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THE AGE OF DIAGNOSIS

THE gross symptoms of the ills of the twentieth century have included wars, depressions, and a radical increase in degenerative disease and psychological disorders. Until about thirty years ago, the criticisms of modern civilization were commonly technical; that is, it was assumed that any noticeable trouble could be adjusted by applying some specific remedy. The economists proposed programs to correct for the business cycle; physicians looked for specific cures of infectious diseases, and mental ills were largely regarded as arising from some neurological defect.

A change in the mood of criticism began about 1930, with Alexis Carrel's *Man the Unknown.* This was a book about human *attitudes.* It was a philosophical criticism of medicine and, of course, of modern culture, since the thinking of doctors about the cause and cure of illness can hardly be separated from the prevailing views of the twentieth century. While the great wave of what we may call the new "general diagnosis" of human ills did not begin to make itself felt until after World War II, Carrel's work was a forerunner of the later trend, perhaps because the troubles of the body supply a kind of isolated "case study" of disorders which do not produce clearly defined symptoms in other regions of human experience.

By the end of the war, however, it began to be plain that specific criticisms, while no doubt necessary, were much less important than a review of the general human condition. The dropping of the atom bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki released a torrent of moral judgments which had long been accumulating in the minds of thoughtful men who, you could say, were lying in wait for an opportunity to be heard. Dwight Macdonald's *Politics* printed a series of discussions on the Bomb and its implications which confirmed the new level of political criticism established by this magazine. Before the test shots were exploded over the Bikini Atoll, Lewis Mumford wrote his epoch-making piece for the *Saturday Review* (March 2, 1946), "Gentlemen: You Are Mad!"—an article which is justly called "epoch-making" since it staked out the position of civilized and humane men beyond the pale of the conventional policies and statecraft of modern nations. We print again a paragraph of what Mumford wrote in 1946, so that there will be no mistake as to the meaning of this position:

> The power that the madmen hold is power of an order that the sane alone know that they are not sane enough to use. But the madmen do not want us to know that this power is too absolute, too godlike, to be placed in any human hands: for madmen candle the infernal machine jauntily in their laps and their hands eagerly tremble to push the button. They smile at us, these madmen: they pose for fresh photographs, still smiling: they say, being madmen, "We are as optimistic as ever," and their insane grin is prophetic of the catastrophe that awaits us. . . . Their every act is an act of madness. . . . One mad act has led to a second mad act, the second to a third: and the end will be a morbid compulsion to achieve the last irretrievable act of world-madness—in the interests of security, peace, and truth.

Once the leading authority on culture in the United States—a man whose books, such as *Technics and Civilization* and *The Culture of Cities*, were often used as texts in schools and colleges—Mumford is now a somewhat lonely figure, but he is still read, and if his readers are fewer in number, they count for more, these days, because they are people who are learning to stand alone.

If you wanted to offer a ruthless judgment, you could say that declarations of the sort Mumford makes separate the men from the boys, and among men the immoral from the moral. The "boys," in this case, include all those who feel unable to make any sort of important judgment of

the acts of governmental authority, while the immoral among grown men are those who endorse the horror of nuclear war without any serious reflection or weighing of values.

What we are getting at is that the new spirit of criticism in the Age of Diagnosis has its origin in the aroused moral and philosophical nature of modern man. The new diagnoses are heard from people who have taken a step—several steps—beyond the limits of conventional thinking and now stand, with their numbers daily increasing, as judges of the time. Whether they discuss the prevailing attitudes or only certain odious consequences of those attitudes, the judgments remain moral at root. Dozens of books could be mentioned, but for a sampling of critical works of different sorts we might name Roderick Seidenberg's *Posthistoric Man*, Freidrich Juenger's *The Failure of Technology*, Erich Kahler's *The Tower and the Abyss*, and Lyman Bryson's *The Next America*, and all the recent books by Lewis Mumford.

