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THE QUEST FOR SELF-RELIANCE

THE present is a strange and rather long moment in history when from a slow collapse over several decades the world is being left without authorities of any sort. Religious authority began to recede as the discoveries of Galileo and Newton spread throughout the world. Then, in 1945, faith in science withered at its roots when the physicists gave to the politicians a terrible weapon with which to destroy the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. While the scientists, in the persons of its most distinguished representatives, never claimed to possess the sort of knowledge that people long for in time of great trouble, the popularizers of science for years made extravagant predictions of all that science will do for us through technological advance, so that physicists and chemists and often biologists for at least two generations have been assigned to an almost priestly office, but the horrors of nuclear fission have put an end to that. Meanwhile, the leaders of various cults have come forward, hoping to profit from the anxieties of people who have rather suddenly found themselves without any solid authority to turn to—no reliable ancestral religion, no government that rules in behalf of the public good, and no codified set of scientific rules that can be turned to with honest hope. Have we, within ourselves, the capacity to solve the sort of problems that seem to beset us on every side—some, like the threat of nuclear war, so formidable and complex that it seems outside the area of individual control?

Two responses are possible to such a burdensome situation. One is to look for some kind of leader, teacher, friend or sage who will relieve us of the necessity of making our own decisions about such questions, which is to say, help us not to have to think for ourselves any more, since we are already out over our heads. The other response is to say to ourselves that, at last, through a sudden change in our circumstances, we must now find out what kind of metal we are made of, and take back to ourselves the responsibilities which the cultural habits of the past made it seem natural to delegate to others, on whom we came, almost like children, to rely. In short, it may be frightening, but it is also challenging, to find that we must think for ourselves.

If this is now the human situation, then the old issues which we used to debate will gradually dissolve into two basic alternatives—shall we keep ourselves free to make up our own minds, or shall we locate the authority on which we shall henceforth rely, no matter what. Setting the problem in this way, we may find ourselves seeking new companions, new associations with others who may be looking in the same direction as we are, and taking counsel with them. The other way would be not to seek ways of strengthening ourselves and our confidence in ourselves, but to look for a strong leader who would do away with our fears. A good account of this tendency is supplied by A. H. Maslow in his book, *Eupsychian Management.* Speaking of paranoid leaders, he says:

> The general point was to understand why it was that obviously borderline people like Hitler or Stalin or Senator McCarthy or some of the Birchers or people of this sort can gather so many followers. It seemed clear that one reason they could was because they were so decisive, so sure of themselves, so unwavering, so definite about what they wanted and didn't want, so clear about right and wrong, etc. In a nation in which most people do not have an identity, or a real self, in which they are all confused about right and wrong, about good and evil, in which they are basically uncertain about what they want and what they don't want, then they are apt to admire and succumb and look for leadership to any person who seems to know definitely what he wants. Since the democratic leader, the nonauthoritarian person in

> general, is apt to be marked by tolerance and by admission of ignorance, by willingness to admit that he doesn't know everything, sometimes for less educated people the decisive paranoid authoritarian then can look very attractive and relieve the follower of all anxiety. . . .
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> The person who is able to be decisive, who is able to make a decision and stick to it, who is able to know definitely what he wants, to know he likes this and dislikes that and no uncertainty about it, who is less apt to be changeable, who is more likely to be predictable, to be counted on, who is less suggestible, less influenced by contradiction—such a person is in general more apt to be chosen as the administrative type or the leadership type. They are simply more predictable, more definite about what they like and dislike, less changeable, etc. The fact that this may be for pathological reasons need not be visible to the psychologically unsophisticated person.

This seems a rather precise account of our present situation, illuminating the character of many leaders of the time and explaining their political success. It illustrates the functioning in current history of the wrong kind of hierarchy and the radical need for a kind of maturation in the population at large which we have no idea how to produce except by bitter experience. What kind of people, then do we need? This question has obvious hazards. A useful and communicable answer is hard to imagine, yet one that is at least available may also be found in Maslow's works. Maslow was above all else a balanced thinker, capable, as the foregoing quotation shows, of exacting analysis, but also able to speak with authority of the inventive, self-reliant qualities of human beings. He evolved above all a psychology of *health*, along with a clear understanding of human weakness. The impact on him early in his professional life of two remarkable human beings, his teachers, Ruth Benedict and Max Wertheimer, compelled him to study them and in the process to develop his psychology of health. This, for him, shaped a lifetime of research and evolved a new vocabulary for the science of psychology. The key terms in this vocabulary were and are "self-actualization" and "peak experience."

