INSTEAD OF A SOCIAL MACHINE

WE have a project for the technical experts, the people who are good at measuring things and solving practical problems. It is to get out their psychological transits and tell us how far it is across the abyss which separates what is from what might be in human affairs. Then, having found that out, they might go on and tell us what are the units—for us, these would be the increments of "progress"—on the scale they have used to measure the whole distance.

Unfortunately, the more broadly or universally you conceive the problem of man, the more ridiculously inadequate become the terms in which you try to define it. It isn't only the scientists who like to isolate what they are going to attempt in a way that makes it possible for them to do what they set out to do. Moralists are similarly tempted. And while it would be extremely nice if we could get bitterly opposed ideological spokesmen to sit down at the conference table and work out their differences, this, we say, isn't really possible, so we arrange a talk between people who are more likely to get along. Anyhow, we have a conference. Too bad nobody important from Southeast Asia is able to come.

Or, right in your home town, there is the problem of a man who has been diagnosed as schizophrenic. They send him to a state hospital—what else could they do?—and there, after a few tests, they begin giving him electric stock treatments. Then you happen to meet a psychiatrist friend with a long string of degrees who tells you that in his opinion shock is very nearly the worst thing you can do to another human being, sick or well. He seems to have good reasons for saying this, but he can no more buck the system of "indicated" shock therapy than you can stop the war in Viet Nam. There are hundreds of such situations. For example, you

know, without any effort to gather proofs, that the bureaus which dispense administrative power, all over the world, have each their quota of mild little junior Adolf Eichmanns who every day sign some kind of papers relating to what will happen to certain people—people who have to be fired from their jobs, removed from relief rolls, or who must lose their homes, or be deported on account of some law passed by the legislature when McCarthy was still around. If you start collecting data on situations of this sort your life will turn into a dull ache of continuous pain and frustration. Even the righteous processes of the law, correctly administrated by men who do their best, tend to make you sick. People who devote their lives to helping victims of the faceless pressures of the social and economic system no longer talk or think very much about "justice." They know they don't know what it means and have little occasion to use the word. They simply work to reduce human suffering—a never-ending battle. These people seldom have pretentious theories about how to change society. They are like the nurses Charles Jung writes about in *Modern Man in Search of a Soul:* the nurses know how to care for people, while the high-powered specialists who make big diagnostic theories seem unfitted by their intellectuality for works of caring and kindness.

No matter how long you circle around, trying to see the human situation whole, when you finally light you are confronted by the overwhelming fact that human problems have grown out of scale. Tinkering with the social machine does little good; most of the time it doesn't work at all. Blowing it up won't work, either, although sometimes you feel like doing it. And when it comes to the large theories which the not yet extinct tribe of system-builders propose, you know from both historical and personal experience that no *one* theory will

ever be put to work, and that even if this were possible, the theoretical intelligence of human beings is simply not equal to dealing with the complexity of the society we have now. Artists usually know this, but planners refuse to give up.

Of course, the muddle-through optimists and the people who work night and day for, say, the United Nations Association, in the hope of getting *something* good going, aren't entirely wrong. Nor are the Great Books enthusiasts who labor for conceptual clarity wrong. And the people who move to the country to find the Good Life in some kind of homestead environment aren't wrong, either. The youngsters who join Peace Corps, hoping to find outlet for longings that only original and ingenious invention could put to work at home—well, maybe they can do some good before they get disillusioned. Then there are the Quakers, who keep wearing away at the ugly harvest of man's inhumanity to man; they do a great deal of practical work to keep the dialogue about peace going. Others pick their projects and work along at them. The new psychologists seem especially important. They are finding out things about creative thinking and are building a semi-scientific foundation under Emerson's ideas about self-reliance, with what promise to be fruitful lines of investigation into the different kinds of motivation which are behind human behavior. We have all these as well as many other good things going on; the problem is to fit them together and generate some faith in their effectiveness. So far, we see little rational ground for hope.

Just possibly, these psychologists will be able, in time, to tell us something about the kind of unified mental and emotional life that will enable human beings to keep on feeling useful in the face of the enormous disproportions between what is and what might be. What this would amount to is a *workable* theory of progress which has a rationale that people can understand. This "rationale" is really crucial, since its function, in the modern world, would be to take the place of what theology used to do for religion, and what

nationalism did to create meaning for the populations of the nation-states.