Objection to mechanization and commercialism goes back, of course, to the time of William Morris and probably earlier. Eric Gill was another artist who began his campaign against the dehumanizing effects of machine culture early in the twentieth century, while Edward J. O'Brien's *The Dance of the Machines* was a stirring cry against industrialism and its consequences. Ralph Borsodi's *This Ugly Civilization* ought also to be mentioned as a forerunner of the criticism which has now become the rule instead of the exception. The current set going by these books found a natural counterpart, despite some differences, in the work of Gandhi, and since World War II with its nihilist's finish by the atom bomb, there has been a tendency for all these influences to grow together into a single viewpoint, largely pacifist, but also cultural and humanist—a viewpoint expressive of vast indignation and revulsion, which finds outlets at many levels of human thought. The central common judgment is to the effect that the basic values and attitudes of modern civilization are at fault. In criticism of scientific thinking, this view emerges as an attack on Scientism and the pretensions of scientific "objectivity." In politics it comes in various manifestoes of Existentialist thinkers. In psychology, writers like Erich Fromm, A. H. Maslow, and David Riesman represent the new spirit, with a strongly positive note of similar import coming from the Viennese psychiatrist, Viktor Frankl. Another specialty, nutrition, has made some dramatic contributions to the general diagnosis. Rooted in the work of men who began questioning the common diet of civilized peoples twenty-five and thirty years ago, the movement for reform in nutrition has spread out to include the organic gardeners, the health food enthusiasts, and the reformers who write books exposing the poisons and adulterants which are often present in mass-produced foods. When what we eat reaches us from the assembly lines of the food-processers, the devitalized flour, the refined sugar, and the unhealthful preservatives may have rendered it practically unfit for human consumption, and while discussing these commercial expedients represents a practical rather than a philosophical issue, the question of *why* supposedly responsible merchants and industrialists insist on their "right" to treat food products in this way is obviously a moral problem.

An invitation to review for the *New Yorker* (Oct. 8, 1960) some books on the history of technology gave Lewis Mumford opportunity to make some summarizing comments on the entire development of technology and also to draw a contrast between the customary naive chronicle of "modern progress" and the new spirit of diagnosis, of which he is himself a pioneer. Warming to the subject, he takes H. G. Wells as a type of the champion of "the old Victorian optimism"—the expectation of a "world set free" by the progressive application of scientific technology to a properly responsive human population, which would somehow shed the weaknesses which often made the pre-scientific world a fairly unpleasant place. Mumford reminds us that—

> . . . he [Wells] looked forward to the emergence of a new race of technocrats, dedicated airmen, ready to redeem a savage, half-destroyed world to law, order, and scientific intelligence. (Ironically, it is these same highly intelligent, scientifically trained, rigorously disciplined, globe-minded airmen who have prepared the new strategy of total extermination, a strategy by which a whole continent can be poisoned, blasted or incinerated in a "war" that might be started by an electronic accident or a neurotic hallucination and could end with the permanent mutilation, if not the early demise, of the human race.)

Wells was a good choice, since he was one who finally had second thoughts about his "Victorian optimism":

> Yet, just before Wells' death, the sleeper—that is, Wells himself—awoke, for he came to the end of his life with the dismal realization (was it senile despair, prophetic illumination?) that the whole technological process he had interpreted with such eager hope for the future was completely out of hand and that "mind was at the end of its tether." Those who still retained Wells' earlier views turned away from this conclusion with embarrassment, as from the gibberish of a dying man. Yet in view of the stereotyped reactions, the implacable compulsions exhibited by the leaders of government, science and technics today, unable to conceive alternatives for the course they are following or to slow down the speed of their movement as they approach a very visible precipice, one wonders whether Wells in his decay did not perhaps have a maturer understanding than he had attained when all his faculties were intact.

Impressive argument to this conclusion follows, but there is too much to quote. Getting on to other points, Mr. Mumford reports that one of the works under review—the last volume of the Oxford five-volume set, A *History of Technology*—together with earlier volumes in the series is written in an almost Victorian spirit, a "combination of complacency, naïveté, and historical superficiality—as if the writers belonged to the period that came to an end, like this history, in 1900." There is no sense of "social matrix," no search for an emerging pattern. While grateful for the excellent assemblage of facts in the Oxford history of technology, Mumford comments:

> What is more, the thinkers who were concerned with the relation of technics to other human concerns—Saint-Simon Comte, Marx, Le Play, Bucher, Veblen, Weber, Geddes—are not mentioned, even in the index of the final volume. This is British empiricism at its lamest. The great dictum of the French mining engineer and economist Frederic Le Play—that the most important product that comes out of the mine is the miner—was lost on the editors, who have paid no attention to the interplay of technics with the worker, with the larger community, and with the impinging natural environment.

In a few brilliant paragraphs, Mr. Mumford fills in some of these omissions. It is the thesis of J. B. Priestley in *Literature and Western Man* that the industrial revolution drove the artist from the center to the periphery of modern society, alienating him from its socio-economic processes by the sheer ugliness and inhumanity of the methods which were employed. Mumford extends this analysis by rejecting the term "revolution" as unsuitable in this connection:

> . . . if the present history demonstrates anything, it demonstrates the fallacy of this term {revolution}. If there was a revolution, it began long before the eighteenth century, and the facts of continuity, accumulation, and cultural preparation are important for what followed. No invention of the eighteenth century was as revolutionary as the mechanical clock of the thirteenth century, the model for all later automata, or even as revolutionary as the printing press, that paragon of mass production, utilizing standardized, interchangeable parts. What made the eighteenth century loom so large was an ideological rather than a technological transformation, for it was then that the machine began to be treated not as an auxiliary to human purpose but as an adequate substitute for purpose. Under this new religion, to serve the machine became the whole duty of man.

