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TO GET A BETTER WORD:

THE central problem, in a world like ours, is to become convinced that another kind of world is possible, and then to do something about it. The people who have in some measure changed the world have always had this sort of conviction. Where does such conviction come from? It comes, no doubt, from mysterious and hidden deeps in human nature, but an essential ingredient is the power of sustained imagination.

> To love and bear, to hope till hope creates,
> From its own wreck the thing it contemplates . . .

The individual men who have affected the course of world history have been men who have been possessed by an irrepressible vision of a changed world—men like Tolstoy, Lenin, Gandhi, Edward Bellamy, Henry George. One thing you can say about these men—their private, personal problems didn't stop them from what they felt they had to do. Their personal problems were no doubt irritations, but they were not the real issue. These men were drawn into the maelstrom of history by a sense of participation which would not be denied. Such men include thinkers as well as doers. Thoreau had a part in the liberation of India; Dr. Schweitzer is an architect of some far-off utopia of the future, and of moral awakening in the present. In every case, however, it is the power of the imagination which opens a path for the lives of men who affect history. Wherever there are republics, the thought of John Locke and Montesquieu and Thomas Paine and Thomas Jefferson has raised the archways through which their builders marched.

It is true, of course, that imagination cannot create a new order of relationships out of the empty air. There is an element of destiny in the readiness of the cultural matrix for change. The American Revolution, as John Adams said, already was accomplished in the minds and feelings of the colonists, before the War for Independence began. But there wouldn't have been much of a revolution without the men of imagination who conceived the change and the order which it was to establish. They were practical and sagacious men—we've had few like them since, in the United States—and they were also men of soaring imagination.

It is interesting to compare Gandhi with the Founding Fathers of the United States. Both sought freedom from the British and both were able to marshal the best qualities of the national idea to bring about the independence of their countries. The circumstances of the Indian Revolution were vastly different from those of the American Revolution, but the moral phenomena following both have had much in common. With the removal of the dynamo of nationalist motives, India suffered a reversal of moral polarity which has produced much anxiety among leaders who try to be faithful to Gandhian ideals. In the United States, the pattern of acquisitive self-interest soon dominated the expansive activities of the new country. In neither case, however, did the ideals die. Rather, they were modified by the standard operating procedure of human nature, after the crisis was past, the victory won. The history books tell the story of what happened in the United States. For a helpful account of the course of events—the inevitable reaction—in India, we turn to an article by Frank Moraes in the January *Foreign Affairs*. Gandhi would sorrow, Mr. Moraes says, over India's rush to industrialize. He would be saddened by the survival in many parts of India of the abuse of casteism. "Were Gandhi alive," Moraes says, "he would have tramped the countryside using his great moral authority to exorcise this scourge. But the Congress Party is now in office and, sad to relate, the business of winning elections has even led it to compromise with casteism in areas where votes depend upon pampering the susceptibilities of caste." Gandhi foresaw such unpleasant possibilities:

> In his autobiography [writes Mr. Moraes] Nehru recounts a conversation which reveals Gandhi's uncanny prescience on things relating to his own people and country. The conversation took place

some fifteen years before independence, and in the course of it Gandhi inquired of Nehru how he visualized the future of the Congress and what form the organization should acquire when freedom came. Nehru replied that when independence came the Congress should cease to exist as a party. Gandhi demurred.

"I think the Congress should continue," he said, "but on one condition. It must pass a self-denying ordinance that none of its members should accept a paid job under the State. If any one of its members desired such a post he should resign."

What was in the Mahatma's mind? Clearly he visualized the possibility of power corrupting the fine fibre of Congress character, of dulling the spirit of service, of blunting honesty, and of eventually influencing Congressmen in their capacity as ministers and officials to stand apart from, instead of with, the people as he had always taught them to do. Paradoxically but perhaps significantly, the political power of the Mahatma over his colleagues waned as independence approached, though his moral authority over them and the country was still strong enough to compel the Indian Government soon after partition to hand over to Pakistan 53 crores of rupees ($106,000,000) which the Mahatma felt rightly belonged to the latter.

What of Gandhi's spirit still lives in India? He has, it is often pointed out, two successors in Nehru and Vinoba Bhave, each in his own way furthering certain of Gandhi's vision and ends. But Gandhi himself etched certain basic realizations on the Indian mind. The following seems a just appraisal of Gandhi's lasting contributions to his people:

To Gandhi the basic fact of economics was that man must eat. His views on politics and economics, because they were fundamental, appear to many to be elementary. They were founded in an understanding of the human personality and in an appreciation and awareness of the basic needs and desires of India's common man. Among the many enduring lessons which Gandhi taught is his insistence on the dignity of manual labor. The *charkha* symbolizes self-sufficiency but it also demonstrates the beauty and value of working with one's hands. Gandhi's sense of social service took many forms, from his passion for nursing the sick to performing the most menial tasks such as cleaning latrines. There was no trace of sqeamishness in his make-up.

