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THE "REVOLUTIONARY SITUATION"

THE attempt to get at the roots of the meaning of this expression involves certain difficulties. You start out, say, with the Declaration of Independence. There, while the word is not used, Revolution has an almost purely political meaning—the putting down of one form of government and the establishment of another. The view expressed in the Declaration is that governments ought to serve certain fundamental purposes in behalf of all the governed; that whatever they do, it must be by the consent of the governed; and that when a government fails in these respects it is necessary and right for the people to change it. The essential portion of the Declaration reads as follows:

> We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.—That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed,—That whenever any form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes, and accordingly all experience hath strewn that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security.—Such has been the patient sufferance of these Colonies; and such is now the necessity which constrains them to alter their former Systems of Government.

As a writer in the *Encyclopædia Britannica* points out, Jefferson's Lockian logic "fitted beautifully the question of colonial independence," and fitted also "the question of individual rights," but it neglected the "non-political conditions of liberty," such as those arising out of industrial and social conditions. It left out, moreover, "a noble denunciation of slavery" that Jefferson had prepared. While the northern states abolished slavery in their own constitutions, the South feared industrial paralysis and ignored the spirit of the times. Eli Whitney's invention of the cotton gin enormously extended the plantation area and made the availability of slave labor seem essential to the southern farmers.

Since the eighteenth century, the idea of revolution has undergone extensive change. The increasingly obvious bearing of social and economic factors on the "non-political conditions of liberty" has made the objectives of revolutionary action so far-reaching that its rhetoric no longer speaks of the *pursuit* of happiness, but seems rather to offer to *produce* it, once the revolutionary party gains power. At the same time, the term "revolution" has broadened in application and is now used to describe any major historical development which is held to be altering the pattern and the conditions of human life, whether people are wholly aware of it or not.

Today, when a man speaks of "revolutionary" happenings, he often intends simply to draw attention to elements of change which he believes must be taken into account if human affairs are to be understood and maintained in an orderly course. For example, a few years ago, when President A. Whitney Griswold of Yale University was attempting to throw light on the course of world events, he observed (in *Foreign Affairs* for October, 1960):

> Perhaps it will help us to see more clearly if we take into account the five distinct yet simultaneous and interrelated revolutionary forces that common knowledge tells us have been and are at work in the world. The first of these is a scientific revolution, the second is an industrial revolution, the third is the Communist revolution and the fourth is a revolution toward national independence. The fifth is a restiveness on the part of the younger generation which is evident in almost all countries and reaches revolutionary intensity and proportions in some.
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> Of all five revolutionary forces the restiveness of youth which seems the most familiar, is perhaps the least understood. . . . There is something in the minds of young people today which they themselves have not been able to make wholly articulate. . . . The first thought is that youth is far more disillusioned with war than most of its elders—who think that they too are disillusioned—realized. With this disillusionment goes a disbelief in the old concepts of patriotism and codes of chivalry that used to find their ultimate fulfillment and sanction in war. . . .

We can legitimately increase Dr. Griswold's five revolutions to eight by adding the three announced by the Triple Revolution manifest—really three revolutionary *needs:* To do full justice to the Negro citizens of the United States; to end the arms race; and to anticipate and provide by economic planning for the effects of the revolution of cybernation, which promises to take away the jobs of millions of Americans in the course of the next twenty-five years.

With a little effort, no doubt one could work up a good case for at least half a dozen more "revolutions" now going on—such as, say, the revolution of "rising expectations"—or on the way. There is surely a revolution in "morals" potential in the disordered and sometimes shattered personal lives of a disturbingly large proportion of the population; and probably a revolution in religion in the making, judging from the dissatisfied stirrings heard from the more liberal branches of organized religion and from thoughtful critics of contemporary Humanism. Meanwhile, it is no exaggeration to say that the rejection of stimulus-and-response simplicities by the Third Force in Psychology and the new interest in-subjective experience and ideas of the Self constitute an on-going revolution in the psychological sciences, which may before long extend itself into the social sciences.

There is no question but that the idea of "revolution" can be useful in giving weight to the need for an extraordinary effort to understand the immeasurably important crises through which the human race is now passing. The word Revolution "connotes a sudden and far reaching change, a major break in the continuity of development," and on this basis we are indeed having dozens of revolutions. But once we admit this, another aspect of this "revolutionary" psychology should claim our attention. It is entirely possible that by endless talk of revolution we shall wind ourselves up into a High Jinks state of mind. The undeniable truth in the claim of multiple and continuing revolutions can generate so much excitement, so much ardent desperation, and so much resentment of those who do not seem excited enough, that the meaning of the entire enterprise might go down the drain in a Ragnarok of confused emotion.