We should pause here to note that Mr. Mumford's approving quotation from Le Play is considerably more than an expression of paternalistic regard for "the miners," or "the workers," generally. His stance is different from that of the critics who argue—somewhat piously and ineffectively—that industry must learn to live with a little "inefficiency" in order to give the workers more opportunity to be human beings.

The point is rather that the industrialists—the owners, managers, and executives—as well as labor and consumers, in fact, the entire chain of participators in modern technology, are all victims of the process.

The workers have a bad time of it, but the rest are in just as much trouble, since they live under and even approve the moral climate which brought the industrial system into being. Mumford's criticism is not a "social reform" criticism, but a frontal attack on the all-but-universal worship of *power.* The power mythology of our world, he says, systematically strangles every good impulse and stamps to death the seeds of constructive change before they can take root. "The priests of this strange religion," he adds, "go about their dehumanizing tasks with the same inflexible dedication that the Aztec priests applied to disembowelling and flaying en masse their living victims. They are prepared to sacrifice the human race itself rather than to reestablish human control over the advances of technology."

Mr. Mumford has never been only a prophet of doom and in this article he has some sage counsels concerning what might be, developing at length how a constructively critical history of technology ought to be written, with a view to returning modern power resources to the service of mankind. Perhaps he will expand these thoughts into a book of his own. Here, however, he devotes most of his attention to diagnosis, taking his stand with the few who see and are able to say what is wrong with our age.

First, then, came the discovery and sense of ill. From the identification of particular problems or evils, and the attempt to meet them with particular remedies, we passed to the feeling of a general *malaise*—a feeling which, as it became more acute, began to be explained in general terms, in philosophical terms. Our account of our ills was less and less expressed in the vocabulary of science, and less in the language of politics. Gradually, we adopted the language of *values* to describe the crisis which seemed to be overtaking the human situation. That is, the individuals who may be thought of as leaders, as the seminal thinkers of our time, found themselves unable to avoid the language of value in discussing human problems. In general, they have described and are describing the human situation as one in which there is a dearth of idealism, of positive commitment, an impoverishment of courage and vision, and an almost overwhelming tendency toward mass decision on the basis of anxious self-interest and fear. These are big generalizations, and you might say that big generalizations are usually associated with hortatory and moralizing rhetoric. But the movement of the best in modern thought toward the decisive criterion of values is almost the opposite of this characterization. The fact is that the rediscovery of the crucial importance of values in human life has come as a result of the slow assimilation of stubborn facts by scores of workers in the sciences—mostly the psychological and social sciences—and by thoughtful men in the humanities, in education, and literature. The best of the specialists, in other words, have been obliged by their labors in their specialties to think more and more like non-specialized human beings—that is, philosophers—under pressure of the converging realities in contemporary human experience. For the contemporary human experience is now intense enough to force them to general conclusions about what is good and what is bad for human beings. This means, so far as we can see, that modern man is approaching something like a climactic peak in his experience—or, to say it in another way, he is slowly reaching a new plateau of perception, a level at which generalizations about value are inescapable.

This is of course a dangerous doctrine. It is dangerous, from the scientific point of view, for the reason that it seems to justify, or at least to hint at, scholarly or learned, if not scientific, support for particular claims regarding value, and this, after all, would turn professional men into crusaders and hot-gospellers. And then, we must

ask, what becomes of their blessed objectivity, their scientific dispassion, their non-participating capacity to look at all sides without emotional attachments?

This question was the right one to ask so long as the values that men commonly espoused were of a sort that could turn them into partisans for a particular social theory. But what if the values now emerging are of a sort that could not possibly be used to blow up the fires of hostility? What if the values themselves turn out to be a more intimate perception of the very rules upon which the ideal of "objectivity" was originally based?

And what, finally, if we find that the right of the specialist to be human within as well as outside his specialty is a right that cannot in decency be withheld from any man? You could even propose the possibility that the withholding of this right on theoretical grounds, in the name of science and scholarship, was precisely the act of betrayal which slowly turned the dynamics of modern culture into a vast partisanship *against* human value and human interest, leading to the situation which Lewis Mumford so movingly describes.

Well, suppose we adopt this view; there still remains the mournful reality that we have come only as far as diagnosis. We sit with our white tablets and our black conclusions and our depressing communications to one another. There is still the great agony of the world and the almost endless bewilderment of the people in the world—the people who are the victims of the failure of their weak or lagging values. What shall we do about *them?*

The old methods will not do. They will not do because they would mean a distortion and a betrayal of the new values—those profound dictates which tell us that a politically manipulated or a propaganda-persuaded man is not a *man,* but only the tool of other men, who are themselves less than men for their wish to shape the decisions of their fellows. Which tell us that something we may call self-discovery, for lack of a better term, is the basic fulfillment of human life, and that all lesser fulfillments, when sought and realized, finally lead us back to the hunger of a man's heart to know and to understand himself.

