essential being to declare itself. And it may be the special moral problem of modern man to learn to distinguish between these two kinds of pain.

We need not accept the Hobson's choice of a perverted morality or no morality at all. Neither of these alternatives can be what is good for man.

REVIEW
INTELLIGENT "ANTI-COMMUNISM`'

WHAT WE MUST KNOW ABOUT COMMUNISM, by Harry and Bonaro Overstreet (Norton, 1958), is probably a book many MANAS readers will wish to read. For not a few subscribers, we suppose, together with the editors, tend to seek something favorable to say about unpopular causes. The Overstreets' attempt to define the dangers and errors of Communism certainly deserves a hearing, also, since there is always something in what they have to say. But the essential slant of the book, in our opinion, is "anti-communistic" in the conventional sense, and it therefore overlooks aspects of the ideological conflict which men like William O. Douglas and Cyrus Eaton bring into clear focus.

One basic criticism in *What We Must Know about Communism* seems sound enough. The *theory* of Communism, at least, has no patience with a *philosophical* conception around which the brotherhood of humanity might finally form. The Overstreets hold that all Communists have been consistent in one respect—that the only theory to which they are committed is one which sees economically based differences as irreconcilable:

> The divisive task which the Communists assign to *theory* is at a far remove from one of the basic tasks which we assign to our beliefs and principles—religious, political, legal, moral. While we expect these to move us to convinced action, we also expect them to civilize our "native cussedness": to nag at our consciences until we outgrow our unredeemed egoisms and provincialisms. We think of them, in brief, as overspanning a multitude of differences, disagreements, and mutual dislikes, and as obligating us to seek ways of living together in spite of these. The Communists do not credit any such use of theory. We, in turn, find it hard to credit their determined use of theory, *not to overspan or reconcile human differences, but to "prove" them irreconcilable.*

Throughout *What We Must Know about Communism,* this analysis is used to show that no one following the Communist line can ever attain what the authors elsewhere call "the mature mind." Much of this seems to us oversimplification, but then, it is also an oversimplification to ignore what the Overstreets say about the determining factors in Communist policy.

From one standpoint, the most useful part of the book is found in the Overstreets' account of Russian history just prior to the impact of Marxian theory. Much of Marx, as every scholar knows, deserves appreciation, and it is unfortunate that few respectable voices are ever raised to make this point. In discussing "the theory behind the Communist system," the Overstreets write:

> By Marx's day, capitalism had brought the production of material goods to a point where, for the first time in history, a decent standard of living for all began to seem within human reach, and it had bred a new type of worker. Exploited though he was, this worker did not look at his world with the eyes of serf or slave. He was beginning to see himself as possessed of rights; and himself and his fellow workers as possessed of power.
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> What capitalism had not done, however, was to prove that it could or would produce economic justice. The workers' every gain, it seemed, had to be won *not through the capitalistic order but in spite of those who controlled this order.* Thus, paradoxically, the vision of a better future was the product of a system which seemed stubbornly set against delivering this future. Under these circumstances, many persons began to look for an alternative system on which to focus their hopes.
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> *Enter, Karl Marx*—with what seemed like a creative fusion of humanitarianism and science. What Marx did, in effect, was to "prove" that while the going order could never rectify its own faults, its accomplishments need not be lost. These, with the dross all washed away in revolution, could be lifted up to a higher level where their intrinsic promise would be fulfilled.
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> Marx was a man consumed by what appeared to be humanitarian anger. Also, he was a man with a theory—*dialectical and historical materialism*—which seemed to bring all reality within one frame. This theory, for those who accepted it, both took the guesswork out of history—past, present, and future—and guaranteed a happy ending to earth's long story of injustice. Finally, Marx was a man with a revolutionary program—*scientific socialism*—in which, because it was "scientific," countless persons felt they could invest hope and effort to some clear end, with no danger of being let down.