There is a fixed scale of charges for the revolutions which involve violence and social upheaval. The less attention paid to the axiom of ends and means, the worse the charges get. The highest cost of all is exacted by the revolution of Nihilism, which is the direction in which excessive revolutionary excitement leads.

The one thing we can be sure of, these days, is our massive ignorance concerning what is going to happen in the world and to ourselves, during the next twenty-five years or so. Too many traditional roots have already been cut, too many familiar patterns of behavior have altered beyond recognition, too many certainties have dissolved. The only intelligent thing to do, in such circumstances, is to recognize, first of all, the fundamental difference between the eighteenth-century revolution, announced in the Declaration of Independence of the United States, and those which have been proclaimed since, and complete

that one, first. This means extending to the Negroes their long-denied rights, and giving support to the revolutions for national independence wherever they are occurring, throughout the world. It isn't very much to do, but we would at least know what we were doing, and that it must be done.

The next thing would be to recognize that any change or "revolution" we have a part in should lead directly to a better life for human beings. This means that working for the change must itself be a better way of life. If working for it isn't better, getting it won't *be* any better.

A common trouble among revolutionary spirits is their gradual loss of awareness of what a better life really means. The good life is made up of perceptive moods, intervals of deep awakening, work for worthy objectives, and general growth in understanding. These values are difficult to describe, and it is almost impossible to hold them up as revolutionary objectives. It follows, therefore, that revolutionary aims are increasingly defined in the gross terms of physical conditions—of material *symbols* of the good life. And the ardors of fighting for political and economic arrangements, involving defiant argument and last-ditch confrontation, are producers of nervous tension and anxiety in all but the most balanced of men. Revolutionary literature has many thoughtful notes on this problem. John Reed spoke of it, and Bertolt Brecht wrote a moving poem of apology to future generations for the harsh necessities of revolutionary action. Seldom, however, is there exploration of the possibility of enriching the approach to revolutionary change by insisting that work for the good life involve some phase of *living* the good life. Hawthorne may have been thinking of another aspect of this question when, after a period spent at Brook Farm, he wrote: "I was beginning to lose thesense of what kind of a world it was, among innumerable schemes of what it might be." Later, he added:

> No sagacious man will long retain his sagacity if he lives exclusively among reformers and progressive people without periodically returning into the settled system of things to correct himself by a new observation from that old standpoint.

This would be not so much to return to conventional ways of thinking as to restore one's feeling of the qualities of being that the struggle is intended to make possible for all.

You could say that Hawthorne was concerned with a man's need to get the Brahma-Vishnu-Siva aspects of life in order and to participate in each of them with the right intensity. The Western revolutionist has been too much involved in the destructive functions of Siva. His anger at existing evils and his determination to erase them from the social scene puts the historical play of the Trimurti out of balance, with the result that the *regenerative* aspect of Siva is nullified by violent breaks with the past. This imposes fatal distortions on the phases of Brahma and Vishnu—creative growth and sustaining equilibrium. No one has written of the problem of historical discontinuity more effectively than Everett Dean Martin in *Farewell to Revolution.*

In terms of political manipulation and the "public relations" of social change, these considerations have to do with *timing.* But timing has also a deeper meaning, put with great simplicity by Theodore Roszak in his *Peace News* article, reprinted in MANAS last week:

> In this situation, it is important to grasp what every good teacher knows: namely, that one does not educate by stubbornly insisting that a student adopt his teacher's interests, nor by seeking to frighten or humiliate him into doing that. One simply takes the student where he is. One tries to work with, not against, his motivations, to guide him and mature his interests. Not the least benefit of this approach is that the teacher may find he has a great deal to learn from his student.

Here, without any ado, we have a Westernized or secularized version of the Gandhian view of revolution. One fundamental difference between Gandhian efforts for social

reform and Western methods of revolution lay in the fact that Gandhi had no interest in destroying his opponents. He wanted to educate them to the realization that theirs partisan policies would not work any more. To accomplish this Gandhi needed helpers who were able to participate in what was an extraordinarily enlightened point of view toward people who were doing them wrong. He was able to get such helpers in India, mainly because of India's religious culture, in terms of which the combination of courage and humility, of wisdom and harmlessness, were quite consistent with the Indian ideal of human development, and because the Indian people had not had their eighteenth-century political revolution, and little schooling, therefore, in occidental doctrines of social progress. Even today, the partially Westernized Indian Republic exhibits a noticeable ambivalence in relation to India's new role as a World Power, and Indian attempts at bluster and imitation of Western "toughness" seem strangely out of character to the rest of the world and, of course, to many Indians as well.