He tells about this early in his last book, *Farther Reaches of Human Nature.* Here we go to his earlier volume, *Toward a Psychology of Being*, for a passage on creativity which throws light on the kind of people who, somehow or other, have the quality our culture needs most. These are people who are not devastated by the loss of external authority because they gave it little attention when it existed. Maslow had been studying a group who were, he felt, really healthy people—self-actualizers, he called them—and learned something important about the qualities of creative people. He confined himself, he said, to trying to understand the "kind of creativeness which is the universal heritage of every human being that is born, and which seems to co-vary with psychological health."

> . . . I soon discovered that I had, like most other people, been thinking of creativeness in terms of products, and secondly, I had unconsciously confined creativeness to certain conventional areas only of human endeavor, unconsciously assuming that *any* painter, *any* poet, *any* composer was leading a creative life. Theorists, artists, scientists, inventors, writers could be creative. Nobody else could be. Unconsciously I had assumed that creativeness was the prerogative solely of certain professionals.
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> But these expectations were broken up by various of my subjects. For instance, one woman, uneducated, poor, a full-time housewife and mother, did none of these conventionally creative things and yet was a marvelous cook, mother, wife and homemaker. With little money, her home was somehow always beautiful. She was a perfect hostess. Her meals were banquets. Her taste in linens, silver, glass, crockery and furniture was impeccable. She was in all these areas original, novel, ingenious, unexpected, inventive. I just *had* to call her creative. I learned from her and others like her that a firstrate soup is more creative than a second-rate painting, and that, generally, cooking or parenthood or making a home could be creative while poetry need not be; it could be uncreative.
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> Another of my subjects devoted herself to what had best be called social service in the broadest sense, bandaging up wounds, helping the downtrodden, not only in a personal way, but in an organizational way as well. One of her "creations" is an organization

which helps many more people than she could individually.

He goes on with these wonderful illustrations of the natural creativity in individuals he studied, one of them being a young athlete who showed "that a perfect tackle could be as esthetic a product as a sonnet and could be approached in the same creative spirit." Generalizing, he said:

> All my subjects were relatively more spontaneous and expressive than average people. They were more "natural" and less controlled and inhibited in their behavior, which seemed to flow out more easily and freely and with less blocking and self-criticism. . . .
>
> [Self-actualizing] creativeness was in many respects like the creativeness of *all* happy and secure children. It was spontaneous, effortless, innocent, easy, a kind of freedom from stereotypes and clichés. And again it seemed to be made up largely of "innocent" freedom of perception, and "innocent," unhibited spontaneity and expressiveness. Almost any child can perceive more freely, without a priori expectations, about what ought to be there, what must be there. And almost any child can compose a song or a poem or a dance or a painting or a play or a game on the spur of the moment, without planning or previous intent.

Toward the end of this section Maslow comments:

> In trying to figure out why all this was so, it seemed to me that much of it could be traced back to the relative absence of fear in my subjects. They were certainly less enculturated; that is, they seemed to be less afraid of what other people would say or demand or laugh at. They had less need of other people and therefore, depending on them less, could be less afraid of them and less hostile against them. Perhaps more important, however, was their lack of fear of their own insides, of their own impulses, emotions, thoughts. They were more self-accepting than the average. This approval and acceptance of their deeper selves then made it possible to perceive bravely the real nature of the world and also made their behavior more spontaneous (less controlled, less inhibited, less planned, less "willed" and designed).
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> . . . What I am saying in effect is that the creativity of my subjects seemed to be an epiphenomenon of their greater wholeness and integration, which is what self-acceptance implies. The civil war within the average person between the forces of the inner depths and the forces of defense and control seems to have been resolved in my subjects and they are less split. . . . Also, since one aspect of this integration within the person is the acceptance and greater availability of our deeper selves, these deep roots of creativeness become more available for use. . . . And since self-actualization or health must ultimately be defined as the coming to pass of the fullest humanness, or as the "Being" of the person, it is as if Self-Actualizing creativity were almost synonymous with, or a *sine qua non* aspect of, or a defining characteristic of, essential humanness.

