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CART-BEFORE-THE-HORSE PHILOSOPHY

FROM India comes a letter correcting what seems to the writer a loose use of words in MANAS articles, and continuing with a general discussion in behalf of the free market economy. MANAS sometimes gets into trouble with specialized thinkers who object to a lack of precision in matters pertaining to their own fields. For example, there is a critic we are almost sure to hear from because of the quotation from John Wain (in last week's lead article) in which Mr. Wain identifies the Stalinists of 1950 as "Marxists." We shall be told that Stalinists are not Marxists, but the betrayers of Marx. We are not unaware of this distinction, but it didn't seem worth while to add it as a "correction" of what Mr. Wain said, since the point he was making was quite clear. A somewhat similar criticism is made by our Indian correspondent, whose letter follows:

> You refer (in Frontiers for June 14, 1961) to the "built-in inefficiencies of the free-enterprise and profit system when charged with the complex enterprise of national defense." I would say that the mess in the missiles was a natural result, and a fine example, of the built-in inefficiencies of statism. The criterion of whether a particular enterprise belongs to the free market or not, is not whether private corporations are engaged in it, but what the *state* is doing. Missiles, etc., simply cannot be sold in the free market—nobody will buy them. It is governments alone who will buy them. So missile production is a diversion of resources *away* from the free market, into statism. The inefficiencies, corruption, waste, etc., seen in missile production are the natural corollaries of all statist activities. The fact that these are produced—under state contract—by *private* corporations, does not vitiate this statement. The corporations are *not* producing for the market—they are producing for government. As such, though privately owned, they belong to the statist sphere, and not, essentially, to the free market. Inefficiency can be minimized only under the discipline of competition in the free market.
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> It seems to me, from my reading of MANAS, that your writers appear to regard the U.S.A. as the acme of the free market. I would beg to differ. The U.S.A.—as I see it—is a prime example of the "muddled" or statist economy. The Communist countries represent one end of the spectrum—the totalitarian economy. The West European countries are moving toward the other end—the really free-market economy. (Not a little of West Germany's reluctance to re-arm comes from Dr. L. Erhard's recognition of the fact that "defense" industries can be established *only* at the expense of the rest of the economy.) Countries like U.S.A. and India lie somewhere between the two—they are the muddled economies, combining the *worst* features of both the systems. The statism of East Europe is called Communism, the statism of India is called "the socialistic pattern of society," and the statism of the U.S.A. is called capitalism, "American" free enterprise.
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> I have been following with interest your criticism of certain aspects of what you call the "free enterprise" system. It seems to me, that what you consider to be the natural corollaries of the free market, are not integral parts of it, but the *distortions* produced in its working, by the attempts of the state to do the duty of another, while neglecting its own duties. For optimum functioning, the market needs a suitable framework, provided by the state. It presupposes the performance of a number of essential functions by the state. Failure of the state to perform these functions, or their inadequate performance, results in imbalances and distortions in the market—which are usually taken by socialists and others to be its normal and essential features. Unfortunately, it is *impossible* to take for granted that the state (*i.e.,* the politicians and bureaucrats) *will* adequately perform these essential functions. What is much more certain is that the state will either totally neglect these duties—which it alone can perform—or else give them stepmotherly treatment, while attempting to do things beyond its scope. The resulting distortions in the market will be pounced upon by socialists and statists, held up to view as the normal phenomena of the market—and the politicians will proceed yet further with the identical policies that caused the imbalances in the first place, or with worse policies—all to the accompaniment of humanitarian slogans, and with the encouragement of socialists and others.

In the resultant vicious circle, the essential duties of the state will probably be forgotten or neglected.

Every Christian church claims to follow the teachings of Christ. It does not necessarily follow that they actually do so, or even that what they claim are the true teachings of Christ, *are* his teachings. So, too, many businessmen, many groups, claim to speak for the free-enterprise system, or claim that their proposals constitute the basic principles of such a system. It does not follow from this, that what *they* claim is the true picture of a free-enterprise system is, in reality, a true representation of that system. As I said before, American *statism* very often calls itself "free enterprise," just as American statists call themselves "liberals."

MISS SUDHA R. SHENOY
Ahmedabad, India

This seems to us a factually accurate statement presented with impeccable logic. The question, however, is not so much whether generalizations in MANAS have misnamed the economic system of the United States, but whether it is vitally important to campaign for a free market economy. Even supposing the virtues of the free market economy are all that Miss Shenoy says they are, the campaign will still be for a *system,* and we gravely doubt that the problems of the twentieth century, in the United States or anywhere else, should be regarded as existing simply because of a bad system.