Meanwhile, the idea of conquering evil with "love" rings falsely in Western ears. It seems a vast and largely sentimental over-simplification of the problems of social injustice and war. The fact is, however, that violence and hostility can no longer be made to work for good, in the West. This is a pragmatic reality discerned with clarity as long ago as 1910, by Norman Angell, and set down in his epoch-making book, *The Great Illusion.* The most recent version of this argument, *The Abolition of War,* by Millis and Real, brings the argument up to date. But bringing home to Westerners the full impact of this historical realization—that violence and military exploits, even in a righteous revolutionary cause, will no longer work—is an educational project which places extremely heavy burdens on the workers in the Western revolutionary tradition. It means a displacement of very nearly all the time-honored symbols of revolutionary struggle. It means a radical change in the methods of intellectual analysis on the part of the theorists of revolution. It means, in short, a virtual revolution in all serious thinking about revolution.

It is slowly becoming apparent, for example, that two tasks confront any sort of revolutionary activity. First, there is the necessity of showing that attempts to force people to behave in ways which are degrading to them—as, for example, in the use of police power in the American South to compel Negroes to submit to the *mores* of white supremacy doctrine—will simply not work. The second task is to demonstrate, in as many ways as possible, that the methods of education, of entering into the problems of others, of learning to see through *their* eyes, do work. There is a subtlety of great importance here. It is that educational methods cannot be used for any goal except one which fulfills justice. In other words, the individual who becomes reconciled to educational influence as the only practicable means to achieving the good life, or the good society, finds himself compelled to recognize and abandon his own unconscious egotisms and his secret longings for special privilege. There can be no fraud or hypocrisy in the educational approach. By definition and in practice, education eliminates the last trace of self-seeking. The method, therefore, is self-correcting in respect to revolutionary action itself.

What will be, then, the last citadels of violence? They will be found among men who fear that even-handed justice will destroy them, and who regard critical self-examination as an even greater threat.

There is one other source of violence to be acknowledged. When the means of education are depraved by hypocritical intent, for the purposes of fraud, its victims, when they discover what has happened, experience an almost uncontrollable tendency to respond with violence. This is a spontaneous, uncalculating violence which has its own integrity. It is very different, morally, from the force used by men to get what they want. Critics of violence need to recognize this intensely

natural reaction of human beings and to allow for it in their generalizations.

Coming back to the matter of "timing," one might say that there are organic rhythms in the revolutionary process, and that the task of the new revolutionary is to discover what they are. A man has no business ploughing under the barren stubble and weedy growth of a misused field except at the right time of year; and he has no business ploughing it at all unless he has seed ready to plant. And unless he has tested the seed and knows what sort of plants it will produce, he has no business planting it.

The agricultural analogy is a good one, since it is capable of wide application. The persuasive process is the fruitful one, and a program for social change ought to be proved fruitful before it is even proposed. This calls for endless experiment in the conduct of small-scale social wholes—of limited social units which have as their purpose the demonstration of revolutionary principles in the conduct of life. And the life so lived must be self-evidently *good.*

Take for example the Freedom Schools in the contemporary South. In these schools, which are certainly revolutionary in that they are unprecedented expressions of both spontaneous good will and radical determination, a kind of "instant education" is taking place. Teachers give their time, and they teach wherever they can; if they haven't a building, they may hold class under a tree; and if they haven't books, they teach what they know, out of their heads. You can't stop children from learning, if they want to learn, and you can't stop teachers from teaching, if they want to teach. And as for the good life, there is no better, anytime, anywhere. This is the kind of revolution which sends down roots.

All we are trying to say, here, is that revolutionary activity, to deserve this description, must seek more than a legal realization of equality and a more than political achievement of justice. These objectives have revolutionary meaning when they have no social existence. But when they represent the past, if still imperfect, gains of civilization, which have been turned into little more than the ground rules of competition in acquisitive pursuits, a true revolutionary spirit will look far beyond such "rights."

A casual Freedom School is not, perhaps, a "social whole," yet it has the basic elements of human wholeness in it. Teaching and learning involve that high mutuality of mind meeting mind, and while it may be momentary, there is no finer joy, no greater fulfillment, for anybody, anywhere.