If he imbued many in India with a sense of service he also set up both for himself and others an exacting code and a meticulous standard of conduct and performance. He set scrupulous standards which the people of India came instinctively to expect from their leaders and which, despite a marked deterioration after the Mahatma's death, continue to influence and govern the conduct of public men and affairs. Therein lies Gandhi's greatest legacy—the spread of a moral climate of thought, behavior and action which serves as the "voice of conscience" to many thousands of Indians, just as the Mahatma himself relied on what he called his inner voice which was really his sense of intuition.

Alongside the setting up and observance of standards, Gandhi made another distinctive contribution. He taught the Indian people to respect the simple way of life. This lesson lives. If in the process he tended sometimes to idealize poverty, he strove more than any of his countrymen to lift the common man from the degradation of poverty.

This account is useful to Americans as an indication of how the influence of great men survives the passing of greatness. It makes a kind of cultural *mold*, helping the not-so-great and even the mediocre to rise to a stature that would have been unattainable for them without the example of those who came before. Now it is conceivable that this sort of analysis will irritate some readers, as an unwelcome repetition of the "great man" theory of history. We plead, in reply, that something like the "great man" theory of history is unavoidable, if the values we associate with individuality are to be preserved. The only alternative, as we see it, is to accept some sort of mystical secretion from the "masses," as the source of progress. And this alternative has proved itself the fruitful parent of endless delusions. It leads, not to conditions which emancipate the individual, but to a cumbrous system which condemns the individual to rigid patterns of behavior and even of thought. No "vision" begins as a corporate creation. Many men may, in time, contribute to a vision, but it cannot survive being "digested" by a team of professional rationalizers of social foresight, or any other kind of foresight. The highest good, for man, is spontaneous activity, and the social matrix in which spontaneous activity most easily takes place is suffused with a living reverence

for the unpremeditated act, for unpredictable originality.

But what of the future? The future remains obscure, perhaps, by reason of its lack of similarity to the past. For there to be any dramatic step out of the present, some kind of leverage is needed, comparable to the national idea, which was the inspiration of both the American and the Indian Revolutions. What, it may be asked, is wrong with the ideal of *Internationalism?* Nothing is wrong with it, except that, to be practical, it does not seem to have the same kind of power as the national idea. Nationalism involves feelings which mix both idealism and self-interest. Nationalism is usually confronted by tangible obstacles of easily definable evil. The harm done by the enemies of the national spirit is neither vague nor abstract. A leader can marshal the emotions of nationalism with little difficulty. This is not the case with the emotions of internationalism. The internationalist is a man who, in some measure, is able to think impersonally and abstractly. He has a general concern for human good. By comparison with the nationalists, the number of people capable of internationalist emotions is very small.

The difficulty is really quite clear. The nationalist is aroused because he is deprived. The internationalist is aroused when any man is deprived.

It is possible, of course, by careful argument, to relate the good of the individual with the good of all—to show that the survival of one people is hardly possible, today, without the survival of all other peoples; but recognition of the force of this argument calls for habits of serious thinking. Such habits are not widespread.

The tendency, at this point, is for someone to say that, despite these difficulties, we *must* campaign for internationalism. Well, we certainly ought to do something besides wring our hands.

But without disputing the claims of the internationalists, one might raise some other questions. These terms, for example, "national" and "international"—what do they mean? For one thing, they identify crucial human values with groups of men as organized in States, or in one Great Big State (Internationalism naturally looks toward a single world organization as its logical fulfillment). They unmistakably represent political concepts.

It is legitimate to ask: Should we make our ultimate values depend upon political conceptions of the good? Or should we first do some pre-political thinking? Political philosophy, after all, is not primary philosophy. It does not establish the Good. Political philosophy is intended to implement the Good, after it has been defined in more elementary terms. Political values, therefore, are secondary values. They are meant to serve the primary values.

What, then, are the primary values?

We are stopped, here, by the liberal, anti-authoritarian tradition, which declares—with considerable show of reason—that no one has any business to declare what the primary values are. These belong, it is said, to purely private conviction.

It is time to contradict this view, and to say that it is everyone's business to make declarations about primary values. To speak with conviction about primary values is not the same as wanting to legislate about them. There is a lot of confusion on this subject—in the assumption that primary values *can* be legislated about, on the one hand; and, in another sense, in the assumption that you can avoid legislating about them.