But the Overstreets also derive from Marx and Engels, from Lenin and from Trotsky, an interpretation of Communist fulfillment which places one "class" in permanent dictatorial control; because the Communists are "under no moral compulsion to respect the rights or the lives of persons outside one favored class, they have been able to want total revolution in behalf of their total answer." On the other hand, it has seemed evident to a variety of non-Communist visitors to Russia that the old concept of class has been altered so extensively that the "proletariat" no longer exists. The Communist State is not, to be sure, a "classless society," but the new divisions of status among the populace answer more closely to a description furnished a few years ago by James Burnham in *The Managerial Revolution.* It is, in our opinion, an awareness of Soviet efficiency in "managing" which furnishes the clue to alterations in Soviet policy both at home and abroad. From this point of view, both Russia and the United States have largely passed beyond the stage where "classes" can be defined by economic reference—the last phase of class, curiously enough, appearing in the U.S., where the relationships between labor and capital are governed by political maneuvering on the part of representatives who are fairly equal in power. (We say "curiously," because the Overstreets maintain that the Communist system *depends* upon a concept of continual conflict between classes, and yet, at the present time, it is within our own economy that the "tensions" between labor and capital are made the basis of political debate.)

A paragraph in the chapter called "The Paradox of Legality" sets the stage for the Overstreets' belief that more effective means need to be devised for "curbing" Communist activity in the United States:

> The genius of the CPUSA has lain in its unique capacity to work for an illegal end by a variety of means many of which, taken separately, are within the letter of the law. To paraphrase a Marxian line of thinking, we might say that when enough of these lawful actions have been added up, a point is reached where *quantitative* change becomes *qualitative:* where the sum total of the lawful, viewed in the context of Party purposes and allegiances, becomes unlawful. Yet—and here is the paradox—there is often no precise statute under which it thus becomes unlawful. Thus, we find ourselves in a peculiar position: either, it appears, we have to let that which is illegal in its purposes and effects, but not in its immediate form, continue unrestrained; or else we have to run the risk that, by restraining it, we will curb the legitimate exercise of freedom as well as its illegitimate exploitation.

Subsequently, the authors discuss the differences of opinion represented by J. Edgar Hoover and Senator Hubert H. Humphrey. Hoover, according to the Overstreets, "has been careful not to step out of his own province to trespass upon that of policy-making." This is proposed in the face of incontrovertible evidence that Hoover has used every means at his disposal to weaken confidence in Supreme Court decisions outlawing extra-legal tactics employed by the FBI and the Un-American Activities Committee in an effort to "get at" known Communists. Both Hoover and Humphrey—Humphrey is author of the Communist Control Act—are regarded by the Overstreets as "two good men and true"—an estimate which seems to us most strange and inconsistent on the part of authors who repeatedly proclaim that our democracy depends upon "respect for the integrity and uniqueness of the individual; the right to enact friendliness and compassion broadly and spontaneously."

However, there are many thousands of American citizens whose views of Communism might be improved by the Overstreets' book. But any such consummation will, in our opinion, need to be superseded by apprehension of subtleties which the Overstreets neglect. While *What We Must Know about Communism* at times allows us to see the "Communist," whether past or present, as a human being like ourselves, the dominant impression is that his ideology renders him impervious to ethical value and permanently so. This sweepingly negative appraisal seems rather close to what the Overstreets themselves consider to be a deplorable misconception in Communist thought.

COMMENTARY
"BALANCE OF POWER"

OURS is obviously a mixed-up world, inhabited by mixed-up people. This is the only conclusion that seemed possible after a couple of hours spent reading a batch of clippings, mostly from the New York *Times.*

One story is about a new "Elixir of Youth," already possessed, but apparently not much in use, by human beings, that has been discovered by Dr. Carroll M. Williams, Harvard zoologist. (*Times,* Feb. 7.) The headline is a bit extravagant, although it is clear that by injecting into the pupa state of insects a hormone extracted from the thymus gland of rats and other mammals, the insects are made to live longer. The thymus gland, according to the *Times,* is a mysterious organ which is active during youth and especially at puberty. Later it shrivels and may disappear with age. The function in man of the life-prolonging substance, called by doctors "the Peter Pan hormone," is unknown. Dr. Williams wonders whether it has a role in "mammalian physiology," or is only a "biochemical curiosity."

Next in the pile was a *Herald Tribune* story (May 7), also reporting research at Harvard, but of grimmer content. The first paragraph:

> The anti-germ drugs—sulfanilamide, penicillin, streptomycin and other antibiotics—have opened a new Pandora's box of infections, while laying low some of mankind's killer germs.