We take the view—not a popular one, these days—that the system people live under is a matter of comparative unimportance. We mean by this that the qualities of the system they have, whatever it is, will inevitably be made to reflect the qualities of the people themselves. If the people have typical weaknesses, the system will massively recreate those weaknesses or compensate for them with institutional measures and forms. What do all the major power states have in common these days? The attribute which overshadows all others is the role of the military: regardless of politics, the powerful nations of our time have organized all the resources of modern technology in preparation for total war. This diminishes the importance of ideological differences or differences in political economy. The act of war puts an end to all political decision for the people participating in the war. Alternatives are erased by all-consuming military necessity. War is the night in which all shirts and flags are black. It follows that preparation for war leads to the partial dissolution of politics. War has an absolute system of its own, governed by the laws of destruction, and during preparations for war the laws of destruction progressively invade the regions of politics and economics, imposing a single fateful pattern upon the operations of men.

But let us look more closely at the idea of systems. What is a system? A system is an instrument by which men hope to gain access, or more access than they have, to the good life. The idea of the good life varies with individuals. It varies with their initial circumstances, which are accidents of history; it varies with their intellectual and moral endowments, and with their attitudes toward life. Necessarily, therefore, the system of an epoch or a social group can never be anything more than a rough approximation of the common interests and needs of the group. The satisfaction or dissatisfaction of men with the existing system depends upon a number of factors. It depends upon the relation of the system to their felt wants and needs. It depends upon how they regard themselves and the system: whether they think of themselves as subordinate to the system, and the system as sovereign, or themselves as the makers of the system as a tool to be used for their own purposes.

Obviously, there is enormous latitude in the possible definitions of a good system, as a result of these various and complex differences. But this latitude itself at once suggests the prime characteristic of any good system: it must be capable of alteration by the people who are affected by it. The preservation of alternatives—which we call freedom—is the first necessity of any good system.

A second qualification of any good system is its conformity with nature. This sounds like a simple requirement, but it is quite difficult to fulfill—almost as difficult to fulfill as the preservation of freedom. A system of dealing with single-natured material, such as a machine which processes ore, or a loom which weaves thread into fabrics, is fairly easy to devise. Modern technology is a monument to the success of human beings in devising systems of this sort. We are very good at it.

Man, however, is not a single-natured material, like ore or thread. Man is multi-natured; you could say, with John Dewey, that each man is a competition of many selves; or you could say, with Buddha, that the resolution of the conflict in man's nature is the object of human life. There is no concise definition of man's nature upon which general agreement can be obtained. Lacking this general agreement, it remains for the planner of systems to decide whether he will pretend to know all about the nature of man, designing a system according to his pretense, or *declare* the common ignorance, at the political level, of the nature of man, and propose a system which takes this ignorance as one of its prime assumptions.

The importance of declaring this ignorance cannot be over-estimated. To attempt to hide it puts the system on a par with theological imposture. How often has a particular *status quo* been justified by quoting the Bible: "The powers that be are ordained of God"? A whole cycle of political slogan-making resulted from the assumption that Darwin's "law" of the Survival of the Fittest was proper foundation for the design of a social system. Then there is the use of the adjective, "scientific," in the expression, Scientific Socialism—an endeavor to show that *this* kind of socialism fits in with the laws of nature.

There is no doubt but that something can be learned of human behavior from the study of history. Macchiavelli's *Prince* is one sort of manual compiled from experience. Hitler's *Mein Kampf* is another. The *Federalist Papers* of Hamilton, Madison, and others presents an impressive compilation of political sagacity based upon observation and experience. The point to be kept in mind, here, is that the reading of history or experience is too easily done in accordance with preconceptions or partisan purposes. Science is difficult enough without all the variables of human nature, and only fools, fanatics or demagogues have the hardihood to claim they *know* what is in accord with the laws of human behavior, aspiration, and development. But we have had fools, fanatics, and demagogues among the makers and caretakers of our political systems, with the result that there is no field of human inquiry more hedged with confusion, claims and counterclaims, with the echo of sacred sayings and the shrill heraldings of utopian promises. Add to this the longing of ordinary men for simple answers to their problems, for wide and easy highways to the fulfillment of their dreams, and you begin to have some idea of the problems of designing a just and wise political economy. Not only is there the need to approximate what "nature" requires in the way of a system; there is also the need to *persuade* the members of the society that the system you propose is desirable and good. Then there is the question of power, how it is to be obtained, how it is to be kept, and how—if challenged—it is to be justified.

Some of this analysis applies to what our correspondent says about businessmen who "claim to speak for the free-enterprise system," as to Christian churches which claim to disseminate "the true teachings of Christ." This criticism was put very well by Louis J. Halle in a recent (Oct. 23) *New Republic* article:

> Christ came into the world and preached certain things which then became the nominal basis of Christian ideology. One thing he preached was poverty. Another was peace—not to smite one's fellow man and, if he smote you, to turn the other cheek. Nominally, then, Christians were people who embraced poverty and turned the other cheek. But, in reality, they came to be immensely rich and warlike. In the Middle Ages even bishops girt on their swords

and rode into battle carrying the Gospel of Christ in their left hands.