You can't legislate about primary values, in the sense that no truth can be established by law; in fact, you kill the truth by trying to make it into law, because the truth about primary values is inaccessible to law or any "public" form of vehicle.

And you can't avoid legislating about them, in this other sense, since all political concepts issue from judgments about the nature, vocation, rights, and responsibilities, of man.

In short, legislation invariably grows out of an *atmosphere* of ideas concerning primary values—the "moral climate of ideas"—but it can never articulate those values with precision, except in negative terms.

The point, here, is that political thought grows weak and ineffectual in a culture which has grown indifferent to the determination of primary values.

And the conclusion, here, is that the ideals which we now cloak with the term "internationalism" will continue to animate only a small minority of persons so long as they have to be filtered through the categories of political thought in order to be recognized.

The question is, What are we, before we are "citizens," whether of a nation or of the world?

What do we want to do, before we get around to deciding upon the political forms which will let us do it?

If you don't have anything important to do, before you pick your national or international politics, you don't have any serious reason for caring whether your politics is national or international—no reason, that is, that is better than questions about "survival," and all the rest of the last-ditch arguments which you hear on this controversy.

Fundamentally, the idea that "you'll be dead if you don't do this" is not very persuasive to the best intelligence of human beings. A lot of men have done great things in order to be more alive, but not just to avoid being dead. To "avoid destruction" is not particularly worthy as a dominant motive in life. It is certainly no foundation for a philosophy. But that is where the nationalist-internationalist debate sets the argument. We ought to find a better level and new terms for the issues in this argument.

It is now time for somebody to say, "Well, what do you *mean*? You're really talking about religion, and all that stuff, aren't you?"

And this is the place where a discussion such as this one often either dies or gets lost by reason of over-simplification. If we are talking about religion, it is not the kind of religion that is meant by the man who is impatient to end the discussion. For what he means by religion is the right of every man to believe any damn fool thing he wants to. That is not what we, if the term must be used, are willing to let religion mean. So, in this discussion, we had rather not use the term at all.

This discussion is about primary values—about what your life means in the morning, when you look at the day ahead, and whether that day is going to increase your life; and if so, how; and if not, why not. Ordinary religion has a way of making the answers to such inquiries far too easy.

There is a sense in which every man is alone in the Universe. There is a sense in which a sword of Damocles hangs over the head of every one of us, and in which every one of us sits in the Siege Perilous. A man can't know much about ultimate values—the primary values—unless he has felt the hazard of being human, along with its occasional joys. And he has to feel it as a thing in itself, and not by reason of some personal or group emergency.

It is important to gain some sense of forging the meaning of one's life for one's self. This is a feeling that must be gained at first hand, without help, without prayer or counsel. It has to be done alone. To have any kind of true companionship, one must first endure the agonies of loneliness. To participate in the fraternity of life, a man must have felt to the point of intolerable pain the indifference of the world to his fate.

These climactic emotional experiences—and they are more than emotional—emotional-intellectual, perhaps—are the foundation for thinking about primary values. A man has to seek these experiences and to learn to long for them, the way his body longs for food and drink, and the way his heart longs for love.

What can tradition do for us, in this respect? It can tell us, and keep on telling us, that the truth—religious truth, philosophic truth, any kind of truth worth pursuing with the full complement of human capacities—must be sought in this way. Tradition used to do this. Even the so-called "primitive" societies instructed their young along these lines. They guarded against *hubris;* a real man, they taught the young, is a man who has been through the fire. They described the process of growing into manhood in magical terms. Perhaps that is better than describing it in biological terms. The biological terms contain no hint of what a man may grow up *to*.

Hence this dreadful silence on the question of primary values. We don't even tell the young that they have some discoveries to make. We tell them to work hard in school; we tell them to meet nice

people; we tell them not to drink too much, to get good jobs and to be successes. We speak to them in heavy sententious tones about things that don't matter at all. We speak out of empty hearts in the vocabulary of yesterday's slogans and then reproach them for their apathy or their delinquency. We hide from them the utter poverty of our lives, hoping they'll not find us out, yet wanting something "better" for them!

We set the stage for it perfectly, and then wonder why we get blind, nihilistic rebellion. We give the young the guidance of half-conscious hypocrisy and wonder why they don't come to us for advice—why we can't get "close" to them. What are we worth, that they should want to be close to us? If we were doing a little honest suffering, it might be different. We suffer, all right, but how much of it is honest—in, that is, a worthy cause, the result of genuine questioning?