What we are after here is an account of the kind of people who will have no great difficulty in coping in a society without firm authorities, a society which throws us back on ourselves when great questions arise, yet also a society filled with conflict and confusion because of the fears and longings of large numbers of people some of whom may join together for a time with the members of other groups in the declaration of passionate claims. In relation to questions of this sort, Maslow is consistently helpful. In one of the closing chapters of *Toward a Psychology of Being*, titled "Health as Transcendence of Environment," he considers the inward resources of people who have made themselves comparatively independent of their environments, and therefore, in a sense, the makers of culture. Quoting a paper he wrote in 1951, he said:

> I reported my healthy subjects to be superficially accepting of conventions, but privately to be casual, perfunctory and detached about them. That is, they could take them or leave them. In practically all of them, I found a rather calm, good-humored rejection of the stupidities and imperfections of the culture with greater or lesser effort at improving it. They definitely showed an ability to fight it vigorously when they thought it necessary. To quote from this paper: "The mixture of varying proportions of affection or approval, and hostility and criticism indicated that they select from American culture what is good in it by their lights and reject what they think bad in it. In a word, they weigh it, and judge it (by their own inner criteria) and then make their own decisions.

They are, in short, *able* to make their own decisions; they have their own, inner authority. They might be hard put to explain to others what that authority is, yet it serves them well. As Maslow puts it:

> For these and other reasons they may be called autonomous, i.e., ruled by the laws of their own character rather than the rules of society (insofar as these are different). It is in this sense that they are not only or merely Americans but also members at large of the human species. I then have hypothesized that "these people should have less 'national character,' and that they should be more like each other across cultural lines than they are like the less-developed members of their own culture."
>
> Examples of this kind of transcendence are Walt Whitman or William James who were profoundly American, most *purely* American, and yet were also very purely supra-cultural, internationalist members of the whole human species. They were universal men not in *spite* of their being Americans, but just because they were such good Americans. So too, Martin Buber, a Jewish philosopher, was *also* more than Jewish. Hokusai, profoundly Japanese, was a universal artist. Probably any universal art cannot be rootless. *Merely* regional art is different from the regionally rooted art that becomes broadly general—human.

What Maslow was trying to do in this book—in all his works, and with some success—is to reach down into himself in order to get acquainted with the inner human being, the actual resources of what he called self-actualization in order to get a better grasp of the human forces for growth and good. He found that analysis is indispensable, but reductive in effect without a balancing synthesis. How could he illustrate this? He was a behaviorist in his early professional years. But he rejected John B. Watson's claims when he got a good look at his first baby. He knew that there was an independent identity in the infant—he could see it in the baby's eyes—not just some psychic mush to be manipulated in one way or another. Then, after returning to New York, with his Ph.D., he encountered Ruth Benedict and Max Wertheimer.

> My training in psychology equipped me not at all for understanding them. It was as if they were not quite people but something more than people. My own investigation began as a prescientific or nonscientific activity. I made descriptions and notes on Max Wertheimer, and I made notes on Ruth Benedict. When I tried to understand them, think about them, and write about them in my journal and my notes, I realized in one wonderful moment that their two patterns could be generalized. I was talking about a kind of person, not about two noncomparable individuals. There was a wonderful excitement in that. I tried to see whether this pattern could be found elsewhere, and I did find it elsewhere, in one person or another. . . .
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> The people I selected for my investigation were older people, people who had lived much of their lives out and were visibly successful. We do not yet know about the applicability of the findings to young people. We do not know what self-actualization means in other cultures, although studies of self-actualization in China and India are now in process. We do not know what the findings of these new studies will be, but of one thing I have no doubt: When you select out for careful study very fine and healthy people, strong people, creative people, saintly people, sagacious people—in fact, exactly the kind of people I picked out—then you get a different view of mankind. You are asking how tall can people grow, what can a human become.

We have one more passage to quote from A.H. Maslow:

> What does one do when he self-actualizes? Does he grit his teeth and squeeze? What does self-actualization mean in terms of actual behavior, actual procedure? . . .
>
> First, self-actualization means experiencing fully, vividly, selflessly, with full concentration and total absorption. It means experiencing without the self-consciousness of the adolescent. At this moment of experiencing, the person is wholly and fully human. This is a self-actualizing moment. This is a moment when the self is actualizing itself. As individuals, we all experience such moments occasionally. . . . From the outside, we see that this can be a very sweet moment. In those youngsters who are trying to be very tough and cynical and sophisticated, we can see the recovery of some of the guilelessness of childhood; some of the innocence and sweetness of the face can come back as they devote themselves fully to a moment and throw themselves

> fully into the experiencing of it. The key word for this is "selflessly," and our youngsters suffer from too little selflessness and too much self-consciousness, self-awareness.