REVIEW
"CREATIVITY AND ENCOUNTER"

DISCUSSION of philosophical affirmations in the writings of Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow should be supplemented by note of the work of Rollo May. An article by this psychiatrist with the above title (*American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, January-June, 1964) provides an excellent example of Dr. May's influence. His various contributions are generally informing in layman's language, but he is also very much involved in professional work as a Supervisory and Training Analyst for the William Alanson White Institute of Psychiatry. Dr. May begins:

> In this paper I shall not use our usual psychological language. I am not inclined to apologize for this since I believe that most of our approaches to creativity in psychology have been strikingly inadequate. Essentially we have come up with what the artists and poets smile at and say, "Interesting, yes. But it has next to nothing to do with what is actually going on within me in the creative act." There have been notable exceptions to this tendency, of course: the works of MacKinnon, Frank Barron, Crutchfield and Harold Anderson, for example, and the insistence of Allport, Rogers, and Maslow that creativity be studied not merely as an aspect of neurosis or reductively, but in its own right as a positive aspect of personality. But, in general, we have come up with truisms or irrelevancies.
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> It is not that I believe that the ideas which I will put forth cannot be phrased in psychological language; I think they can, and also can to some extent be tested and understood by empirical methods. However, I believe our pressing need at this stage is that we have not grasped the nature of creativity as such.

Dr. May turns to literary sources for perspective on "creativity and encounter," from Greek tragedy to W. H. Auden:

> Creativity occurs in an act of encounter, and is to be understood with this encounter as its center.
>
> According to the theory proposed in this paper, anxiety is an understandable concomitant of the shaking of the self-world relationship which occurs in the encounter. Our self-system and sense of identity are literally shaken, the world is not as we experienced it before, and since self and world are always correlated, we no longer are what we were before. Past, present and future form a new Gestalt. Obviously this is only rarely true in a complete sense (Gauguin going to the South Sea Islands, or Van Gogh becoming psychotic) but it is literally true that the creative encounter does change to some degree the world-self relationship. The anxiety we feel is *temporary* rootlessness, disorientation. (Italics, ours.)
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> The creative person, as I see him, is characterized by the fact that he can live with this anxiety, even though he may pay a high price in terms of insecurity, sensitivity, and defenselessness for his gift of the "divine madness," as the Greeks called it. He does not run away from Non-being, as Macleish tells us, but by encountering and wrestling with Non-being, he forces it to produce Being. He knocks upon silence and meaninglessness until he can force it to mean.

Rollo May's *Man's Search for Himself* was an important addition to the comprehensive revaluations taking place among some contemporary psychologists. Erich Fromm and Karen Horney speak of a "real self" as distinct from a "false self." Fromm has claimed that the only integral life of man is the life of an Inner Self. He later indicated that this Self has a language all its own. (*The Forgotten Language*.) Dr. May's complementary emphasis is found in a chapter titled "Man, the Transcender of Time." A few sentences illustrate the point:

> Our aim is to discover ways in which we can stand against the insecurity of our time, to find a center of strength within ourselves, and as far as we can, to point the way toward achieving values and goals which can be depended upon in a day when very little is secure.

Here, again, May shows considerable interest in and awareness of the great philosophical ideas of the past. He is drawn, for instance, to the psychological implications of Spinoza's *sub specie aeternitatis.* He thinks that man *should* live "under the form of eternity" because he is, himself, timeless in essence and origin. So here a psychiatrist endeavors to point out that the peculiar strengths and weaknesses of our age—its proclivity for attracting atom bombs, even its

frenetic urban living—are all beside the point so far as affecting a man's discovery of himself is concerned. Dr. May has adopted the "conclusion that, on the deepest level, the question of which age we live in is irrelevant." Further:

> The basic question is how the individual, in his own awareness of himself and the period he lives in, is able through his decisions to attain inner freedom and to live according to his own inner integrity. Whether we live in the Renaissance or in the thirteenth-century France, or at the time of the fall of Rome, we are part-and-parcel of our age in every respect—its wars, its economic conflicts, its anxiety, its achievement. But no "well-integrated" society can perform for the individual, or relieve him from, his task of achieving self-consciousness and the capacity for making his own choices responsibly. And no traumatic world situation can rob the individual of making the final decision with regard to his own fate.