> . . . anyone who thinks Christendom represents poverty and peace is mistaking the nominal for the real. The only thing one can say that Christendom represents is a sort of allegiance, not to the person of Christ or to what he stood for, but simply to the name of Christ. Christians, as such, may deck themselves in gold and jewels, and they may ride forth to battle, but they do it in the name of Christ. In the same way, the Commies may enslave the workers, and they may establish military empires over alien peoples, but they do it in the name of Marx—or in the name of Marxism-Leninism. Communists like Christians are true believers—they are true believers in a name.

This is the sort of ideological flag-waving you encounter when you set out to enter the lists with a socio-politico-economic system to propose or defend. Of course, you can be a purist and insist that you stand for the *good* kind of Capitalism, or the good kind of socialism, or the good kind of Christianity, but you will never get within a hundred miles of the great arena in which the battles of the systems are fought out.

You may say, then, with William of Orange, "It is not necessary to hope in order to undertake, or to succeed in order to persevere." But is this really the right struggle for making such uncompromising sacrifice? After all, the nature of politics is compromise, and the path of its progress is greased with propaganda and over-simplification of issues. We do not deny that a very great man may succeed in politics, without essential compromise, when the times are ripe for the realization of his ends and the turn of events works in his favor. But what are the times ripe for, now, and in what direction does the turn of events point?

Not, certainly, toward the withdrawal of the State from its multiple functions, which distort and corrupt the now quite hypothetical free market society, but toward more of the same. A passage from Lyman Bryson's *The Next Amer*ica (Harper, 1952) may be useful here. In a chapter, "The Collective in Politics," Mr. Bryson speaks of a basic choice faced by everyone in this present age:

> Shall I fight to retain ancient values against a secular trend? That is, shall any one of us resist the socialistic changes that are affecting our economy as they have affected all the rest of the world? If these changes are to be accepted as good, or as inevitable, then the agents of the welfare state, the swiftly growing body of government managers, can be judged largely on their merits. It is not theory that will then determine the value of our administrative rulers but performance, and their performance will depend upon their quality as persons as well as on the legal rules. If they have character and brains, they can bring much more justice to the distribution of our goods.
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> The claim to power of this new governing group will continue to be based not only on the improvements they can make in equities of distribution but also, at least by implication, on their alleged capacity to increase production of all kinds, of goods and services. That invokes another test of acceptance. The records up to now would indicate that this second claim is partly specious although it can never be guessed in advance what some future government bureau may do on a large scale to improve production. There are fields of enterprise in which the government's hand is helpful, others where it paralyzes. The discussion of these choices has been so cluttered with partisan assertions, with promises, and with ideological passion that it is difficult even to guess at the practical truth. In any case, the believers in useful statism in industry have ample opportunity to prove their point.

But how can any point of this sort be proved by a welfare state which is also a military state, poised for the kill? Technically, the military state is also the omnicompetent state, since in war the state will totally take over. The prospect of war makes the argument quite academic.

It may be possible to conceive in the abstract of a decentralized, free market, quasi-anarchist society, but working for this kind of utopia directly is not, we think, the way to get it. If men ever decide to work for the things that are really worth working for, they will get the best possible society or social system for doing that work, as a by-product of more important endeavors. The system they have right now is the result of what

they have worked for, and what they have held to be valuable.

Mr. Bryson has some thoughtful comments on the working of the welfare state:

> How could government be really ourselves? Any one who has ever held a public office and can remember his ways of thinking while in that situation knows that he was more than a member of the public. If an official thinks for us, we have not thought for ourselves. Even when a government official is most truly our servant, he is not a mere extension of ourselves; he is the custodian of our opportunities. The difficulty in our thinking about these things appears to lie in the mistake that many philosophers make and thus give a bad example to citizens. It is the mistake of thinking that a political process is justified by its public result. This is not true. A political process is justified by its private result, that is, by its result in the lives of the members of the state, and the most important thing in the lives of the citizens at any given time, even at a time of public danger, is the development of their own best selves.
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> We are compelled to make group decisions, by means of delegates, to escape anarchy in political life, so this is taken as a reason for doing something quite different. It is taken as a reason for us to put into the hands of administrative officials who work under vague laws that are not easily corrected by the courts, many of the decisions men could make for themselves. If by being thus relieved of responsibility men are freed to give their judgment to other problems and get their democratic experience and seek their ideals in other struggles, where are those other ideals? The partisan advocates of the welfare state seem too busy to seek them out, but they must be found, or we have made too casually a bad bargain.

A similar difficulty, although of a different order of magnitude, afflicts the ideal of a free market economy. A free market economy is a system for entrepreneurs, not human beings. The unit, in a free market economy, is the entity which goes to market as a producer. This gears thinking about the good society to the low floor of an economic process. Let us work rather for a society in which there are better men, who will surely have no difficulty in improvising the economic arrangements they need, and which will not get in their way. Again, Mr. Bryson has a useful comment:

> There is one difference between political groups and economic groups as collectives far greater than what has been noted. Economic activities must be taken care of before anything of greater importance is possible, they are prior in time but secondary in value as a means to the realization of the self. If collectives will take over the economic choices and save us the trouble, the loss in experience, if properly compensated for, may not be too great.