It seems apparent that what is needed is new forms of expression for these very ancient concepts of value, and unceasing emphasis of their importance in the terms of a common comprehension. How can this be accomplished? Only by general examination and discussion of, and reflection on these values, until a common speech for their meaning slowly develops and a new culture, informed by perception of their validity, envelopes the old and dying age that is so rapidly becoming our past.

REVIEW
THE HEIGHT OF THE TIMES

IN one of his books, Ortega y Gasset uses an expression, "the height of the times," to suggest the outlook of the exceptional men who achieve the full perspective and insight which their times permit. A man who lives at the height of his times is a man who, as an individual, and to the extent an individual can, fulfills the historical potential of his period.

We have a book, *The Pattern of the Future* (Routledge & Kegan Paul), by Alex Comfort, a British physician and writer, which seems an excellent example of the thought of a man who is living at the height of his times. It is not a new book, but is made up of four BBC talks given by Dr. Comfort back in 1949, yet what the author says relates so clearly to still prevailing questions that it is not dated at all; if anything, it is a tract for the future as well as the present.

The first talk, "Is Christianity True?", makes an evaluation of the status of Christian belief and its present-day role in human decision. The second talk concerns "The Values of Today." These papers present the view that the ethical ideas of Western man have moved from a Christian to a Humanist foundation.

The third talk examines the major problem of the age—the threat of Power—contrasting the popular remedy for the abuse of power, which is democracy, with a brief study of the actual workings of the democratic political process. The result of this comparison is hardly encouraging to those who place their faith in parliamentary self-government.

The fourth talk is entitled "The Way Ahead." One suspects that in these few pages Dr. Comfort has been able to hint at some of the essential ingredients of any possible humane and harmonious society of the future. His suggestions, in short, are aimed at avoiding the delusions and mistakes that have afflicted men and societies in the past, at the cost of immeasurable pain and suffering. At the conclusion of the book, he writes:

> We shall not apply our knowledge through the actionist fantasy of the XIXth century, the revolutions or the spectacular public acts. Nor, I think, are we likely to be able to apply it through the machinery of party politics. The whole system and orientation of political life, democratic as well as totalitarian, is too deeply involved in the patterns we wish to change. Least of all can we do it through a government of scientists, who are no more proof against corruption by office than anyone else, or through a World State, in which both the evils of centralisation and the competition to get power for power's sake would be magnified. How we shall apply it, I can't tell you. That is precisely what we have to find out. The growing points of social progress today are not in Westminster or Moscow, but in study and research, in individual and social psychiatry, in the creation of small experimental societies, ranging from the Jewish Kibbutzim to schools, colonies for delinquents, groups of neighbors: through public education, prosaic-looking activities such as child guidance: through the growth of ideas and attitudes. If this looks like a broom to keep back the Atlantic, I can only answer that it works, and revolutions don't. The point I particularly want to bring home to you is this. Science can take care of the research and development side, but, unlike research into typhoid or atomic structure, all of us, scientists and public, can and must participate as individuals if we are to succeed. If there were an epidemic, you would help the investigators by boiling your water. In the present situation, take the same precautions. We have got to inform ourselves—be in a position to answer the arguments which assume punishment, coercion, anti-sociality and power as necessary features of life by informing ourselves of the evidence. I can't give it you here. Most of us can read. We can find out for ourselves what is known about human conduct. And we have got to be willing to live, to disobey, to stick to our guns. Remember that *this* revolution, the revolution towards sociality, has no further side, when we can all relax, and doesn't depend on our paying our party subscription or coming out on strike in support of our leaders. It depends upon the relationships which we ourselves set up. It begins next time we read some hate-propaganda in the press, next time we are asked to support a delinquent policy, next time we have to decide how to bring up our children. This revolution is something no party or

government is going to do for you. You have to do it yourself, beginning tomorrow.

The very reluctance of Dr. Comfort to spell out in detail the steps which he thinks will lead in the right direction is good evidence of the soundness of his advice. Back of these counsels are the bitter lessons of the two world wars of the twentieth century; the breakdowns and failures of parliamentary democracy, such as are discussed with profound insight in the recent writings of Jayaprakash Narayan; the case histories and clinical experience of numberless psychotherapists, gathered during the first half of the century; and the multiple lessons of recent history, pointing to the ultimate futility of violence and coercion as means of altering constructively the patterns of human behavior.