Every culture, every civilization, one may learn or see in history, has a way in which people may find their way home—that is, to self-knowledge. Maslow surely pioneered one path in this direction, by his theories, by his example—most of all by his example. We may find, if we study past thought, that there are metaphysical structures that match up with his investigations, although using very different words. There are, it is evident, different levels of self-knowledge, different perspectives on the human pilgrimage possible to human beings. We may see them in the *Bhagavad-Gita,* in the *Tao Te King,* in the Platonic dialogues, in Plotinus, in Spinoza and Leibniz, and here and there are some other writers such as Ortega and Wendell Berry who light the way. . . . For those who have felt in themselves that the time has come to begin this quest, in order to generate the vision and strength the world sorely needs, the road is not unmarked.

REVIEW
OF UNUTTERABLE VALUE

WE have from a reader, friend, and contributor in Colorado a paper on community arts that deserves attention here, mainly because it speaks to a question that has long haunted your reviewer. The author, Maryo G. Ewell, identifies herself:

> I am the daughter of artists, and have spent my entire vocational and avocational life in the arts. The aspect of the arts which I chose to pursue was "community arts,' for it combined my interest in populist government, community organizing, and the creative process. I found "community arts to be an important complement to the "fine arts"—separate but equal. It is a field whose emotional richness is compelling, but one largely unacknowledged by artists, patrons, critics. Community arts people have felt isolated from the establishment arts world, and have been puzzled, even angry, over this. I know, at times, I have. . . . I spend a lot of time in communities across Colorado, listening to the visions of community arts council people, of school administrators, of local artists. In turn, I am asked to talk about "community arts."
>
> But the more I speak, the more I realize that I don't know what "community arts means. . . . To some, it means rural arts. To others it means the arts and crafts projects undertaken by park districts in the summer. Or any project undertaken by a community arts council.

Here the writer goes to various institutional accounts of what community art is, attempting to clarify her subject-matter, making what seems a good place to recall another approach. We have in mind a book recently reviewed in these pages, Guy Brett's *Through Our Own Eyes* (published in the U.S. by New Society Publishers in Philadelphia). Brett, a former art critic on the *London Times,* made this book out of five different spontaneous expressions in different circumstances. We don't have ordinary language, part of some cultural tradition, for describing them. If you were a man in Zaire who wanted to give expression to how you felt about the murder of Patrice Lumumba, you might paint a picture that appears in this book. If you were a woman camping at Greenham Common who wanted to represent how the cruise missiles stored there affected her, you might inscribe on a poster a burlesque of a page in a first-grade reader saying, "Fun with Dora, Dick, Scot the dog, and the missile/ Oh look Dick, See the missile, I see the missile, Dick can see the missile/ Run, Dick, run/ Oh see Dick burn."

The patchwork quilts put together and embroidered by impoverished women of Chile, to make a dollar or two, seem covert memorials to Salvador Allende and horror at their life under the vindictive soldiery of a military regime. Many of them belong to a protest group, Families of the Disappeared, for whom quilt-making became a kind of therapy. One woman said:

> There's one *arpillera* [quilt] I'll never forget. I made it at the end of 1975.
>
> "E1 Gordo" (her husband) had lung trouble, in fact he had cancer and he had to go to hospital. I was left with the kids. My boy, who was about ten then asked for something to eat and we just had nothing to give him.
>
> It was such a big problem for me, I felt I was impotent, I didn't know what to do. I decided to vent my feelings by making an *arpillera.* I made a road which went up into the mountains and had no end, then I made a sun which I gazed at and it gave me strength. This sun I made from pure red wool.
>
> When I tried to sell it I couldn't. How could I sell this *arpillera* which was was so much "me." How was I going to do business with my own life?
>
> In the end, after a while, I gave it to a nun.

After reading Brett's account of these five different ways in which bottled up emotions found expression, you go back to the pictures with more than casual interest: these were by people who got something of their lives on paper, or in fabric with needle and thread, or woven into a link fence. It is indeed folk art, and community art. The "primitive" art of men and women who had no lessons was stronger than the work of painters who had been to art school. They tackled jobs of representation which the sophisticated art students didn't know how to cope with. They just *showed*

what the invading colonials had done to their lives. All this is in Mr. Brett's book.

Going back to Maryo Ewell's paper, she struggles with definitions of "community arts," not satisfying herself very well, until she came across Carol Gilligan's *In a Different Voice*, a book in which the writer gathered data to show a fundamental difference between the attitudes of men and those of women. The main idea of this distinction is that men define achievement in masculine terms—independence, clear decision-making, and responsible action, while, on the other hand, women, as Gilligan shows, think of the excellences of caring, relating to the needs of others, and helping. This quality, of course, is not only feminine, but is found in all real achievement, but it also enriches the conception of community art. The community workers, she suggests, need to make affiliation rather than separation their organizing principle.