This kind of balance, however, is not likely to become available until Mr. Bryson's order of values is adopted by many more people than those who hold to it today. Yet it is only this order of values which can free us of the torturing anxieties which come from seeking freedom in economic theories and systems that conceive of human beings as one-natured material.

REVIEW
THE SOCIOLOGY OF ZEN

THE importance of tough-minded Western intellectuality is nowhere better demonstrated than in "The Politics of Zen," by Henry Braun, in the first issue (Fall, 1961) of *New Politics,* a quarterly of socialist thought and criticism. The writer is a veteran of the Korean War who taught in Korea for several years after the armistice and who is now at work, in California, on a study of mysticism and religion. Mr. Braun has little concern with the mystical validity of Zen doctrine, nor does he discuss the concealed or neglected background of Buddhist metaphysics, except to say that it exists. He comes into practical focus on the ethical indifferentism of Zen practitioners, over a long period of centuries, picking up where Arthur Koestler left off in *The Lotus and the Robot.* Koestler found some Zen abbots in Japan who refused to take a seriously critical position on Hitler's gas chambers. He concluded that Zen, whatever it was to begin with, "has become a kind of moral nervegas." Mr. Braun assembles a great deal of evidence to further this impression, some of it quite horrifying. His closing judgment is this:

> When the demands of the upper class periodically became too painful the ever present Monistic Mystic tradition of Asia came to the fore with a solution which bordered on the dualism of moral schizophrenia. An inner psychological change was wrought that left the outward behavior of the individual unchanged. Moral responsibility was denied, and History was proclaimed the organic unfolding of the Godhead—positions which in conjunction with one another created at the heart of all the civilizations of Asia a mysticism that can most aptly be described as Organization Man Mysticism. This mysticism of the status quo was present as a tendency in all the great religious traditions of Asia and it made its appearance more than once in Christianity. But one sect above all was to represent it in its purest form. From the moment of its inception as a distinct sect, on through fifteen hundred years of history, Zen Buddhism was Organizational Man Mysticism incarnate.

Mr. Braun traces this historical role of Zen through Chinese and Japanese history, coming up with some tidbits. Example:

> For some reason neither Suzuki nor Alan Watts nor any of the present-day enthusiasts ever refer to the very famous literary work of the Kamakura period that so appealed to the desire for simplicity in the "democratic" hearts of feudal Japan. It is rather strange because its author was none other than Eisai, the then recognized spokesman and leader of Zen. It is a real Zen classic with the title of: "The Protection of the State Through the Propagation of Zen Buddhism."

Then there is the following:

> In modern times Zen has continued to play a role in the political ventures of the Japanese power elite. The psychological indoctrination of the Kamikaze pilots was only one of the more flamboyant contributions of the Japanese upper middle classes. In the nineteen thirties large sums of money were earmarked by the military rulers of Korea for the propagation of Zen among Korean intellectuals, not only to counter the influence of Marxist doctrines and Christianity, but as an antidote to certain dangerous tendencies within Korean Buddhist circles. Or, to bring the story even more up to date, we have but to dip into the recent (1959) work of one of the Japanese enthusiasts of Zen, the reactionary Neo-Shinto philosopher Dr. Chikao Fujisawa.
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> It is rare indeed when one comes across the congealing of so many inherent ideological tendencies in one round ball. Dr. Fujisawa has a whole pantheon of heroes whose virtues he sings to his Japanese audience. They include, among others, Heidigger, Carl Jung, Alan Watts and—Prince Shotoku (the Buddhist labor relations expert). Aside from championing Zen Buddhism and something he calls "existential nationalism," Dr. Fujisawa is also against the present Japanese constitution for making the Emperor subject to the "will of the people." He also directs a few enlightening words of Zen inspiration to "peace-mongers." Echoing the words of another Japanese Buddhist, Momozo Kurata, Dr. Fujisawa writes:
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> "The growth of life necessitates to a considerable extent the immolation of other beings, however repulsive this dreadful claim may be to the sophisticated minds of peace-mongers."
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> The utilization of slave labor, the exploitation of the proletariat, this contemporary Zen philosopher

> concludes, is the inexorable working out of the spirit of the cosmos. Those who accept the inevitability of the cosmos are the awakened, those who do not are the prisoners of the illusions of the ego or worst of all, peace-mongers.