Since 1941—the beginning of the antibiotic era—old germs have been arising with new destructive power and assaulting their human hosts, the report continues. These ancient agents of disease are called E Coli, pseudomona, proteus, and aerobacter, which once lived harmlessly in the bowels and other organs. Normally simple scavengers which effect the decay of dead matter, "they now cause increasing numbers of deaths, in contrast to 1935, when fatalities from them were almost unknown." The announcement of this trend in infectious disease comes from Dr. Maxwell Finland of the Harvard Medical School who, with colleagues, has been studying the incidence of infection among some 10,000 patients at the Boston Hospital. Following is the explanation to which he inclines:

> . . . the quiet germs which live in our organs may have been held in check by substances secreted by the killers, like streptococcus and pneumococcus. With the latter destroyed by antibiotics, the natural barriers to these so-called "sewage germs" have been broken.

Now, he thinks, we shall have to find stronger antibiotics to control the old germs with their new power. It is the familiar issue of "balance of power," appearing as a problem in medicine. "Massive retaliation" seems to be the solution sought, in medicine as in politics. But in medicine, as in politics, some of the most highly recommended "deterrents" don't work for very long. Today, Dr. Finland says, staphylococcus germs, which were once slowed down by antibiotics, "are killing more people than ever before."

Skipping to politics, one learns that in Tallahassee, Florida's Senate Education Committee recently cleared a bill to prevent schoolchildren from being "brainwashed" by books about Communism or by Communist authors. (New York *Times,* May 1.) This bill would prohibit the use in the schools of any book written by Communists, ex-Communists, or people who won't say whether they are or have been Communists, or people who write favorably about such subjects as one-world government or world citizenship. They're really alert down there in Florida!

Meanwhile, the president of backward Michigan's state university, Dr. Harlan H. Hatcher, who is visiting in—of all places—Moscow, told a *Times* reporter that the people in Washington had better recognize that Stalin and his era are dead. "Soviet society is moving at a much faster rate than is generally realized either here or abroad," he said. He said further that

"Education is the motivating and guiding force in this evolution," and that he thought "the direction of this movement is going to surprise everyone."

Then, just to add to the confusion, at least in Tallahassee if not in Washington, there is the speech of Field Marshal Viscount Montgomery *(Times,* May 17), who thinks that the West is in no danger from Soviet Russia. In his words:

> It's a curious situation. Two blocs, East and West, each thinking the other intends to attack them at any moment. And the plain truth is that neither side has any intention of attacking the other. . . .
>
> Hitherto the West has worked on the assumption that it is not really possible to resolve the present deadlock in the Eastern bloc, and that it many end in a nuclear war—for which we must prepare. But are we quite sure about this? Is there a gleam of hope anywhere? If so, let us look for it, and having found it, exploit it. . . .

Field Marshal Montgomery doesn't expect the "cold war" to dissolve, but to continue for a long time. But he sees no reason for nuclear struggle; and, meanwhile, we might make the cold war less turbulent by trading with the Russians, and even making friends with them.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves
NOTES AND QUOTATIONS

DRAMA FOR DISCUSSION, an announcement issued by the Pasadena Community Playhouse in conjunction with the Pasadena Liberal Arts Center, suggests a kind of education which might be applied at every level of learning. The Liberal Arts Center started "Drama for Discussion" as an experiment, with ninety-three men and women taking part. An eleven-week program combines playreading, theatre-going and discussion. Those who signed up for the series read five plays—by such playwrights as Tennessee Williams, George B. Shaw, Sherwood Anderson, Robert Sherwood, and Luigi Pirandello. After the members read a play they meet in discussion forums of not more than twenty to discuss it and then see the play itself the following week.

As a participant in some "Great-Books" type discussion groups, we recall that often it was the "literary" material which occasioned the most impassioned exchanges. A playwright or novelist provides rich material for discussion of the values represented by his characters. Since there is no one, unalterably "correct" interpretation of the behavior of any given protagonist, the idea of Authority in discussion-leading is virtually nonexistent. The discussion leader is to be judged not by his capacity to persuade others to accept his own views, however excellent, but by his skill in evoking varying opinions.

Very little formal background is necessary to enable an interested person to defend his "feelings" about a certain character, and matters of ethics, philosophy, and religion enter, as they should—distilled and then reflected by the unique outlook of each participant. One discussion group concerned with contemporary fiction discovered that a reading and comparing of opinions on Steinbeck's little-known play-novel, *Burning Bright*, and his huge novel, *East of Eden*, stimulated those present in a manner which no college course in ethics is apt to manage.