A Spanish anarchist educator said that a child's education must begin with his grandfather—which means that we can't help our own children very much, but that we may be able to help theirs. But we can't help anybody except by beginning to help ourselves. We help ourselves by seeking vision—even weak, faltering, uncertain vision, just so long as it is our own, and not something we heard somewhere. It doesn't matter where you begin. You can start wondering about what happens when you die, or what happened when you were born. One thing leads to another. What have you been making all your life? Is it a good thing to make? If not, why did you bother? Which embarrasses you the most—questions like that from somebody else, or from yourself? Which *ought* to bother you the most? To what or whom are you accountable? And so on.

You can't have any internationalism among people who are indifferent to these questions. You can't stir up a real interest in liberty or freedom among people who fear the tiny beginnings of freedom in their own minds—who think that liberty and freedom are somehow in the charge of the courts and the civil liberties unions.

The project is to make a home, an environment, a place of welcome, for men of imagination, for the men who have the genius to start in making a better world out of the one we've got. If we are those men, or if some of them are among us, we shall have to begin to think like them and behave like them. To get a better world, we must first imagine it; and to imagine it, we must believe that it is possible; and to believe it is possible, these days, means to want it above all else. How shall we learn to want it above all else? By discovering that the world we have is a mean and shameful place where an honest human being ought not to be willing to live. How shall we discover this? By looking at our lives with the fresh eyes of those who are determined to investigate and declare, as well as they are able, the primary values of human life.

REVIEW

LIBERALISM REVISITED

THE CASE FOR MODERN MAN, by Charles Frankel (Harper, 1956) is a defense of liberalism and of what the author calls the "revolution of modernity." Most of all, however, it is a defense of the human mind and of its competence to deal with the problems of mankind. If Mr. Frankel must be classified, he should probably be called a scientific humanist, although he rises above classification by being an acutely intelligent, witty, and articulate scientific humanist. *The Case for Modern Man* is a book that should be paired with Peter Viereck's *The Unadjusted Man*, for Mr. Viereck is the advocate of a wise conservatism, as contrasted with Mr. Frankel's defense of an ideal liberalism.

In his last chapter, Mr. Frankel gives his reasons for defending modern man:

> . . . the revolution of modernity has not been only a material revolution or an intellectual revolution. It has been a moral revolution of extraordinary scope, a radical alteration in what the human imagination is prepared to envisage and demand. And it has changed the basic dimensions in which we measure happiness and unhappiness, success and failure. It has given us the sense that we make our own history, it has led us to impose new and more exacting demands upon ourselves and our leaders; it has set loose the restless vision of a world in which men might be liberated from age-old burdens, and come to set their own standards and govern their own lives.... it developed a radically new outlook on human destiny, which saw the meaning of history in terms of the progress of the human mind and held that human history could be made to follow the direction men chose to give it. Prometheus was the first modern. The revolution of modernity proposed to put men squarely on Prometheus' side. It is a unique venture in human affairs, and we can only relieve the strains and tensions it has created by taking it seriously. Our disappointments are real. But they are real because our powers are great and our expectations legitimately high.

This is a fairly theoretical book. That is, it gets to the end without ever mentioning thermo-nuclear weapons and the threat of World War III as by-products of the revolution of modernity. Yet, more than other modern books of criticism which avoid this problem, *The Case for Modern Man* has the feeling of being concerned with matters of genuine importance. This feeling comes, we think, from its insistence upon the idea that man must work out his own destiny. The thesis of the book emerges in the form of an argument with four modern thinkers whose tendency is to take the initiative of history and human decision away from man's mind. These thinkers are Jacques Maritain, Reinhold Niebuhr, Karl Mannheim, and Arnold Toynbee. Of the first three, Mr. Frankel says:

> Professor Maritain argues that in all the essential questions of morals and politics what we are to seek are absolutes that stand above progress and change. Mr. Niebuhr urges that the incurable sinfulness of man sets an impassable barrier to what objective and disinterested intelligence can do in human history. That human reason does not develop the power to determine its own independent course, is the fundamental theme of historicist philosophies like Mannheim's.

Of Toynbee, he says:

> His philosophy of history tells us that the meaning of history is not the gradual extension of man's understanding of nature and himself through the growth of intelligence, nor is it the gradual advance of freedom and happiness in this world through law and concerted social action. The meaning of history is the conversion of men's values away from such worldly objectives, and the transfiguring of men into saints. The conditions that are favorable to material progress and to intellectual progress are precisely the conditions that endanger the true end of history and lead to a civilization's decline.

Well, if we have to choose sides, we shall probably line up with Mr. Frankel, not because we agree especially with his conclusions, but because we agree with his intentions, which are to preserve the integrity of human thought and decision from supernatural confinements.