The foregoing does not make us alter in the least the appreciation we have felt of Zen documents and of essays by men like Suzuki on the subject of Zen, but it does bring a long line of mournful reflections on the generally unfortunate effects of religious "tracts for the times," especially once they have outlived their usefulness. As we understand it, Zen came into being as a vigorous critique of excessive intellectualism in Buddhist thought. It is not enough to think conceptually about the truth; one must *be;* in fact, conceptual thinking is often a box canyon of delusion which, once made into a dwelling of the mind, becomes a barrier to self-realization. There is certainly a great truth here, but it is not the whole truth. The truth in Zen acquires a special luminosity and appeal, by reason of its isolation, but if it is allowed to *remain* in isolation, without what might be called a "rational frame," then the insight may be reduced to some kind of magical trick, and to triviality, as well as become subject to the distorting misuses of which Mr. Braun speaks. Something that was quoted from Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan two weeks ago has pertinence in this connection. In his book, *The Hindu Way of Life,* Dr. Radhakrishnan said:

> Religious experience is of a self-certifying character. . . . It carries its own credentials. But the religious seer is compelled to justify his inmost convictions in a way that satisfies the thought of the age. If there is not this intellectual confirmation, the seer's attitude is one of trust. Religion rests on faith in this sense of the term. . . . We call it faith simply because, spiritual perception, like other kinds of perception, is liable to err and requires the testing processes of logical thought. But, like all perception, religious intuition is that which thought has to start from and to which it has to return. In order to be able to say that religious experience reveals reality, in order to be able to transform religious certitude into logical certainty, we are obliged to give an intellectual account of the experience. . . . There can be no final breach between the two powers of the human mind, reason and intuition.

The indifference shown by the Zen abbots to Arthur Koestler, when he asked them what they thought of Hitler's gas ovens, was morally frivolous and intellectually cavalier. It was also a denial of the basic intuition of human brotherhood, which is the central inspiration of Buddhism. Here is an illustration of what can happen to a psychological discipline which grandly denies any intellectual responsibility, on the ground that intellect makes abstractions which can be, and often are, mistaken for reality. Mr. Braun has several more such illustrations which deserve inspection.

There is, however, another side to this question. It is true enough that "the inexorable working out of the spirit of the cosmos" inflicts pain on human beings. It is also true that no man can carry the weight of the universe on his shoulders—erase, that is, all this pain by applying the devices of modern technology. Pain, after all, is something of a mystery. Get rid of it in one place, and it comes out in another. It may be, as Buddha intimated, more of a psychological problem than anything else. But one thing that could never be said of Buddha, nor of Christ, is that he was complacent in the sight of man's inhumanity to man. Individual human beings have life-orbits of varying diameters, with equivalent capacities to ease the pain of others. There is the pain that cannot be helped, and the pain that can be helped, and not the least of religious philosophy is learning to distinguish between the two, and then to go to work on what can be helped, in whatever way that one knows how.

Mr. Braun has a useful analysis of the relation of mysticism to social history:

> The history of mysticism reveals only four possible relationships of the mystic to values: (1) an "anything goes" nihilism; (2) an ethics of abstention and withdrawal from evil that ends in quietism; (3) a humanist scheme of values that is avowedly anti-status quo in intent and practice and involves the mystic in the affairs of the world, (4) a mysticism that

> denies the reality of moral choice, that rejects the norms of the status quo only to remain active supporters of the status quo with the dogmatic certainty of a Pangloss that what is real is rational.

Humanist mysticism, Mr. Braun points out, is largely a Western phenomenon. "Western mystics in the tradition of Humanist mysticism openly identify themselves with the lower classes, and proclaim ethical *and political* norms that are in sharp variance with both the status quo and their raptures over the beautiful oneness of everything." In other words, the West had an eighteenth-century revolution—which was essentially a *Humanist* revolution—while the East did not; or it did not, until the coming of M. K. Gandhi. Gandhi, you could say, brought the Humanist revolution of the eighteenth century up to date, not merely for India, but for all the world. True to Mr. Braun's analysis, it used to be possible to detect a certain snobbishness on the part of some Eastern mystics of recent years, who suggested that Gandhi was not sufficiently "spiritual" to suit their taste. That Gandhi turned the fruit of his private vision to the public good seemed to them a kind of violation of the "code." Gandhi was a mystic *and* a social revolutionary, and with unerring perception put his finger on the major social ill of the age—the use of violence in war. Non-violence was pre-eminently a teaching of the Buddha, and if the modern followers of Zen are to maintain a claim to the second half of their hyphenate name, they had better learn well the importance of this concern for mankind, shared by Western Humanists with Buddha and Gandhi.

COMMENTARY
"DEMOCRACY OF CULTURE"

FOR years we have felt that Lyman Bryson's book, *The Next America,* published by Harper in 1952, has in it the seeds of an intelligent resolution of the argument about political and economic systems. We invite readers who feel that this question is of prime importance to read and weigh carefully what Mr. Bryson has to say. Here, for example, is one of his conclusions:

> We have had enough trial of the collectives to know what they can do, in managing our practical needs, and what they cannot do, namely, give us freedom. But we are building a national culture in which there are to be, ultimately, no artificial barriers between any man and his own best self and we must use the machines and the organizations to keep the solid basis of material well-being, and seek our free experience in our home politics, where we can see the wheels move, and in the cultivation of art and thought and whatever our self-explorations and our social trials may discover. This is the democracy of culture.