> An individual works with other individuals who come together to discuss their place and their traditions and ways to symbolize their attachment to these things and to one another through the arts. A common slogan of community arts councils has been, "Our community is creating a climate in which the arts can thrive." This shift enables us to say, "The arts create a climate in which our community can thrive." The arts take their rightful place—they are a given, they need not be defended—and we may focus upon the relationships among people, among neighbors, which may flourish as a result.
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> If we take this approach, we no longer will need to measure the amount of art that is created, nor audience size. Evaluation will examine people's changing perceptions of the place they live; community pride; neighborhood interaction; the "spilling over" of collective creative endeavors into other facets of community life; people's increasing willingness to try new artistic experiences, to be open to a variety of artistic products, and to see how what they do fits into a spectrum of "art." Programming will emphasize the collective activity, the creative use of shared spaces, and the providing of opportunities for people to participate, not merely to observe. And the evaluative "test" of community programs will be the questions, "Did that program teach us something about ourselves?" ("Success" will be "Yes.") "Did that program leave something for the people who will live here after us?" ("Yes.") "Could that program have been done identically anywhere else?" ("No.")

American women, too, make quilts, and still do. In a book called *Artists in Aprons: Folk Art by American Women* (1979) Maryo Ewell found this extract from a letter:

> It took me more than twenty years, nearly twenty-five, I reckon, in the evening after supper when the children were all put to bed. My whole life is in that quilt. It scares me sometimes when I look at it. All my joys and all my sorrows are stitched into those little pieces. When I was proud of the boys, and when I was downright provoked and angry with them. When the girls annoyed me or when they gave me a warm feeling around my heart. And John too. He was stitched into that quilt and all the thirty years we were married. Sometimes I loved him and sometimes I sat there hating him as I pieced the patches together. So they are all in that quilt, my hopes and fears, my joys and sorrow, my loves and hates. I tremble sometimes when I remember what that quilt knows about me.

Maryo Ewell's conclusion is rather wonderful—getting rid of most of the uncomfortable feelings reading her paper produced. Which brings us to our own "haunting question" mentioned at the beginning. How important is self-consciousness in an act which results in what we call art? Thinking about what we are doing, theorizing about it, and "discussing" it, seems a blighting, vulgarizing influence. Should we even talk about art? Did the great artists ever talk about it? And did that, if they did, ever do anyone any good?

A work of art transmits from something ordinary, or extracts from it, something that belongs to eternity. It seems indecent to talk about an act involving eternity. Someone said once that a real artist naturally spits art. We remember, years ago, sitting in the lobby of a hotel where a Russian ballet troupe was staying. They came into the lobby together, sat down, and talked to each other in Russian. It didn't matter what language they used. Every move they made, every gesture, every expression, declared them

exquisite dancers. Their resting in the lobby was a ballet. There is something similar in the behavior of a real farmer out in the field. It seems all right to mention this, casually, in passing, but far from good to say much more. There are indeed wonders which are betrayed by self-consciousness.

So, as we read her paper, Maryo Ewell's underlying effort in helping arts community councils is to abolish the need for her own presence, which is indeed the role of every good administrator. This is like repeating an old truth—that while technique often means the destruction of art, yet there is no art without technique. Maryo Ewell has her own way of saying this, at the end of her paper:

> We can insist that for every activity which takes place in our arts centers an equally important activity must take place outside those centers in places where people live and work. Indeed, we can help our community re-think the role of the arts center, whether it already exists or is being planned, for arts centers potentially perpetrate the homage to the passive.
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> We can then sing and care, write and love, paint and converse, compose and listen, in the full recognition that they are the same thing, and that we are all human beings whose lives, separately and together, are distinct and for that reason alone, are of unutterable value.

COMMENTARY
. . ALL FOR NOTHING

A RECENT book, *Ammunition for Peace-makers* (Pilgrimage Press), has recently been put together by Phillips P. Moulton because he believes that those who are working against the arms race need to meet the arguments of the defenders of a huge military build-up in their own terms. He maintains that deterrence does not really work but will eventually precipitate the war everyone sane wants to avoid. We need, he says, to grant what validity there is in the claims of those who rely on more weapons, but "then show that nuclear weapons are more provocative than deterrent."