What, exactly, is Frankel defending?

> To hold the liberal view of history meant to believe in "progress." It meant to believe that man could better his condition indefinitely by the application of his intelligence to his affairs; it meant, further, to measure the improvement of man in secular terms, in terms of his growth in knowledge, the diminution of pain and suffering, the increase of joy, the diffusion and refinement of the civilized arts;

> and it meant that such improvement in the condition—and, indeed, in the nature—of man could be brought about by deliberately adopted legislative and judicial techniques which would gradually change the institutions that framed men's lives. The liberal view of history was associated with the doctrine—sometimes couched in terms of "natural rights," sometimes in terms of the utilitarian principles of pleasure and pain—that in matters of morals every man might be his own priest, judging the final worth of things for himself. It looked to public education and to the developing techniques of communication to spread intelligence in the community; and it looked for the steady elimination of socially inherited inequalities, which prevented men from defending themselves against exploitation, and were responsible for most of the crimes and follies that had dominated the record of human history. It expected, therefore, to see political authority dispersed in the community at large, and to see a steady movement away from government by coercion and toward government by rational consent. And as the basis of all this, supporting and propelling it, it saw the fact of intellectual progress, now assured by the advent of science—an intellectual progress which would move the human mind away from animistic and mythological modes of thought toward definite positive knowledge of fact, and which would substitute this knowledge of fact for tradition or revelation as the new foundation for moral and political behavior.

Mr. Frankel is well aware of some of the weaknesses and failures of liberalism. The liberal, he points out, "now seems to be the man who has his head turned backward, and who is anxious to see things kept the way they were." One difficulty of the liberal lies in the fact that the communists have "usurped and perverted the traditional vocabulary of liberalism, and their calculated doubletalk has left no clear and unambiguous language for stating the liberal case—a contribution to semantic corruption in which our advertising men and patrioteers have joined." Further:

> Soviet imperialism has done something which no other modern imperialism has been able to do: it has moved to power by exploiting the generous impulses and large hopes that have gone with the liberal tradition. The Nazis showed us the depths of which human beings are capable; the Communists have shown us the same depths while manipulating a social vision. The faith in science, the belief in progress, the ideals of liberty, equality, and fraternity, have all been paraded before us in a murderers' masquerade. "I have the imagination of disaster," Henry James wrote in 1896, "and see life as ferocious and sinister." In the sixty years since he wrote the imagination of disaster has overwhelmed the liberal vision.

Those who too easily cast aside the liberal vision have need to read this book. When you cast aside the liberal vision, you cast aside the Renaissance and, in Mr. Frankel's terms, your faith in man.

What is wrong with this book? Its main fault, it seems to us, is an over-simplified faith in the social sciences. Mr. Frankel composes for the reader a short primer on scientific method to demonstrate that "scientific objectivity" toward human beings is quite possible, illustrating the claim with instances of the application of the method. For example—

> . . . we know that a straight stick normally looks bent in the water. If a man tells us that such a stick, suspended in the water, nevertheless looks straight to him, we do not accuse ourselves of having only a partial perspective on things, and tolerantly proceed to build a new perspective which takes his observation into account. We take the man to an oculist.

Now it may be said that a science of man is possible, but this, we are fairly sure, will not be like the science Mr. Frankel is talking about. Objectivity toward the stick in the water and the phenomenon of refraction is not the same as objectivity toward a human being. You can isolate a stick and declare its properties, and you can do the same with the behavior of light. But you can't do this with human beings and it becomes dangerous presumption to suggest that you can. Man is both subject and object, and the subject part of him is the most important part—the part inaccessible to analysis.

You don't have to insist that man is an "object" in order to support the liberal vision as Mr. Frankel states it. And you don't have to side with Jacques Maritain and Reinhold Niebuhr and Arnold Toynbee in order to disagree with certain of Mr. Frankel's supporting arguments.

COMMENTARY
LETTER FROM MOSCOW

[We asked an American musician who recently toured Soviet Russia with the Philadelphia Symphony Orchestra to do us a "Letter from MOSCOW." Normally, we print these letters on page two, but this communication seems rather to belong on the editorial page. It will, we think, warm the hearts of all MANAS readers.

There are some bits of information that may be added to what our correspondent says about the Russians. In Russia, everybody goes to concerts—not just the "intellectuals." Appreciation of great music is part of Russian national life. The audiences at these concerts, we are told, were a real cross-section of the Russian people. Workers came to hear the orchestra, as well as poets and bureaucrats. It was an audience more representative of the Russian people than Russian musicians would get of Americans at Carnegie Hall. We believe that the magic our correspondent describes was there, that it happened just as he said.—Editors.]