The conclusion of Dr. May's article in *Psychoanalysis* bears interesting relation to a theme in Ira Progoff's *The Symbolic and the Real:*

> Symbol and myth do bring into awareness infantile, archaic, unconscious longings, dreads and similar psychic content—this is their *regressive* aspect. But they also bring out new meaning, new forms, disclose reality which was literally not present before, a reality that is not merely subjective but has a second pole which is outside ourselves—this is the *progressive* side of symbol and myth. This aspect points ahead: it is integrative; it is a progressive revealing of structure in our relation to nature and our own existence; it is a road to universals beyond discrete concrete personal experience. It is this second *progressive* aspect of symbols and myths that is almost completely omitted in the traditional Freudian psychoanalytic approach.

It is difficult to see how, with men of this caliber shaping the psychological and philosophical thought of the future, there can be either pessimism or despair. We live in a time that is filled with the fertility of psychological discovery and insight. A deep penetration of these views is now taking place among intelligent people in all walks of life. This is a process which cannot help but have far-reaching effects, first in thought, then in action.

COMMENTARY
WHAT MAKES FOR PEACE?

PEACE NEWS for Dec. 4 had an article by the American pacifist leader, A. J. Muste, commenting on Theodore Roszak's article, "Direct Action for Social Change," which was reprinted last week as the lead article in MANAS. Some attention should be paid to what Mr. Muste says, since he raises questions that did not occur to us, and may not have occurred to Mr. Roszak.

Mr. Muste's main point is that if pacifists divert too much of their attention from the evil of war to various social issues, they may leave their most important work undone. He recalls that the socialist and labor movements of the first ten years of the twentieth century declared against war, yet succumbed to the demands of nationalism in 1914, and were soon killing one another. The tragic figure of the murdered Jean Jaurès stands as a reminder of this betrayal of radical ideals.

Again, the absorption of liberal and even radical energies in Roosevelt's New Deal weakened the anti-war movement of the 1930's. There were New Dealers who welcomed the war of the '40's as a kind of big-time WPA project—"raking iron leaves," it was called by one light-hearted official. And as Muste says: "Jobs for the new unionists soon became tied up with rising appropriations for the defense budget. When the war came, Negroes profited from it economically and in some cases in status."

Following are some pertinent paragraphs by Mr. Muste:

> I agree that the non-violent civil rights movement in the USA has been an event of very great significance for the believers in non-violence, as well as in other respects. Large numbers of people have been educated in the technique of non-violence, and it has become a household word.
>
> It is too early to assess the ultimate results and destination of the civil rights movement. This means, among other things, that it is too early to be confident that, while it has drawn energies away from the struggle against war as such, it has proven the most effective way to advance that struggle. Theodore Olson has observed: "Because the cold war, for both ideological and economic reasons, profoundly inhibits any real change on genuinely social issues, any attack on these issues is an attack on the cold war." But on strictly logical grounds it would be just as correct to say that only a massive attack on the cold war which by definition so profoundly inhibits social change will make possible a real attack on other social issues. . . .
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> There is nothing in political experience to suggest that in the absence of a powerful pacifist or anti-war component in the movement for social change, and specific education in issues of nationalism, militarism, the meaning of war in the nuclear age, and so on, war will in fact be abolished. That will come about only if a creative peace movement comes into being and people's minds and feelings are somehow reached on the issues in this field as they have been on the race issue. . . .
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> Early in his article Theodore Roszak follows his contention that the "war issue . . . simply does not have drawing power as a political issue" by this statement: "We all know it *ought* to have drawing power; it ought indeed to be so potent an issue that none of us can get to sleep nights worrying about it." This suggests that what is most needed is an analysis of why a "peace programme" is less the object of attention now than a few years ago. What made it popular or seemingly popular then?

What are the background issues of this dialogue? Essentially, they are two. Serious workers for peace feel strongly certain moral obligations. One is to live peaceful lives themselves and to contribute as little support as possible to the social agencies which are used by the state for military purposes during or in preparation for a war. Another obligation is to make themselves effective in the "anti-war component in the movement for social change"—to try to reach peoples' minds and feelings with "specific education in issues of nationalism, militarism, the meaning of war," etc.

Even more generally, the pacifist seeks to resolve the dilemma—or the series of dilemmas—which arises out of the psycho-social reality put with startling simplicity by Thomas à Kempis: "All men desire peace, but few men desire those things that make for peace."

So, the reflective pacifist finds himself endlessly repeating the thought-processes of his colleagues and predecessors in the anti-war movement. Peace, he says to himself, is not a "thing," but a social harmony which results from just and beneficent attitudes of mind in all human relationships. Accordingly, let us work on these relationships; let us attempt to redesign the entire social order, that peace may eventually prevail. It is Mr. Muste's point that enthusiasm for a new social design may make an erstwhile pacifist willing to use war to get his plan established; or he may simply forget the immediate needs of the peace movement because of his growing preoccupation with social issues.