This view will not of course sit very well with people who habitually define the good life as depending upon some sort of nineteenth-century version of *laissez faire* economic freedom; nor will it, on the other hand, appeal to those who are determined to *enforce* the kind of economic equality that some socialist utopians have insisted is the foundation of the good life. Actually, as Bryson says, "for the mere supplying of material needs, any efficient system will do." But until the champions of ideologies get around to this view, which represents a major shift in the location of the primary values of human life, we doubt that any real solution is possible. There are some processes that will never work very well except under the conditions of intelligent neglect, and the economic processes, we think, are among them. Or, as Bryson puts it: "The management of property is not the noblest and most difficult challenge to human virtue and human power." A key statement is quoted from him in this week's lead article: "Economic activities . . . are prior in time but secondary in value as a means to the realization of the self."

The thing that modern man finds so difficult to realize is that this arrangement of values cannot be compelled, but must be freely *chosen,* in order to work. The temper of free choice, and the area in which human beings locate their ideal freedoms—these are the factors which absolutely determine whether or not a given economic and political scheme of things will work to the common good. It is the primary importance of these factors which causes MANAS to by-pass arguments about systems and about conflicting theories concerned with the management of property. We share with Bryson an admission of the possibility that, "If collectives will take over the economic choices and save us the trouble, the loss in experience, if properly compensated for, may not be too great," but would consider it the utmost folly to try to force such an arrangement, and a waste of energy even to campaign for it, since other human decisions are of far greater importance.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves
TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD

MANAS seldom works up much enthusiasm for book club selections, but Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* is a notable exception (J. B. Lippincott, 1960). This is one of those fine adventures in writing which enable adults to feel encouraged about their children—and enable children, if they are old enough, to feel encouraged about adults. The setting is a small Alabama town, steeped in irrational color prejudice. The quiet drama of the story lies in the unfolding of a stubborn integrity which bypasses the prejudice. There is communication of a sense of integrity from one generation to another which makes the local story universal in scope and, along with all this, Miss Lee writes with spontaneous enthusiasm.

We have no desire to use *To Kill a Mockingbird* as a means of poking fun at progressive education, but the passages dealing with a young girl's first experience of a new "system" of learning should be passed along, even though they are no more than asides. Here, an older brother, Jem, is giving an account of the school's effort, in the 1930's, to be modern in the way of Columbia University and John Dewey. Jem explains "the new way they teach in the first grade the Dewey Decimal System":

> The Dewey Decimal System consisted, in part, of Miss Caroline waving cards at us on which were printed "the," "cat," "rat," "man," and "you." No comment seemed to be expected of us, and the class received these impressionistic revelations in silence. I was bored, so I began a letter to Dill. Miss Caroline caught me writing and told me to tell my father to stop teaching me. "Besides," she said. "We don't write in the first grade, we print. You won't learn to write until you're in the third grade."
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> I retired meditating upon my crime. I never deliberately learned to read, but somehow I had been wallowing illicitly in the daily papers. In the long hours of church—was it then I learned? I could not remember not being able to read hymns. Now that I was compelled to think about it, reading was something that just came to me, as learning to fasten the seat of my union suit without looking around, or achieving two bows from a snarl of shoelaces.

More on the "Dewey Decimal System" as viewed through seven-year-old eyes:

> The remainder of my school days were no more auspicious than the first. Indeed, they were an endless Project that slowly evolved into a Unit, in which miles of construction paper and wax crayon were expended by the State of Alabama in its well meaning but fruitless efforts to teach me Group Dynamics. What Jem called the Dewey Decimal System was school-wide by the end of my first year, so I had no chance to compare it with other teaching techniques. I could only look around me: Atticus and my uncle, who went to school at home, knew everything—at least, what one didn't know the other did. Furthermore, I couldn't help noticing that my father had served for years in the state legislature, elected each time without opposition, innocent of the adjustments my teachers thought essential to the development of Good Citizenship. Jem, educated on a half-Decimal, half-Duncecap basis, seemed to function effectively alone or in a group, but Jem was a poor example: no tutorial system devised by man could have stopped him from getting at books. As for me, I knew nothing except what I gathered from *Time* magazine and reading everything I could lay hands on at home, but as I inched sluggishly along the treadmill of the Maycomb County school system, I could not help receiving the impression that I was being cheated out of something. Out of what I knew not, yet I did not believe that twelve years of unrelieved boredom was exactly what the state had in mind for me.

So much for mood. *To Kill a Mockingbird* is rich in ethical and moral instruction as related to both children and parents, but the instruction never seems contrived. The leading figure is "Atticus," the father of the two children. He loves the South, understands the racial attitudes created by ignorance and prejudice even while he fights against their corruption of human justice. So, when the children find themselves beside their father, defending an intelligent and unjustly-accused Negro against the lethal rancor of "white trash," they discover that Atticus does not feel

"embattled." He is willing to take insults, ostracism and threats without wanting to retaliate.