I AM a musician with the Philadelphia Orchestra in Russia, an ambassador of good-will. The importance of our mission is dynamically impressed upon us in the direct, overwhelming response of the Russian people—those thousands who listen to our concerts—to our overture of friendship. For it is not only our manner of playing which they like and applaud. Our presence here is tangible evidence that the cordial relationship between us—and the Russians demonstrate their desire for this in thunderous applause and emotional cheers.

For at our concerts in Kiev, here in Moscow—and I'm sure in Leningrad, to follow—Russian spokesmen appear on our platform bearing gifts of flowers (a lovely custom) and with one refrain underlying their words of welcome. The audiences listen with intense attention to their expression of the hope that our visit will pave the way for friendly feelings, peace, and a better understanding between our peoples. For the listeners these are words of intense meaning and they break forth spontaneously, irresistibly into thunderous demonstrations of approval. And then they listen eagerly as the interpreter repeats in Russian the response of our conductor, Eugene Ormandy, who tells them that we bring with us a message of love and good-will from the American people. The interpreter can barely conclude her translated statement when they almost bring the walls down with their expression of joy.

At the back of my head arises a question, a wonder—why such intensity of expression? It is true that racial temperaments vary; only last winter we received a tumultuous expression of approval in Cuba, and the Slavic nature is certainly more demonstrative than our own. But I wonder if a relief from tension—the tension of anxiety—doesn't add unconsciously to the degree of their applause and cheers. For these people know the meaning of war—millions killed, wounded and maimed, and a large area of their homes and cities devastated. As a German woman said to me, "You Americans know nothing of war!" So perhaps our visit is helping to lay this spectre for them.

It is a moving experience and cracks away the hard crust of cynicism with which many of us approached this trip. However we disapprove and deplore many aspects of Russian life, and justly so, I believe (we were made aware of these in individual experiences), *the Russian people want peace.* It seems difficult to reconcile the attitudes and actions of their political leaders with this simple spontaneous response of People to our offering of friendship. Yes, people, just like our own families. But then, maybe the face-saving device of official public truculence may finally find reason to give way to a deepening feeling which should grow as the result of the cultural exchange program now proceeding between America and Russia. I hope so.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves

WHERE DID YOU GO? . . . . OUT

W. W. NORTON & Co., we understand, is having quite a run on a little book of 124 pages by Robert Paul Smith—*"Where Did You Go?" . . . "Out." "What Did You Do?" "Nothing."* After sampling a few of Mr. Smith's passages, which mix delightful whimsey with sage comment, we suspect that many MANAS readers will kind themselves going "Out" for a copy of this volume, either from the library or from the book store ($2.95).

Mr. Smith writes on what he feels to be neglected psychological facts about the lives of small children. He thinks adults have become so concerned about "understanding" the child—and have consequently made up so many complicated educational procedures to apply to children—that the children themselves have gradually been denied a natural world of their own. Certainly throughout the world the tendency is toward routinizing human behavior. If children need the experience of building their *own* world when they are young, and if this is denied them through the benevolent interference of too many "activities" organized by adults, it may be that irrational and rebellious behavior in the late teenage years comes as a natural reaction. The following passage strikes home:

> I don't know things now like I used to know them. What we knew as kids, what we learned from other kids, was not tentatively true, or extremely probable, or proven by science or polls or surveys. We were savages, we were in that stage of the world's history when the earth stood still and everything else moved. I wrote on the flyleaf of my schoolbooks, and apparently every other kid in the world did, including James Joyce and Abe Lincoln and I am sure Tito and Fats Waller and Michelangelo, in descending order my name, my street, my town, my county, my state, my country, my continent, my hemisphere, my planet, my solar system. And let nobody dissemble: it started out with me, the universe was the outer circle of a number of concentric rings, and the center point was me, me, me, sixty-two pounds wringing wet with heavy shoes on. I have the notion, and perhaps I am wrong, that kids don't feel that way any more. We grownups are always around pumping our kids full of what we laughingly call facts. They don't want science. They want magic. They don't want hypotheses, they want immutable truth. They want to be, they should be, in a clearing in the jungle painting themselves blue dancing around the fire and making it rain by patting snakes and shaking rattles. It is so strange: nobody, so far as I know, sat around worrying about the insides of our heads, and we made ourselves safe. Time enough to find out, as we are finding out now, that nothing is so. Not even close to so.