As one reads Moulton's arguments, which seem sound enough, one becomes almost convinced that the would-be war-makers have already made up their minds they are right, and nothing, least of all reason, will persuade them to change their opinions. Yet sound argument may persuade others.

Perhaps the most valuable part of Moulton's book is the quality of some of the quotations he offers; for example, there is this by Freeman Dyson, who was reminiscing in the final weeks of World War II:

> I began to look forward and to ask myself how it happened that I let myself become involved in this crazy game of murder. Since the beginning of the war I had been retreating step by step from one moral position to another, until at the end I had no moral position at all. At the beginning of the war I believed fiercely in the brotherhood of man, called myself a follower of Gandhi, and was morally opposed to all violence. After a year of war I retreated and said, Unfortunately nonviolent resistance against Hitler is impracticable, but I am still opposed to bombing. A few years later I said, Unfortunately it seems that bombing is necessary to win the war, and so I am willing to go to work for Bomber Command, but I am still morally opposed to bombing cities indiscriminately. After I arrived at Bomber Command I said, Unfortunately it turns out that we are after all bombing cities indiscriminately, but this is morally justified as it is helping to win the war. A year later I said, Unfortunately it seems that our bombing is not really helping to win the war, but at least I am morally justified in working to save the lives of the bomber crews. In the last spring of the war I could no longer find any excuses. . . . I had surrendered one moral principle after another, and in the end it was all for nothing.

There are those who will be affected by statements like that.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves

OURSELVES AND OUR STRENGTH

IN every country in the world there are people who strongly disapprove of things their government is doing. In some countries they are able to speak out—as in the United States and Britain—but in others they dare not lest they be arrested, killed, or "disappeared." This is the kind of world in which young people are growing up, and when should they become aware of the fact that many thousands of decent people feel this way about their governments and their war-making proclivities?

The problem needs to be—must be—solved, but how? It is a problem our children will inherit from us, and the least we can do is inform them of its reality and how some adults have been attempting to meet it. What they decide to do is up to them, but they are surely entitled to know that the problem exists. This becomes evident when the recruiters for the army and the navy are allowed to enter the schools looking for volunteers. One way of balancing this mode of spreading propaganda for war is for peace-oriented draft advisers to have equal right of entry into the schools, when the recruiters come, to make clear some of the realities of being a soldier or a sailor, and to describe the alternatives which in this country are legally available. The matter has come before the courts and in some areas peace advisers are permitted to meet with students in the high schools of the country. That is one sign of health in our society. The spread of information about what is happening in other countries is another obligation of the schools, but it will probably fall to parents to fulfill it effectively. The news supplied by peace publications is the best source of such information.

For example, *Peacework,* a monthly New England Peace & Social Justice Newsletter (published by the American Friends Service Committee, 2161 Massachusetts Ave., Cambridge, Mass. 02140), in its December 1986 issue, published a report by Yarrow Cleaves, in which he said:

> I spent most of October in Britain, gathering material to help tell Americans about the presence of US military forces there and ways that British peace activists are responding.
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> In England, Scotland and Wales—an area about the size of New England—there are some 160 US military installations. The extent of U.S. military properties and personnel are cause for concern; the nature of US military power pitches concern to alarm. For instance, in a time of crisis, if the US commander deems the control by British authorities over the people inadequate, he can declare and enforce martial law.
>
> This is why many Britons say they live in an occupied country.

MANAS has recently printed more than one story about the protesting women of Greenham Common near Oxford in Berkshire. Cleaves tells about this:

> Women have maintained a peace encampment at the gates of Greenham Common since September 1981. After the arrival of the missiles three years ago, active resistance extended into the countryside where cruise missiles are deployed in practice for nuclear war.
>
> There have been about 30 dispersal exercises so far. The usual convoy consists of four missile launchers which may carry four missiles each, two control vehicles, and up to sixteen support vehicles. The destructive power of this assemblage is 256 Hiroshimas. With its large police escort, a convoy extends at least a quarter mile as it travels, always after midnight, along the roads and lanes, through the towns and villages of southern England.
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> Incredibly, these exercises were supposed to be kept secret. Perhaps they would have been, in a way, had people chosen to ignore them. But not one convoy has gone out without being traced by the people.
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> Cruisewatch, as this network came to be called, is based on the constant vigil of the Greenham women camped by the gates and by groups of women and men who keep watch on key routes all night, every night, in a two-month scheduled rotation. When a convoy leaves the base, an alert goes out by CB radios and by phone, and hundreds of people gather along the route to protest and, when possible, to stop the convoy.
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> As the dispersal exercise usually spans a week-end, there is a mass demonstration and sometimes a civil disobedience trespass action to bring the protest to the military at the missile launching site where

they've established themselves. When the convoy returns to the base, another alert goes out and again there are demonstrations and blockades, ending where things began with women at the gates of Greenham.