Dr. Comfort continues in this concluding essay:

> Do you see that we have come full circle? We began by seeing man, the human race, accepting his dependence upon himself and his responsibility to his fellows—his freedom from the protection and the fatherly guidance of his past tradition, his adulthood. We end with ourselves, as individuals, faced with the certainty that so far as the study of society can guide us, we must rely upon ourselves, and cultivate our responsibility as individuals. The society we live in has its siren voices preaching responsibilities of other kinds. If you forget your humanity, and exchange its daily expression as a human being, to the human beings you know, for abstract loyalties, it is a matter of accident whether you find yourself in the end as bomber or victim, prisoner or guard. I want to thank all those who have written to me—I wish I could answer them all, though I can't. But I would like to say to those Christians who wrote me letters stressing the need for personal salvation, that I'm entirely with them. Personal salvation, a change of personal attitude, is precisely what we do need. It means something different from the religious experience which my correspondents have in mind, but it is a religious experience, even to the agnostic and the humanist, if by religion we mean the deeper moral levels of human awareness. . . .

If we were to extract from these four BBC talks what seem to be Dr. Comfort's "first principles," which he proposes as common to all men, they would be Love, Truth, and Integrity in individual decision. Speaking of the Humanist values of modern man (he has already shown a clear continuity between pre-Christian, Christian, and post-Christian Humanist values), he says:

> We cannot pass this question off lightly by saying something facile about the greatest good for the greatest number: if we say that, we can properly be asked what we mean by "good." We have to accept the same criteria of goodness, I think, as a doctor employs when he tries to define health. We are human beings, and human beings have certain basic needs and certain definite potentialities—if they realize these, they can survive, they can face the universe on equal terms and grow. If not, they tend to die down and die out, as other organisms have done. And the most deeply-rooted human need, in the social and psychological sense, is the need for love, the need for stability, responsibility and confidence between individual men. It is the first need of the child, and the first need of the adult. It is a requisite of living and of civilisation, with all the potentialities which that implies. Humanity asserts life and living as a positive value in its obstinate struggle to stay alive, to defeat the threats which exist for it in its own fragility and in the disinterestedness of the universe. And the logical outcome, as well as the prerequisite of this impulse towards life, is the impulse to love.

The first of the talks, which deals with the exhaustion of Christian belief, has a perceptive passage concerning the "aloneness" which may overtake those whose faith is in a transition stage:

> The fact that we find ourselves alone is not a more reasonable ground for despair than the loneliness of growing up. Individual adolescence is the cutting loose from the standards of our parents, the attempt to fly on our own instruments. Humanity in Western cultures seems to be undergoing the stresses and loneliness of a rather similar adolescence. We have the equipment to meet the demands of the new tradition of man. It is that equipment which has forced us to abandon the old tradition. And the pattern of our future must lie in the new realisation of what we are, not against it, or away from it.
>
> To abandon the old tradition. We do not abandon it any more than in becoming adults we abandon our childhood, or in being ourselves we abandon our parents. Much that grew up in it

> persists—in the valuation of man for himself, and the individual as an individual, which came from that tradition: in the belief in the wide significance of what we do and what we think. Nobody need be afraid that with the passing out of currency and credit of the supernatural elements in our thought, we shall be more likely to submit to tyrants or descend into barbarism. When we see the scaffolding taken away from a building, we do not run for fear the buildings should fall. Christianity and its tradition were our scaffolding. One of the greatest problems every individual faces, as he grows up, is how to reconcile the world as it is with the world as he desires it to be. He can do it by the denial of reality, by accepting beliefs which are comforting, without regard to their truth. He can do it by abandoning his standards and his will, and resigning himself to things as they are. He can do it, and this is the most satisfactory and the most courageous way, by knowing and admitting reality and setting himself to change it.

We have here, put with remarkable clarity as well as brevity, a statement of the Humanist view. If you want much more than this, you will have to invite statements more definitive of "reality," which is hazardous, for the man who is able to give you his view of reality without becoming sectarian is a rare man indeed. Meanwhile, an improvement upon Dr. Comfort's Humanist outlook, as an attitude toward life, would be difficult to find.

COMMENTARY
BEGINNING THE FOURTEENTH YEAR

MOST years—last year among them—MANAS editors get around about two weeks too late to the idea of suggesting to readers that they give MANAS subscriptions to their friends for Christmas. Regret for this oversight—if it really is an oversight—is usually followed by a mild satisfaction that, somehow or other, another year has gone by without much commercial distraction for the working staff. After all, if you regard your readers as grown-up people, isn't it a little presumptuous to tell them what to do about Christmas giving?

Well, this year, the satisfaction is more than mild, since we are able to report that gift subscriptions came rolling in last month, by the dozen, without the slightest bit of prompting. It seems fitting to take this as a mandate from readers that we should never again make any kind of boring suggestions to them about what to do with their money.