Mr. Smith does not, however, believe that the trouble is in our having too many rules for children. It is rather too much interference, and too few rules. From the cradle on, he contends, the child needs some absolute, arbitrary rules and needs them badly. This, he says, is why:

> I can no longer remember the crisis which involved my son: but in essence, it had reached the point, the point of all arguments, when he was saying the hell he would and I was saying the hell he wouldn't. I don't know—go to bed, or get out of bed, or come in from the garden or get the hell out into the garden.
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> He was two or three. His mother rushed in to say that I must Gesell him a little, or at least Spock him or treat him with a little Ilg. I had a moment of pure illumination: I stood there and saw inside his head as clearly as if there had been a pane of glass let in his forehead. What he was saying was, "Please, please, for Heaven's sake, somebody come and take this decision out of my hands, it's too big for me."
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> I grabbed him and picked him up and carried him to wherever it was I thought he was supposed to go. He was little then, he hit me and bit me and wet me, he hollered bloody murder and did his level best to kill me. I remember now, it was to his bed he was supposed to go. I got him there, and dumped him in, put the crib side up. He was in his cage, and he had been put there by his keeper, and he went to sleep as happy as ever I saw him. There were rules. Nobody was going to leave him out in the middle of nowhere trying to figure out what he was supposed to do, when he was too young to know what to do.

So Mr. Smith is able to say: "Let me settle the problem of juvenile delinquency once and for

all, because I happen to know: the reason these kids are getting in trouble with cops is because cops are the first people they meet who say, and mean it, 'You can't do that.' If there's anything in the world kids need, it's rules."

What does a child do when left to his own devices? Well, when he is young enough we don't really have to wonder about the significance of his undertakings. Let him fool around with the world in his own way. Don't worry if he often seems bored, concluding that he should be sent to camp for a lot of "planned" activities. While he may be bored part of the time when left on his own, he accepts that particular sort of boredom as a natural background for the occasional bright moment of interest, illumination, or adventure:

> The kids are at camp, because, for Heaven's sake what are the kids going to do with themselves all summer? Well, it would be nice, I think, if they spent an afternoon kicking a can. It might be a good thing if they dug a hole. No, no, no. Not a foundation, or a well, or a mother symbol. Just a hole. For no reason. Just to dig a hole. After a while, they could fill it with water, if they liked. They might find a stone that they could believe was an axe-head, or a fossil. They might find a penny. Or a very antique nail. Or a bone. A saber-tooth tiger's kneecap. Or if they didn't want to fill the hole with water, they could put something in it like a penny, or a nail, or an axe-head, or a dead bird and cover it with dirt and leave it there for a while, so they could dig it up later and see what happens to something that you leave in the dirt for a while.

Mr. Smith has illustrations designed to remind us that when children have too much too easily, the edge of their enjoyment is dulled. It is simply not *natural* for the young to receive what they want without waiting for it, at least some of the time. Remember making a spool tank, the little contraption consisting of an empty spool, matches, and a rubber band? Smith offered to build one for a friend's child and the boy asked his mother for a spool:

> He comes back with a spool that has at least three feet of thread on it. You relax, and *this* mother, this flouter of tradition, *goes ahead and tells this kid he can unwind and throw away the three feet of thread.* When we were kids, we had to wait at least six months for an empty spool. A spool was empty when the thread was used up. For sewing. There was one big spool in my mother's sewing box, the kind that they use in factory machines. It would have made a spool tank bigger than any on the block. On the block hell, in the world.
>
> It would have used rubber bands cut from an inner tube and a wax washer cut from a plumber's candle and pencils instead of matches. I wanted that spool more than I have wanted anything else in my life until I was fifteen and saw Mary Astor. I'm still waiting for it. It had thread on it, and when the world was running right, kids who wanted spools had to wait for empty spools.

Mr. Smith could doubtless be as apt a weaver of educational theories as practically anyone else. But he seems to belong more to the children themselves than to the educationists, for he is never sentimental about little people—and neither are children about children. He affords a picture of childhood which makes children seem real, just as they stand, sit, run or crawl. We ought to let this picture grow for a while, and reserve our theories for filling in around the edges. Thus we might recover some of the mood immortalized by Mark Twain, in which many, many children, prior to the hipster stage, still live.

FRONTIERS

What the Nuclear Weapons Do

IT is surprising how few people, even intelligent people, realise what an effect the nuclear weapons are having on our society. Almost everybody seems to imagine that you can have these monsters about and yet still be the same people you were before they arrived. And this is wrong, dangerously wrong. The things are quietly dealing out some forms of death already. We are not the same people we were, and perhaps we shall never be the same people.

First of all, the H-bombs, by creating an atmosphere in which "security" is all-important, have greatly increased the power of the state at the expense of the liberty of the subject. I agree that this was happening before we had nuclear weapons, but they have speeded up the miserable process. They have also cut protests against this loss of liberty down to a minimum. People accept it almost without a murmur. We are all living on a knife-edge, they feel, so the politicians and officials must be given more power.