Yarrow Cleaves comments:

In transcribing conversations I had with such brave women, I am acutely aware of what is not included—stories of how it feels to stand along a road where heavy US machines of war thunder in the darkness; descriptions of changing, strengthened lives and of community growing as people work together over years and are joined by neighbors and friends; explorations of the vital infusion of feminist consciousness into the spirit of peace activism and its healing role in peace actions and interactions; what is going on in other parts of Britain and elsewhere, and how the parts of the movement connect.

He quotes in particular from two women, Di MacDonald and Sarah Graham.

Di: The baseline of what we are doing is personal protest, that as individuals we're not prepared to say, "Yes, get on, get on with this, do this in my name." We've refused that. We're saying we're not going to turn our backs, we're not going to roll over in our beds. We're going to get out of our beds, down the road, and stand there and say "No!" A lot of people doing this as individuals have come together, and we work in a very loose network. Our commitment is to nonviolence, which obviously includes a commitment to helping and supporting others, and apart from that we don't have any rules or regulations. We do things that seem right at the time.

Sarah: When the convoy's moving, the route is lined with people holding banners, wearing bright clothing. People take foghorns and whistles and drums and make lots of noise. Or on some stretches of road, people decide to be perfectly silent and just stand there and witness. It makes the drivers realize that they're not there with the natives' approval. They can't feel they've done something and nobody's noticed.

Di: I think our nonviolent action and style of action has very much come from Greenham. A lot of women involved in Cruisewatch have come through the Greenham network so that in Cruisewatch, which is a mixed group of women and men, we work very much in women's ways, of cooperation and without a structured leadership.

For some people nonviolence means passivity. We are not at all passive. We are very active. But we try to be responsible and careful of everyone's safety, in particular the police's safety, because they are so vulnerable. We're also concerned for the safety of the (American) missile-carrier drivers, some of whom are 20, 21, and are in charge of these huge launchers and control vehicles. They are sometimes very angry and have caused several accidents because of wild driving. And some have driven towards groups of women on the side of the road in a terrifying fashion. But that makes us feel even stronger, I think, in our commitment to nonviolence.

If we're going to stop the convoy, for example, it's done in a careful, calm fashion with awareness of what's going on around us. And if it looks too difficult to stop it, then we will abandon our plan and let it go by. There's no feeling that we have to stop this military juggernaut at all costs. We're not interested in all costs. It's "all costs" attitudes that have got us to this pitch.

Sarah: When the convoy is coming out or going back, one of the first things you'll notice on the roads is police everywhere. On all the roundabouts along the route one or two transit vans of police will turn up, and they'll get out and herd people like sheep to the verges and stand in front of them. Obviously, there's a very tense atmosphere and it's emotional. Sometimes the police come out of the vans like rugby players prepared for a match, they're that tense. You can see it in their eyes.

Di MacDonald tells about encounters with British soldiers:

When we get there, when we're actually in view of the missile convoy, then we will throw off our raincoats and our headscarves and show very clearly that we are peace women.

Sometimes the soldiers are very afraid—they are trained for combat—and so we shout to them, "Don't be afraid, it's only peace women. We've come to talk to you. You shouldn't be doing this work. You can opt out of this under the Nuremburg Principles, you can decide not to do this. And we'll have a conversation with them, and then we'll be arrested and continue the conversation with the police, and so on through the whole process of being held and charged and finally released and then going to court. Accountability for our actions is an important aspect of what we do.

Sarah: I think we get through to them and that they don't stand a chance in the long run, no matter what they do. Because we use such simple things. We just use ourselves and our strength.

FRONTIERS

A Futile Debate

NOAM CHOMSKY, who teaches linguistics at MIT, is also one of the most effective and forceful writers on public affairs. He came into public notice years ago by pointing out that there were two ways of opposing the Vietnam War. You could oppose it by saying that it was a mistake because it was failing to accomplish our ends, or you could oppose it because it was wrong from its devious beginning to its inglorious end—a moral crime. NOW, in a pamphlet published last year by the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation, *The Race to Destruction—Its Rational Basis* (available from the Foundation, Gamble Street, Nottingham NG7 4ET, U.K., at £1), Chomsky examines the political structures which are facilitating the course of the United States toward final self-destruction. He says at the beginning:

> The course that we pursue is deeply rooted in our social institutions and relatively independent of the choice of individuals who happen to fill institutional roles in the political or economic system. Furthermore, the steps taken towards destruction have a certain short-term rationality within the framework of existing institutions and the kind of planning they engender. Such planning is largely a matter of short-term calculation of gain: this is entirely natural in competitive societies, where those who contemplate the longer term are unlikely to be in the competition when it arrives. This natural framework of planning carries over to the political system that is, overwhelmingly, under the influence of those who own and manage the private society. The unfortunate conclusion is that while the population at large may, and certainly should do what it can to avert the most dangerous and immediate threats to survival, such efforts at best delay the inevitable as long as the institutional structures remain in place. These are facts that we must come to understand if we hope to end the arms race before it ends us.

There are indeed vociferous arguments about our current "defense" policies, but, Chomsky says, and shows, they are mostly irrelevant—for example, "the number of warheads and missiles."

> If the numbers were reduced by 90 per cent, the result of a nuclear interchange would still be a devastating catastrophe, and there is no obvious relation between the size of the systems of destruction and the likelihood of their use. Or take the current debate over Reagan's Strategic Defense Initiative or SDI ("Star Wars"). The debate is over the question whether it will work: the doves say it will not, and hawks say it may. The debate is not only beside the point but even dangerous to the extent that it seems to work. Of course it will never defend any country against a first strike: only fanatics can believe any such fantasy. But it is conceivable that it could limit the damage of a retaliatory strike, and thus undermine the deterrent of the official enemy—though even that is unlikely in my view; even without expert knowledge, one can be fairly confident that extremely complex technology will not work. But suppose the USSR had some system that with some credibility might deter a US retaliatory strike, thus eliminating the Western deterrent. How would the West react? First, by rapidly increasing its offensive military capacity. Second, by shifting to automated response systems, launch-on-warning strategies and the like, since in times of crisis there would be no time for deliberation: a first strike would be necessary in desperation, the deterrent having been challenged. Third, the US would move to redelegation of authority to maximize the effectiveness of a retaliatory strike after possible "decapitation." In short, the U.S. would move to systems that enhance the likelihood of its use of nuclear weapons in times of crisis. The USSR will react in exactly the same way.

Chomsky then points out something that no one seems to have considered:

> We know that our systems constantly misfunction: there have been many occasions when a technical error called for a programmed nuclear strike that was aborted by human intervention. The Soviet systems are far more primitive and will fail far more often, thus enormously threatening our security. We are forcing them to use systems that greatly endanger our security. The same is true of the other major weapons systems currently being deployed, the Trident D/5 missiles, which are highly accurate, fast, and very destructive, and thus threaten the Soviet land-based deterrent. It follows again that these systems compel the Soviet Union to adopt counter-measures that are extremely threatening to our own security. The doves who argue that Star Wars won't work are missing the point: the Russians must make a worst case analysis, assuming that it might, and must react accordingly, thus increasing the likelihood of a

> nuclear war in which the United States will be devastated.
>
> Furthermore, by debating the technical question whether the system will work, doves contribute materially to its development, in two crucial ways: first, they contribute to the illusion that the system has a military purpose, that the "fantasy" of defense was seriously intended; it was not, a matter to which I will return. Secondly, they lend support to those who want to develop the system. Suppose some clever physicist from MIT devises a way by which the Russians could outwit Star Wars. Immediately, some equally clever physicist from Los Alamos will say "true, but here's a possible way we could get around that." In fact, no one really knows: we are considering technological fantasies, and certainty is impossible. If experts disagree in an area with a margin of uncertainty, the rational thing is to try. Therefore both sides in the debate are saying, in effect, that the arms race should continue, with the development of new and more dangerous weapons. Both sides are trapped into the same system of ultimate self-destruction.

We have used here material from only the first three pages of Chomsky's pamphlet, while he goes on for eighteen more—all equally relevant and persuasive, if you take the time to think about what he says. But you will also be led to ask—how many people are really able to follow his argument? He proves, let us say, the insanity of our course, and does all he can to make this evident, but it remains obvious that his arguments require so much of the reader that the situation remains about as hopeless as he shows it to be. One might decide that he should indeed go on with what he is doing in behalf of those who will appreciate and understand him—those who will be able to influence others by reason of their general intelligence. Yet people with a different approach—call it that of a man like Thoreau—which seeks to awaken the roots of character in the world at large, are equally important. There are various ways in which lessons are learned, duties recognized and performed. We need them all, these days.