A novel about courage in the deep South, or anywhere in the South, can hardly avoid situations which prove the worth of nonviolently maintained integrity, and this undoctrinaire book shows the natural unfoldment of both qualities in mature human beings. *To Kill a Mockingbird* is a Pulitzer prize novel of 1961, a selection of four major book clubs, and the choice of several critics as the best writing of the past two years. It is a first novel by a thirty-year-old Alabama woman who studied law.

* * *

We still have space for notice of another first novel with something to say about children—*The Clean Breast,* by John Naish (New Authors Limited, London, England, 1961). In the 1920's, as a child, the author wandered from Wales to London and then to Australia—an experience supplying background for the beginning of this story. These passages are vivid reminders of both the minor cruelties of childhood and its enthusiasms. In Chapter I, the young Welsh waifs are searching the woods for snakes to kill, and in this frame of mind turn to questions of what men sometimes do to other men in wars:

> Two hundred yards away the pillaged Roman wall sank down to bridge the stream.
>
> "Let's go up to the fort," I said.
>
> "There's nothing there," said Horace, after a pause. "In any case it's not a fort: it's a keep."
>
> "Rupert Evans said it was a Roman fort," I said.
>
> "Rupert Evans is a siss. An' it's not Roman: it's Norman."
>
> Reg scrambled over and took an old tin from the grass. It clattered over the pebbles as it shot the rapids, and surprisingly stayed afloat when it plunged into the pool. We jumped to our feet in an instant, and pelted it with stones. It sank in the tempest before anyone could score a hit. We juggled and scratched the earth with the stones we had left, sitting again in the peaceful music of the waters.
>
> "The Romans used to be cruel," I said. "They used to cut out people's tongues, and cut off their ears, and slit their noses."
>
> "How could they slit people's noses?" said Horace. "They're made of bone." Reg thought about this.
>
> "I read it in a book," he said defensively.
>
> "I think it's worst to have your eyes burnt out," said Horace, "with a red-hot poker."
>
> "Or be burnt at the stake—all over."
>
> "That's nothin'," said Horace, "cos then you die."
>
> After a while I said:
>
> "I read in a book the Turks is the cruellest. They threw the Amelian babies off a wall, and the soldiers played a game who could catch the most on their bay'nets."
>
> "My father says the Germans are the cruellest," asserted Reg.
>
> "My father says all grown-ups are cruel in a war," I said. And then I added: "Wars must be exciting!"
>
> "Not any more," said Horace. "Bullets kill you quick, an' there's the Red Cross, an' you can't torture prisoners."
>
> "P'raps there'll come a time," said Reg dolefully, "when there'll be no adventure at all. Even if you go to sea now there's no pirates."
>
> There was a long thoughtful silence.

Well, most children are interested in cruelty and profess to be uninterested in love. But children sometimes also respond to a higher ideal than that of excitement and conquest, and especially when a natural teacher such as Miss Harper's Atticus is on hand—one who has so well made the transition from child to man himself.

FRONTIERS

War, Sociology, and History

DAVID RIESMAN'S article on public opinion in the Oct. 2 *New Republic,* titled "The Sense of Despair," contains several points of emphasis familiar to MANAS readers. Dr. Riesman begins by calling attention to the fact that every international event is repeatedly forced upon public attention, at least in its superficial aspects, by the press, radio and TV commentators. (It is impossible not to notice, in twirling a radio dial, that practically all stations repeat every hour on the hour standardized commentary on the crisis of the moment.) The trouble with this bombardment of uniformity is that it forces listening Americans to be aware that Crucial Things are daily going on, but without providing them any meaningful sense of contact with these happenings, save that of worry—or, as Riesman says, "despair":

> When the mass media were less massive, there was a large isolationist belt in the country, in the Midwest and in the working class, but today there is hardly an American who hasn't heard of Castro and who isn't apt to say to an interviewer that he's "tired" of being pushed around by the Communists.
>
> In fact, a more accurate statement would be to say that he was simply tired, tired of thinking, tired of complexity, tired of trying to grasp a world that has poured in on him all too soon. Merge the quick impatience of the educated with the slow impatience of what Veblen called the "underlying population" and a sense of despair is apt to be the result, whether in the South before the firing on Fort Sumter or in the whole country at present before the closing off of East Berlin from West Berlin. While despair may drive some people into apathy, it tends to drive many Americans to what soldiers in the war termed "flight forward," when out of near paralyzing fear soldiers rush at the enemy "to get it over with."