Just over a week ago, from this time of writing, the Swiss Government suddenly banned an international conference of anti-nuclear groups that some of us had arranged to attend in Basle. Yes, the Swiss—of all people! And this action, clean against the whole national tradition of this people, did not rate a small paragraph in most English newspapers. We can pay for the bombs, we can risk obliteration by them, but we must not meet in an hotel ballroom to talk about them.

Passports and visas, once the right of any citizen not wanted by the police, are coming to be regarded as a government favour. Only nice good children can be allowed to travel. The very things we dislike about Communism we are beginning to imitate ourselves. The very people who ask us to pay, suffer and die for the Free World are busy cutting the freedom out of it. We are so busy with our air bases, bombs, rockets and security that we cannot challenge the Communist idea with the one good weapon we have to fight it—our idea of personal freedom.

It is the H-bombs chiefly that maintain the atmosphere of permanent "crisis," which politicians, military leaders and officials pretend to dislike; and perhaps consciously they do. But unconsciously they delay changing this atmosphere, probably because it helps them to claim more and more power and privileges. In this atmosphere they have us where they want us.

In this nuclear age, two-thirds of the people who are against these weapons dare not get up on a public platform and say so. This is a situation we know only too well, after organising so many meetings of protest. I have told audiences more than once that the reason they have to be addressed by parsons, authors, journalists, dons, is that all the more important and official people, including service chiefs and scientists, though they agree with us, dare not say so in public. I am not blaming them. This is the spirit of our age.

People by the score have looked quickly over their shoulders and then whispered, "Actually I'm on your side." Even newspapermen have done this, before returning to the office to misrepresent our meeting. But it is the quick look over the shoulder that frightens me, because I have met it before, between the wars in the totalitarian countries. And it is the poisonous atmosphere of the big bombs that has brought that look to this country.

Again, why is it the young men of Western Europe, the Free World, no longer want to defend their countries? Are they cowards? Have they no public spirit? No, the fault is not theirs. The giant bombs have done it. Just the numbing, paralysing idea of them has done it. The young men shrug their shoulders; they have heard or read too much about nuclear warfare. Why volunteer for anything? Why bother trying to do anything?

And it is no coincidence that all these preparations for nuclear war arrive at the very time when there are complaints, especially in

Britain and America, that the young men now in universities and colleges have narrower interests, more tame conformity of spirit, less sparkle and devil in them, than similar young men used to have. If I have read or heard this complaint once, I must have heard or read it a hundred times. I can only hope that there are nuclear physicists, planning bigger and better bombs, who are beginning to look at their sons in despair. For they and the dangerous muddlers who employ them have taken the liveliness, rebellion, guts and spirit, out of these boys.

The psychological effects of this nuclear thing, in my view, are both far-reaching and profound. There are desperate hidden conflicts deep in people's minds. Projection proceeds at a furious rate. Those who accept the bombs have to magnify and heighten their feelings to justify the presence of the monsters. The enemy must be wicked beyond belief or we wouldn't have these things. Sometimes I have felt that all the people who compel themselves to accept these nuclear weapons can no longer think straight; they are too tangled up inside; and these are the people who when we argue against nuclear weapons, as quietly and reasonably as we know how, turn angry and nasty at once, and yell at us that we are merely being emotional. And I know that during these last six months, for one counter-argument in the press I must have had a dozen paragraphs of sheer personal abuse. The ordinary decencies of debate are forgotten at once. The bombs are doing it.

I do not know how it is in America, but here in Britain I doubt if politics have ever been duller and smaller or of less interest to the public. Party leaders, unable to get a hundred people to attend a meeting, are hastily trying to turn themselves into "television personalities." This makes the democracy we boast about a mere farce, and indeed, in my view, Britain in these 'Fifties is a country entirely run by what I call "Topside," that is, Top people who believe in nothing except being on Top. Is it mere chance that this is happening while we live in the shadow of these nuclear armaments? Of course not.

People here will tell you that they never think about this subject. Now the trouble about not thinking about one subject is that soon you may stop thinking about a lot of other subjects too. (That happened too when sex was not to be thought about.) You just stop thinking altogether. Mental liveliness gives way to a blank acceptance of everything. Or a dishonesty that steadily corrupts the whole mind and outlook. Numbness and dumbness, dishonesty and despair, these are prominent among the signs of our time. So are the concentration of power and its increasing arrogance, the decline of personal independence and individual liberty. We are being defeated by the weapons we have made to guard us against defeat.

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