We have been wondering if our schools, from first grade to the graduate divisions of university, might not derive great benefit from this method of encouraging self-instruction. Generally speaking, young persons learn the most when they are enough emotionally involved in the subject to make their attention intense and complete. Even the youngest of children is apt to have some "special" interpretation of the characters in the books he reads—see them in symbolic light and on a different plane from that of a brother or sister or schoolmate.

Formal learning far too easily classifies opinions and pronounces group judgment, and we have statistical evidence to show that this trend can be a dangerous one. A few years ago a survey revealed that forty-one per cent of American high school students were in favor of cancelling freedom of the press, and another thirty-three per cent favored denial of freedom of speech to "certain people" who espouse unpopular views. Thirty-five per cent believed that the greatest threat to American democracy comes from foreign groups and ideas, and thirty-seven per cent thought that all foreigners should be kept out of the United States! This tragic revelation indicates that impassioned discussion among the peers of an age-group is almost nonexistent, so that one of the most important tasks of the teacher in contemporary society should be to arouse interest in exchanging widely differing views. Any method which sets the stage for perceiving that every opinion can be improved by association with contrasting points of view is worth-while.

So we are all for the discussion of works of fiction and plays, in schools and out of them. Here, too, the "stage" is easily set in the home for just this sort of mutually educative pleasure.

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"Pampering Versus Neglect," an article written for the International Federation of

Business and Professional Women by the MANAS South African correspondent, emphasizes a point often made in these columns. For her text, Mrs. van den Bos chooses lines from Lica Sergio:

> Rights do not make men free. Responsibility is what makes them free, because it gives them the right to choose.

We doubt if anyone would attempt to twist this expression into politically controversial doctrine, for the sense of responsibility intended is clearly that which makes it possible for each man to govern himself. A context of enforced responsibility for children, moreover, is something very different from the extensive obligations demanded by a totalitarian government. On the other hand, Mrs. van den Bos feels that the West is guilty of failure in education for responsibility. She focusses attention on the common tendency to indulge children during their early years:

> The result of analysis covering a number of years has constantly taken me to the same starting point: education. I do not merely mean school education; no, actually education starts in the cradle and ends only when we pass away. Education is the training of the child to stand spiritually, mentally and economically on his own two feet, and after the schooldays are over, it is up to the adult himself to continue that education in order to remain on his own two feet.
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> It is not an easy task, especially not in this world of rapid changes, but it is time that we wake up to the fact that all is not well. Many homes are not havens any more, many parents do not know what is going on in the minds of their children, while the children seek strength in the group or the gang. Parents try to put the responsibility on the shoulders of the teachers, while teachers in their zeal to give more stability are inclined to set their standards of learning constantly lower. There is a tendency to present the child as an individual made of a delicate material; one must not be too harsh, he has to develop in his own, sweet way, beware of complexes, don't give him homework—he is too tired after a day at school, etc. etc. Quite young he is provided with a liberal amount of pocket-money, gets the use of the family car at the earliest opportunity.
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> There was a time when we shuddered when we read about the deprived children of the poor. Welfare organizations were established, many children taken away from undesirable homes and put in the care of foster parents.
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> Today the same phenomenon can be observed in homes of the not so badly off; even the well to do. On the one hand the pampering which does not bring the child any nearer to the ultimate goal, on the other hand the open neglect. Babies left in the care of strangers, bigger children finding their father and mother too tired or too indifferent to listen to the story of their day's happenings.
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> I have no qualms in accusing of neglect a large number of parents and other grown-ups who deal with youngsters, and in labelling the pampering as conscience money. They are the cause that the child grows up without discipline, not aware of good and bad, weak-kneed, not able to cope with the complexities of the modern world.

Mrs. van den Bos concludes by saying something that has been repeated many times, but always with justification: "We have to adjust ourselves and our methods of education now, this very moment, to the demands the future will make on us. Do not let us blame our children for having lost their bearings, rather blame ourselves for not having anticipated their actual needs. No one person can safeguard the stability, the security of the whole world, but each one of us can, through love and understanding, make our own domain into a place where the troubled mind finds a ready ear, where advice for self-help can be procured."

FRONTIERS
Ordeal of War

IT is always a problem, for people who would like to see war abolished, to have to admit that war often seems to represent a basic category of human experience. Much of great literature is concerned with war. Much, also, of great religious symbolism—as, for example, in the *Mahabharata*, the epic and scriptural classic of ancient India which contains the *Bhagavad-Gita*.