Now it is often a fact that persons who are socially quite "unaware" none the less feel extreme revulsion toward the horrors of war and by becoming ardent pacifists may begin a course of personal experience in working for peace which has the effect of changing their social values and views. Here is further support for Mr. Muste's "first things first" point of view.

But is there, let us ask, a difference between the present generation of pacifists who feel drawn to social action and those in the labor and socialist movements of the past who abandoned their anti-war stand with the onset of the two world wars of this century?

One might say that this earlier "pacifist" sentiment, which dropped by the wayside, was not the same as the determined conscientious objection of the hard-core nucleus of the present pacifist movement. It was little more than a generalized humanitarian rejection of war. It did not grow out of conviction of the ends-means proposition maintained by today's working pacifist. Accordingly, you might argue that when the present-day pacifist or conscientious objector turns to social issues as areas for immediate application of his methods and views, and for demonstration of their value, he does so from a deeper motivation. His basic stance is different from what now appears as the social opportunism of previous movements.

On the other hand, it must be noted that today's peace movement is by no means all "hard-core." From the viewpoint of the onlooker, the uncompromising, old-line peace groups have all but lost their identity in the tumult of nuclear pacifist expressions and the wave of popular campaigning against war, for test-bans and other, immediate, peace-tending political objectives, which are animated by an intensified "humanitarian" ardor much more than they represent implementations of absolute pacifist resolve. As a consequence, the "nuclear pacifists" sometimes show satisfaction at superficial victories and fail to understand the necessity for really basic changes in the constitution of society and in the motivations of national policy.

So the old question of "what to do" emerges with renewed insistence. What makes for peace? What shall we concentrate on—"Peace" or "Justice"? Why not both? Shall we capitalize horror, or generate support for positive social understanding—without which we shall never get peace?

Such questions always beset the self-conscious area of the peace movement for the reason that peace is itself a somewhat equivocal idea; yet it is an idea with great popular appeal.

The problem is to stop war. But if we find that war cannot be stopped without more *social maturity* on the part of large numbers of human beings, then the processes which contribute to maturity and social understanding must also be served.

How about "unity" in the peace movement? Is it possible? Desirable? It may be that finding out what "unity" works best for specified ends, and what sorts of "unity" confine and become sources of sectarian dissipation of energy, is the only path to maturity among pacifists themselves.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves
SOME ENGLISH CRITICS

As before noted in this column, the British publication *Anarchy* often contains an interesting mixture of theory regarding the child's need for "freedom" and descriptions of pioneering educational endeavors. The September, 1964, number gives considerable attention to the educational scene in the United States.

John Ellerby, who writes on "Parents, Teachers and Schools," identifies his own position with a passage by Ashley Montagu in *On Being Human:* "A society such as ours, in which human relations are submerged in the economic system, can rescue itself only by submerging its economy in the matrix of human relations. . . . And this is the task that the schools must assist in undertaking, no less than the rescue of man from his debasing enslavement to the principles and practice of an acquisitive society." But, as Mr. Ellerby also points out, the pervasive goals of the acquisitive society make well-meaning attempts at discovering the "matrix" of life in human relations very difficult. Speaking of a now well-known attempt to bring liberal ideals to a privileged community (*Crestwood Heights: A North American Suburb* by Seeley, Sim and Loosley), Ellerby notes that parents and teachers of this intellectually enlightened community "appear to have accepted nearly all the values which the humanists, the liberals, and the psychiatrically oriented speakers and writers have advocated over the last fifty years." But while toleration, permissiveness and individual choice are the rule for the Crestwood Heights youngsters, in the near-by city of Chicago the opposite orientation of a fairly brutal acquisitiveness is dominant.

The authors of *Crestwood Heights* therefore observe that "the child must be free in accordance with democratic ideology; but he must, by no means, become free to the point of renouncing either the material success goals or the engineered co-operation integral to the adequate functioning of an industrial civilization." David Riesman has also given attention to the uneasy compromises produced by mixing a general emphasis on status-acquisitiveness with supposed dedication to the meaning of being human. In *Individualism Reconsidered,* Riesman summarizes the Crestwood sort of situation of the children:

> Their parents want to know how they have fared at school: they are constantly comparing them, judging them in school aptitude, popularity, what part they have in the school play; are the boys sissies? the girls too fat? All the school anxieties are transferred to the home and *vice versa*, partly because the parents, college graduates mostly, are intelligent and concerned with education. After school there are music lessons, skating lessons, riding lessons, with mother as chauffeur and scheduler. In the evening, the children go to a dance at school for which the parents have groomed them, while the parents go to a Parent-Teacher Association meeting for which the children, directly or indirectly, have groomed *them*, where they are addressed by a psychiatrist who advises them to be warm and relaxed in handling their children! They go home and eagerly and warmly ask their returning children to tell them everything that happened at the dance, making it clear by their manner that they are sophisticated and cannot be easily shocked. As Professor Seeley describes matters, the school in this community operates a "gigantic factory for the production of relationships."