The whole question of "promotion" for a magazine like MANAS is puzzling. There are times when any kind of promotion seems out of key with the basic purposes of the magazine. The free samples are hardly to be classed as promotion, since a person can hardly be expected to subscribe to the magazine unless he sees it. The sample copies fill this need. The prospect, however, of writing an "ad" to tell about MANAS is a little shrivelling to the editorial spirit. We know what we are *trying* to do, but we are by no means sure we are doing it. Some years ago we tried some ads for MANAS in the *Nation,* the *New Republic,* and the *Progressive,* and gained enough new readers to about pay for the ads with the subscription money. We were going to try the *Saturday Review* and maybe the *Reporter,* but budget trouble prevented. Meanwhile, our slow growth has continued, so that now we are able to say that we have over a thousand paid subscriptions.

However, we figure that we need four or five times that number to break even. At our present rate of growth, this will take about fifty-two years, barring wars and depressions, or a miraculous spread of the word about the value of MANAS to the general reader. We knew, of course, when we began, that a magazine of this sort very seldom breaks even in economic terms. It has to be supported by well-wishers. MANAS has had some support of this kind, as well as an incredibly generous and indulgent printer who waits and waits and *waits.* In fact, it was not until this sort of printer was available that MANAS was started, since from the beginning the publishers have maintained their rule of never begging for contributions from their readers, relying, instead, on those who give help without being asked.

Any activity pursued at a financial loss in the United States suffers a serious psychological disadvantage. In this land of commercial success, it is difficult not to feel that if a project doesn't make money, it is somehow "unsound." Good things, you say to yourself, if they are really good, will be self-supporting. If you want to publish a magazine, but don't have enough subscribers to balance the budget, you must face the unpleasant possibility that continuing constitutes a kind of "vanity publishing" which proves little except the fact that, somehow, you have been able to dig up the funds to stay in print.

On reflection, this seems a wholesome thought to have around, a useful antidote to any sort of righteous pique to the effect that "people" ought to be more appreciative of such strenuous efforts to keep going. No one who sets out to do things he thinks may be generally useful has any business to expect people to rally round and lend a big hand. He ought to be willing to do it without a big hand, and without a lot of dubious bragging about the excellence of the undertaking. If the project has any excellence, the kind of people who may be expected to recognize it, will recognize it without any anxious pleading by its sponsors.

The feeling of the publishers and editors of MANAS on these delicate questions is that MANAS is worth continuing, that the time may some day come when the number of its subscribers will be sufficient to balance its budget, and that meanwhile the support of MANAS by its publishers and its friends constitutes a wager in behalf of certain hopes for the future.

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To add to the editorial reference library, we recently bought from a book co-op the volume by C. S. Lewis, *Studies in Words* (Cambridge University Press, 1960). This is a book of great piety in respect to the English language, a long-suffering medium of communication. The author examines the shades of meaning which such words as *Nature, Sad, Wit, Free, Sense, Simple, Conscious,* and *Conscience* have been used to convey. Following is a paragraph from the Introduction, illustrating Mr. Lewis' interest in "a new sense of 'responsibility to language":

> Verbicide, the murder of a word, happens in many ways. Inflation is one of the commonest; those who taught us to say *awfully* for "very," *tremendous* for "great," *sadism* for *"cruelty,"* and *unthinkable* for "undesirable" were verbicides. Another way is verbiage, by which I here mean the use of a word as a promise to pay which is never going to be kept. The use of *significant* as if it were an absolute, and with no intention of ever telling us what the thing is significant of, is an example. So is *diametrically* when it is used merely to put *opposite* into the superlative. Men often commit verbicide when they want to snatch a word as a party banner, to appropriate its "selling quality." Verbicide was committed when we exchanged *Whig* and *Tory* for *Liberal* and *Conservative.* But the greatest cause of verbicide is the fact that most people are obviously far more anxious to express their approval and disapproval of things than to describe them. Hence the tendency of words to become less descriptive and more evaluative, then to become evaluative, while still retaining some hint of the sort of goodness or badness implied; and to end up by being purely evaluative—useless synonyms for *good* or for *bad.* . . . I am not suggesting that we can by an archaising purism repair any of the losses that have already occurred. It may not, however, be entirely useless to resolve that we ourselves will never commit verbicide. If modern critical usage seems to be initiating a process which might finally make *adolescent* and *contemporary* mere synonyms for *bad* and *good*—and stranger things have happened—we should banish them from our vocabulary. I am tempted to adapt the couplet we see in some parks—
>
> Let no one say, and say it to your shame,
> That there was meaning here before you came.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves
SOCIALISM AND YOUTH

Two articles appearing successively in the BBC's *Listener* (Sept. 15 and 22) focus some interesting issues. G. C. Johnson, writing under the broad title of "Our Immature Society," regrets the recent parliamentary decision in England to give up the requirement of a year of national service. "This," writes Mr. Johnson, "was the only legislation ever on the statute book which provided our young men with a peace-time experience of ordered community living, an insistence on personal standards, and an encouragement of group consciousness away from complications of family and work. There will now be no such universal opportunity, and the lack of it may well show in the young ranks of industry in three or four years' time."