It is not that, having made this acknowledgement, one is obliged to reconcile himself to going to war. The point is rather that it is necessary to understand—or try to understand—why war seems to bring into focus the drama of human life for so many people. There is of course the other side of the argument, growing out of the fact that, for the modern conscript soldier, life in a military organization is very often a pleasant release from responsibility and from the perplexities of coping with our society. It also affords opportunity for full play of brutish feelings—which in war contribute a large part of the military *ethos*—while a man who submits to the assumptions of the military system is able to gain a sense of "participation" in an important activity simply by doing what he is told.

But these are really side issues. The meaning of war, in the classical sense, is in its requirement of ultimate physical sacrifice for an ultimate physical goal. Something of this content is present in *The Enemy*, by Wirt Williams, a World-War-II novel about the crew of an American destroyer despatched to the North Atlantic to hunt German submarines that were sinking too many allied merchant ships and vessels in convoy. Life on a destroyer reproduces some of the elements of single combat. It is team against team, instead of a struggle between individuals, but the teams, by comparison with other military units, are small, and the interdependence of all the members makes each man's role a vital one.

Much of the Williams book is just good story, but there are times when the author seems to capture all the agony, pain, and heroism, as well as the fear, which shape the lives of these men. A single voyage is described. The *Dee* spends two months at sea looking for submarines. The men on the *Dee* never *see* one, and it is not until almost the end of the hunt that they finally encounter the Enemy, who even then remains unseen. They are struck, but not mortally, by a torpedo, and drop their depth charges. Then they go home. During the hunt, under the pressures of the pursuit, and of becoming themselves the hunted, the men show what they are made of. Some of them die. One man loses his mind from fright and in the midst of the battle hides in the depth charge locker, whimpering like a child.

All that the men of the *Dee* knew about what happened to the submarine was from a patch of oil which came to the surface, faintly brown, fifty yards wide. At the end of the book, the officer who tells the story says:

We had steamed fifteen thousand miles in the hunt. We had hunted through four million square miles of ocean. We had been at sea for almost two months. And that tiny, ragged, brown patch of smooth water, now lost in the tossing whitecaps, was all we had to show for it.

> *That was all. Or nearly all. The "Dee" went into Reykjavik for emergency repairs and rejoined the task unit, which hunted until the big convoy, the one it had been protecting, the one that was essential to an invasion, somewhere, later in the year, reached the United Kingdom. The convoy arrived, and we, never having seen it, started home.*
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> *Nor had we ever seen the enemy. We had steamed twenty thousand miles hunting Them, we had bloodied Them and They us, and we had never seen Them. There seemed no real victory and no real defeat. If either had won anything, we had, because the convoy had made it.*
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> *But you felt there was no clear winning. And it seemed natural and inevitable that there was no clear winning just as it seemed, somehow, natural and inevitable that we had never seen Them.*

> *Because you never really saw your own Enemy, and you never clearly beat Him. You hunted Him, and you fought Him, and if you were lucky enough and tough enough, you survived. If you were unlucky, like little Ski, you got blown overboard, or if you were soft, like Crandall, you tried to dive back into the womb. If you were neither of those things but were instead very lucky, you went back to New York and you Shacked Up. Wherever your New York was. And whatever your Shack-Up might be. Wherever and whatever, it was only for a time. In the end, you always had to go out again.*

What becomes plain, in this book, is that the conditions of war create an extreme situation in which men either become stronger or weaker. They are also dirtied by the experience, since there is very little of itself good about war. But it is inevitably a trial of manhood when the men are in a measure "on their own," as they were in the *Dee*.

The *Dee's* hunt is perhaps a type of the human struggle for the reason that the enemy is anonymous, as it is in life. The enemy is always anonymous in any struggle that matters, since we are really working out something inside ourselves. If this one is not the enemy, then that one will serve; and he is having his private struggle, too, quite unrelated, it may be, to ours.

William James had a great idea in his essay, *A Moral Equivalent of War*. We suspect, however, that there can be no socially devised equivalent, no artificial ordeal. The moral equivalent must be discovered by each man for himself, and when this happens, the great war of the *Mahabharata* begins at another level of being than the physical—a place of struggle where no man need hurt another as the price of his moral development.