This is the natural reaction of a man who has some historical perspective. Gerald W. Johnson in the *New Republic* for Sept. 11 begins his column by noting a subscriber's curiosity as to why so many writers for this journal quote the ancient Greeks, finding parallels between the perils of our time and those of antiquity. For instance, Adlai Stevenson—in a commencement speech he wrote for Amherst, but never delivered because he was dispatched to South America—used two passages from Thucydides. Mr. Johnson comments that "what Mr. Stevenson may have had in mind is unknown to this observer. . .but if Thucydides has slipped into this page from time to time it is because his book applies to our present situation to an extent that raises the hair on the back of a thoughtful American's neck." For one thing, the Peloponnesian war, which Thucydides describes, passed through phases which sound remarkably like aspects of our own dilemma. At the beginning, Athens was completely triumphant over Sparta. Then, following the death of Pericles, the Athenian democracy turned to a general named Nicias to preserve the status gained. Mr. Johnson continues:

> Nicias, who saw what ought to be done, never had quite enough vigor and resolution to do it. Incapable of coping with Cleon, he allowed that demagogue to undermine the morale of Athens even more than McCarthy did that of America. The so-called Peace of Nicias was actually a Cold War, which drifted inevitably into a hot one because nobody knew how to organize a genuine peace.
>
> When the hot war was launched with the Syracusan expedition, worse bungled than the anti-Castro raid on Cuba, Athens although powerfully armed, was psychologically incapable of waging successful war. At a critical moment the one general of some real capacity, Alcibiades, was yanked out of the theater of war by the Un-Athenian Activities Committee. Since it was known by all men that anyone summoned by that outfit was already as good as hanged, Alcibiades defected to the enemy. And so it went. Nicias contrived to lose both the fleet and the army in an operation as insane as would be an American invasion of Laos.
>
> It is about there that Thucydides quits, but Grote continues the dismal story. By frantic efforts Athens managed to raise a new army and build a new fleet, dragging out the war for years. She even recalled Alcibiades, who did brilliant work for a while. But it was all to no avail. Cleon had done his work too well and the city was morally disarmed. There was no such thing as confidence and trust in Athens. Everybody was suspected as a traitor, and if a man had lived an honorable and useful life for many years,

> that only showed what a shrewd deceiver he was. Athens' state of mind was that of the John Birch Society, and ruin was the inevitable result.

Well, whatever is intended by Mr. Johnson, we can say that while it isn't the intent of MANAS to deprecate a recent President, at the same time it is clear that the various attitudes which brought Nicias to power—and with him eventually Cleon—were characteristic of many of the voting public as a whole during the Eisenhower administration. Discussing the decline of the Athenian democracy, Mr. Johnson concludes, that "naturally the story chills any American who lived through the McCarthy affliction and who had hoped that McCarthyism died with its originator, but who now finds it revived in a more pestilential form under the name of a brainless character who got himself shot for no purpose at all." He continues: "Napoleon collapsed, said Victor Hugo, because 'God was bored by him.' But a nation afraid of itself is a greater bore even than Napoleon." And what of the present situation? Even if one is a great enthusiast of the opportunities of the Kennedy administration, it is necessary to remember that no shift in political parties shifts human attitudes enough to prepare the way for a rapid change of common orientation.

Returning to Dr. Riesman's analysis, we find him suggesting: "Room for maneuver had already been curbed by the history of American-Soviet relations in the postwar years and by the fact that the latent pool of ethnocentric patriotism and hostility to most foreigners endemic to this country had been turned increasingly against the Communists through the ability of right-wing propagandists to profit from Communist aggressions and successes. The more liberal and internationalist forces, very much on the defensive, managed to put Adlai Stevenson and a few other spokesmen into visible posts, but as opinion in the country hardened over Cuba and Berlin, the minority constituencies of these men were further narrowed. . . ."

So what is the "hope of the world"? So far as MANAS is concerned, we find it not in any particular political program, but rather in the perspectives of distinguished and influential thinkers who—like Dr. Riesman in the present instance—look beyond both politics and sociology to the problem of human attitudes. Riesman concludes "The Sense of Despair" with these comments:

> The sense of despair in the West that is the source of some of the feeling that we must make a "Custer's last stand" on Berlin is an outlook beyond military remedy. It can only be combated by evidence that the West is flexible as well as firm, creative as well as courageous. As President Kennedy periodically realizes, it is necessary to mobilize, not more National Guard units, but more experimentalism and imagination in dealing with problems at home and abroad—as illustrated by what could be done to invigorate the commercial and cultural life of West Berlin, or of other still more significant showcases of democracy, such as India. In the present crisis there is a possibility that by negotiations with the Russians, both sides could emerge with a positive achievement: the United States with new and clearer guarantees for West Berlin's freedom and access to the city; Khrushchev with a peace treaty with East Germany and a greater security for his satellite regimes in the area that has become his *cordon sanitaire,* as well as improved relations with the West; both sides with a lessened danger of war.
>
> With the world as it is, we could be grateful for that. But over that horizon lies the possibility that the Russians would preoccupy us less, and our own needs and values would preoccupy us more; that we could shed our new form of the white man's burden: the image of ourselves as either omnipotent or nothing; and that we could persuade both ourselves and the Russians—and even, some day, the Chinese—that we live in a pluralistic world of give and take and that all things considered, we have not fared so badly in that world. The dangers of Soviet misinterpretation of our intention can be coped with by untiring patience, insistent search for points of common interest, and systematic efforts to look at matters as the other side (for whatever reasons) sees them, and with an eye single to the question, not of scoring this or that point in the Cold War, but of beginning to create an international order appropriate to the nuclear age.