The youngsters finished with their normal term of schooling concern Mr. Johnson most. In England, some 100,000 fifteen-year-olds drop out of classes before finishing their first elective year, and it is these who, conceivably, have the greatest need of the temporary disciplines which national service provides. Mr. Johnson says:

> It does seem that between us we have been failing to equip our young people for the situations in which they become involved when they go out into life in the adult world and are forced to exercise increasing responsibility for their actions and their future. They are failing to mature. And yet the bases of maturity are well understood. In broad terms, boys and girls in growing up are faced with a series of social challenges or tests which they cannot evade, and which they must meet successfully if maturity is to develop by the time it is needed.
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> There needs to be a much more serious approach to the impending world of work; perhaps through opportunities for long enough periods of experience of the atmosphere of possible jobs, to give some idea of what they are really like. These are the sort of things a youngster needs to help him to mature, to become confident without brashness, positive in personal relationships, displaying a respect for the individuality of others which in turn earns a respect for his own, and with personal standards which will stand the shock of experience of the adult world because they are his standards, not his teachers' or father's or mother's.
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> While he is at school the machinery, at least, is available. In considering the deficiencies of post-school guidance one must of course take other potentially maturing influences which are brought to bear on the youngster into account. For most, it is first the work situation itself, and for many this is vital, partly because it is where the majority of time is spent, partly because young people are anxious to conform to and to be accepted by the existing adult work group. But it is a matter of chance whether there are any adults in these groups who are in any sense specially equipped to understand and help young people. Work provides sensible industrial discipline for some, and for others a continued training or apprenticeship, but these latter are still a minority. Many youngsters start off with evening classes at technical colleges, but large numbers quickly abandon them.
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> Then, the home can do much to help along the maturing process, but many parents find it difficult to cope with the boy's change in family status when he becomes a wage earner. There are now many young people who are the first in their family to proceed to higher education or further training. This exacerbates the problem because it emphasizes the inadequacy of many parents to provide effective understanding and guidance. As parents, we need to recognize that love and concern for our children are by themselves not enough to enable us to help them as much as our affection urges. In a mixed group of older adolescents, not long ago, I asked how many felt completely relaxed and at ease in their family relationships at home; of twenty, only one replied that she did.

This is, so to speak, the Case for the State, and it grows strong from evidence that lack of a program of discipline for youth does not encourage individual thinking, but rather apathy toward anything but temporal personal concerns.

The other article, "Youth under Communism," by Hugh Lunghi, presents an interesting contrast, because the virtually regimented lives of Soviet youngsters, instead of producing apathy, seem actually to have stimulated some individual thought and

initiative—by way of intelligent rebellion. Where the state religion is no religion, where atheism is aggressive rather than apologetic, there remains what Mr. Lunghi terms an "extraordinary degree of interest in religion, or at least in non-materialist ideas." This is especially true among the young in Russia, he says, although not so "noticeable in other communist countries, possibly because religion was already more strongly established there, even among the young." Further, "over the last year there have been several reports in Soviet newspapers of students in higher education establishments—particularly in the Moscow First Medical Institute, the leading one in the country—who have turned to religion." Mr. Lunghi continues:

> Those involved are not just ignorant or sensation-seeking youths. One gets the most vivid impression of the spread of religion among young people not from the cases reported by the Soviet press, which are meant to serve as warnings and are invariably represented as rare exceptions, but as is often the case with social problems, from contemporary Russian literature.
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> It would be wrong to be misled by the attention that is devoted to attacking religion in the Soviet press into thinking that the young in Russia are being converted *en masse.* But even apart from the question of religion there is strong evidence that the quest for spiritual truth and the rejection of materialism is seriously occupying the minds of the more intelligent section of Soviet youth. This has been evident in the tremendous interest aroused by the controversy over the respective merits of science and the arts, which appeared in the pages of the Komsomol newspaper over a period of many months last year. Again, the letter that *Komsomol Pravda* published from a reader questioning the value of the sputnik and indications of many other doubts cast on purely material achievements, are all symptomatic of the state of mind of the young Soviet citizens who are beginning to think for themselves.

We don't presume to suggest how these two accounts of the effect of enforced disciplines should be added up, but we suspect that they illustrate, on a large scale, the fact that young people often gain the stamina of self-reliance only after they have been put to tasks which require some stamina in the doing.

What this conclusion suggests is that the familiar complaint against "authority" ought to be tempered by recognition of the necessary role authority plays in most societies, and that when authority is eliminated, other forces, possibly much worse, always rush in to fill the vacuum. The people who are able to live harmoniously and constructively without some sort of regulatory authority are people of exceptional maturity. If we want to get rid of authority, we shall have to get the maturity, and get it first.