Mr. Ellerby finds this a frightening description, for he sees the result as a kind of "tender trap, a well-intentioned conspiracy against the child." The trap consists in the fact that there is no genuine deliberation concerning individual values because of the constant togetherness of verbally progressive teachers and parents.

The same issue of *Anarchy* also contains an article by Greer and Blossom, who feel that the contrast will never be sharp enough in such situations as Crestwood, to encourage either choice or rebellion in the child. Radical thought is submerged in the confusing plethora of good intentions which schools like Crestwood Heights represent. The authors endeavor to interest a few parents and teachers in another American version

of England's Summerhill, and, as might be expected, they feel that no modification of the grading system is sufficient for the needs of individual discovery. They write:

> The children from the most economically deprived areas are humiliated by being pitted against the averages of others who have been trained from nursery school in the techniques for success in school. Haven't these children feelings, sensitivity like any others? For 12 years we tell them they aren't good enough. But good enough in what? In writing a paper, organising words found in reference books? Passing tests with symbols not understood, putting down these words they don't understand. I could quote from Tolstoy, Goethe, Plato, Pavlov, Thoreau, Ruskin, Kierkegaard all to the point that words are the most superficial level of learning. Herbert Read writes, "It is not merely that we have disguised our feelings as symbols, but what in effect we have done is to accept a limited number of symbols as an adequate account of the total reality, and what escapes our consciousness is what ultimately destroys us, individually in the form of insanity, socially in the form of war."
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> The student working with his complete self, without pressure of time, who develops his own project will know how he is doing, he will judge himself. If he makes poor choices he knows eventually where it doesn't work, and will progress. If his work is carefully kept, valued and respected—never marked on and written on—if it is kept in order his progress will be easy to see, and he will evaluate it himself. He begins to value himself if the work he does is valued and respected (and if it is degraded, he is degraded). If he is pleased he will have a tremendous desire to share what he's learned. This is a natural human need. We negate the need to share knowledge with our system of competition. The child who has the desire to give, and the opportunity to give will be able to take in other areas.

Comment at the close of the Greer-Blossom piece on "High School U.S.A." includes an assertion reminiscent of Plato, Emerson and William James:

> Every subject studied is actually to find out Who we are, Why we are here. Psychology and religion are at the basis of every subject studied whether it be chemistry, literature history or biology. At the basis of all our studies is our search to find out what our life really is, and if we treated subjects from this viewpoint what subject could be boring? But in the present curriculum each subject pompously parades as an end in itself.

Finally, Greer and Blossom revert to a theme which has received considerable attention here—the need for informal instruction from non-accredited members of the community who have a continuing interest in the teaching-learning process:

> Every time a variation on our education is broached you get the response there aren't enough teachers available. Poppycock, there just aren't enough diplomas. Everywhere there are people who come into small schools and give a little of themselves. Who would be glad to give of their time, for the pleasure they would have being needed for themselves. Doctors, lawyers, merchants, chiefs. The school hours could be flexible to enable the students and teachers to take advantage of the hours that can be given to them. When personal relationships develop between students and "resource person" apprenticeships could develop. Working as an apprentice a few days a week or a few hours a day would be a way for students to sample the real atmosphere of a profession, or to just partake of the adult world as he feels ready.
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> Jane Addams knew what Tolstoy meant when he said we spread a "Snare of preparation" before the young people's feet, "hopelessly entangling them in a curious inactivity at the very period of life when they are longing to construct the world anew and to conform it to their own ideals." We deaden their intuitive abilities.