FRONTIERS

Some Men Who Say No

IT may be difficult to oppose successfully the will of the state in America, but it isn't impossible. And there are enough liberals and pacifists to assure that protests against war, or protests against locally-imposed loyalty oaths, do not go unheard. If this suggests a comparison of the treatment accorded dissenters in the U.S.S.R. and the United States, so much the better.

On June 28, a forty-six-year-old factory worker, Hugo De Gregory, was put in a New Hampshire jail as a climax to six years of his refusal to answer questions in state investigation of "subversive activities." Attorney General Louis Wyman was convinced that the demands of the state should not be flouted, but it took him six years to see that De Gregory got his come-uppance. During that time publicity regarding the De Gregory case served to strengthen liberal determination that the Bill of Rights be taken seriously in New Hampshire.

De Gregory said as he went to jail:

> The state has shown once more that it is stronger than the individual. But it has also demonstrated that it is powerless to compel an individual to commit an indecent act. I still refuse to become an informer to help slander people I know to be completely innocent of any wrongdoing. I go to jail with a clear conscience.

An interesting case of dissent in respect to war comes to us in a letter from a MANAS subscriber. T. L. Chatburn is a young man who enlisted in the armed forces and subsequently decided that he could not participate in any kind of military program. As an enlistee, Chatburn was an odd sort of C.O., for most protests against military service are articulated when the candidate faces the draft. This man had voluntarily entered the army and then wanted out.

But who is to say at what point a man's concern or dissent is justifiable? In this particular case the highly individual nature of the decision indicates not only unusual initiative, but also considerable responsibility to principle. In an earlier letter, Mr. Chatburn described the predicament he faced in asking for a discharge, and asked for information concerning the C.O. classification. The following is from his present communication:

> When you acknowledged my letter last time you referred me to the Central Committee for Conscientious Objectors, here in Philadelphia. I gave this matter lengthy thought, and finally decided not to contact them. While I thank you for your interest, I concluded that since I was making this step as a result of very long and sometimes painful thought, that I should be willing to assert my ideas without the aid of any particular organization, even though I realized they might be helpful in eliminating some of the confusion. This action drew much criticism from the powers that be, and especially from the chaplain who had been assigned to my case. It boiled down to the fact that authority will recognize authority, even in matters of disagreement, but authority in this case could not comprehend an individual speaking for himself. They strongly desire to see religious associations with some concrete belief in God to substantiate a person's making such an unusual request.
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> It was my contention that a professed belief or unbelief in God had little to do—or was not necessary—to being deeply concerned about the world we live in, and what the individual's obligation to his fellow man was. This incurred the charge of my being atheistic, and seemed to refute in the mind of the chaplain, any assertions by me concerning morality. I explained, as best I could, that an impartial study of history illustrated to me that religion, as such, could hardly be seen as a consistent champion of human dignity or sensitive man-to-man understandings; but represented in too many instances organizations and bands of men in opposition to compassion and decency. Be that as it may, I stated that I was not interested, in this case, with religion anyhow. I explained that my sole concern was the part I was playing as an individual in society, and how it was related to the world state of affairs. As it is at the present time, I said, I am little more than a pawn for whatever the strategists decide to do: If they say kill, I will kill; if they say it is necessary to blow up another civilization, I must do so unquestioningly; that whatever may be decided upon, I have no cause but obedience. This no longer,

I said seems to me to be the obligation of man by an accurate estimate of the word.

So Mr. Chatburn posed a rather knotty problem. Naturally, the military authorities had to do something about him, and the standpoint from which they approached decision was, significantly, less that of insisting upon proper "punishment" than of seeing that the matter was handled quietly. For six months, he was interviewed and exhorted. The chief concern of the army seemed to be to avoid publicity, and it appeared to prefer waiting until the term of enlistment had expired. But Chatburn wasn't satisfied with this cover-up of the issue and stopped attending drills. Then came specific threat of the stockade. Finally his discharge came through—on the basis of "continued and willful absence from drill."

In this case both the C.O. and the State came out pretty well—the latter because its representatives in the army were less vindictive than puzzled or apathetic. Also, in both De Gregory's case and that of Mr. Chatburn, what happened is open to public discussion, which is what they need. Two contrasting attitudes are here brought to light in curious fashion: the New Hampshire Attorney General thought that De Gregory's refusal to testify against friends was so serious an affront to authority that he plans to prosecute him all over again when his original sentence is served. Mr. Wyman, in other words, is a kind of medieval man: "Vengeance is mine," saith the Lord—or the Lord's appointed. But the army officers with whom Mr. Chatburn dealt were apparently ultra-modern; since as an enlistee he was no longer useful as war materiel, he was basically ignored. Both responses, however, are somewhat ominous. We need more of the kind of thinking that may be expected to result from discussion of the situations created by the men who say *No*.