FRONTIERS

Going and Coming

> . . . the practice of rationalism is an irreversible process. If once one loses the innocence of naive belief by venturing to stray into rational thought, there can be no honest way of recovering it. When one has cut himself off from God by a first sip from the cup of knowledge, one will not rediscover Him by drinking its dregs, no matter how hard they may be boiled.
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> JAGJIT SINGH

THIS passage, which comes toward the end of Mr. Singh's book, *Great Ideas and Theories of Modern Cosmology* (Dover, New York, 1961), might be expanded to suggest that the problems of human beings are essentially problems of knowledge. It seems certain, for example, that the polemics, the charges and counter-charges in the controversy between radicals and conservatives are largely made up from the partial certainties, and the insecurities and rejections which have grown out of the attempt to understand the world and human life on the basis of rational inquiry. There are no thorough-going anti-rationalists. The parties which are in conflict over the great question of what is knowledge and how it is obtained are all rationalists of one sort or another. They differ only in their claim of how and to what extent the method of rationalism should be applied. Every statement about the meaning of life has a rational form.

The chief import of Mr. Singh's statement, for the present, may be that when rational thought reaches its highest development, it becomes, in *its own terms,* bankrupt. That is, rationalism destroys its own certainties. You could say that, today, the increasing sense of being cut off from our roots by the continued application of rational analysis is the cause of what psychotherapists have called the "existential vacuum." The demoralizing experience of "vacuum" has multiple effects. It makes some men scurry back to the beliefs of their fathers, while others take a tough, stoical stand; it turns the devotion of the idealistic young to immediate, humanitarian and non-ideological issues, and often makes beatniks of thoughtful, undisciplined youth.

But the best and most promising effect of the self-defeats of rationalism comes in new accounts of the human situation. At first, of course, they are diagnostic, but soon they begin the construction of a new plateau on which to stand. A clear expression of both diagnosis and reconstruction is found in *The Encapsulated Man*, by David Royce (Insight paperback, 1964). In a chapter on the problem of "Meaninglessness," Mr. Royce says:

> The loss of meaning in traditional symbols has led to despair over the fact that absolutes do not exist, or if they do, that we do not seem to know how to make certain contact with them so that they can order our lives. With the angry young men, I suggest that we accept whatever 20th-century insights we have into our awareness and push on like men instead of mice. Why not face all truths squarely, that is, continue to be rigorous and disciplined about admitting potential candidates into the house of truth, but, once admitted, accept all items and explain them for what they can mean to us rather than conclude that the truth is simply too much to bear. The point is that the meaninglessness of modern man could be viewed as a sign of philosophic depth—a new awareness of the tragic side of life. The demand for honesty, even at the risk of destroying one's cherished beliefs, is surely indicative of philosophic maturity, an important step in the direction of "learning how to die." For as the old position is cast aside, a part of one's self does, in fact, die. But the implication of Montaigne's phrase, "to learn to philosophize is to learn how to die," is that the dying is necessary and desirable for it leads to a growing awareness of the totality of life. The meaninglessness of 20th-century man could represent more of an heroic quality than we have heretofore realized. After all, it is not easy to look epistemological and value relativism squarely in the face and refuse to pick a value as our absolute for the sake of convenience or for the "peace of mind" it has to offer. It may well be that modern man has taken the first step toward becoming a visionary with respect to humanity.
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> In other words, the hope in the meaninglessness of contemporary man is this: If the truth is that there is no *single, ultimate* truth, or that we have no way of being certain about *the truth,* let us at least continually question whatever truth seems

> impregnable at a given point in time and space and accept meaninglessness if necessary, but let us also make the effort to move beyond the legitimate realities of the void. But in the process of doing this, let us not be deluded into the belief that one's personal "reality image" and its consequent meaning is, in fact, ultimate reality.

Mr. Royce makes this general statement of the problem under consideration:

> What do we mean by encapsulation? In general, we mean claiming to have all of the truth without being sufficiently aware of the limitations of one's approach to truth. We mean looking at life partially, but issuing statements concerning the wholeness of living. In its most important sense the term "encapsulation" refers to projecting a knowledge of ultimate reality from the perceptual framework of a limited reality Image.

It would have a neat conclusiveness to say that Mr. Royce has taken us back to a sound reliance on "Socratic ignorance," and this is true enough. However, he has done far more than this. He has looked at all the major forms of cultural encapsulation and shown how the pioneers in every field are breaking out of their confining prejudices. By this means his book becomes the symmetrical record of a general awakening. It shows how an authentic Socratic *spirit* is operating all along the growing edge of modern thought.

Some day these insights, as they grow stronger, will begin to exert an effect on world affairs and to leaven the dogmatic certainties of controversy. As they take hold—and they must, if we are not to collapse into another Dark Age—there will probably be a final end to the modern nation-state, and to the familiar idea of power and present justifications of its use.