What we are talking about seems simple enough at the outset. It is a matter of developing workable and believable ideas about both individual and social good, and resulting programs for action. Such ideas will probably involve some absolutes—controlling principles which frame and order the field of decision-making. People who are determined to act can't do without absolutes of some sort. This is the difference between science-oriented or "objective" study of human situations and problems, and actual engagement in dealing with them. People who act in a situation have to have first principles or something that they are able to use for first principles. Only "observers" can afford to remain relativists. And because they are relativists, they never *feel* the realities they are supposed to be studying.

Today, a great many people have intuitive conviction that their lives are worth while—that is, contributory to both individual and social good. It is the rational support of this conviction that is missing, and because it is missing there is no coherent social philosophy which can be communicated and discussed.

When we say that there are people with intuitive conviction that their lives are good, we mean that such people enjoy a certain wholeness or serenity which pervades all their activities. A passage from A. H. Maslow's *Toward a Psychology of Being* will help to give content to this idea. Writing about the built-in dilemmas of even the best of human life, Dr. Maslow remarks:

> The Buddhists distinguish the Pratyckabuddha, who wins enlightenment only for himself, independently of others, from the Bodhisattva who, having attained enlightenment, yet feels that his own salvation is imperfect so long as others are unenlightened. For the sake of his own self-actualization, we may say, he must turn away from the bliss of B-cognition [Being-cognition, or Nirvana] in order to help others and teach them.
>
> Was Buddha's enlightenment a purely personal, private possession? Or did it necessarily belong to

others, to the world? Writing and teaching, it is true, are often (not always) steps back from bliss or ecstasy. It means giving up heaven to help others get there. Is the Zen Buddhist or the Taoist correct, who says, "As soon as you talk about it, it no longer exists, and is no longer true" (i.e., since the *only* way to experience it is to experience it, and anyway words could never describe it, since it is inevitable)?

Of course there is some right on both sides. (That is why it is an existential dilemma, eternal, unsolvable.) If I find an oasis which other people could share, shall I enjoy it myself or save their lives by leading them there? If I find a Yosemite which is beautiful partly because it is quiet and non-human and private, shall I keep it or make it into a National Park for millions of people who, because they are millions, will make it less than it was or even destroy it? Shall I share my private beach with them and make it thereby unprivate? How right is the Indian who respects life and hates active killing and thereby lets the cows get fat while the babies die? What degree of enjoyment of food may I allow myself in a poor country where the starving children look on? Ought I starve too? There is no nice, clean, theoretical, *a priori* answer. No matter what answer is given, there must be some regret at least. Self-actualization must be selfish; and it must be unselfish. And so there must be choice, conflict, and the possibility of regret.

First of all, let us recognize that this kind of thinking cannot get done, or if done can never get publicity, in a wholly politicalized society. To the extent that the idea of the good is a political concept, people tend to ignore the reality of existential dilemmas, and if they persist in thinking politically about problems that cannot be solved by manipulating existing conditions, it follows that anxiety, then fear, and resentment, then hate, supply the dynamics of social behavior.

Modern social thought is filled with theories and doctrines of the good, but it has given practically no attention to a theory of normal pain in human life. Inevitably, the population which lacks an understanding of existential dilemmas becomes vulnerable to the appeals of demagogues, so that its political life degrades into the typical phenomena of a mass society. The idea of individual responsibility is sloganized into patterns of simple conformity and the people come to think of their good as represented by promises which politicians cannot possibly fulfill.

Let us look again at the attitudes characteristic of the people Dr. Maslow calls "Self-actualizers." They seem to have achieved a balance that enables them to work fruitfully along lines they have chosen, and while they may be saddened by the state of the world, their efforts are not made ineffectual by depressing comparisons between what is and what might be. Here, perhaps, we have some instruction in the basic nature of the moral feelings. Just as a man who thinks only of himself may have a sliding scale of calculated interest in other people—from the mass which he plans to exploit to the individual who can be personally useful to him— so, also, regard for the good of others may undergo many changes of focus, from participation in large humanitarian projects to services to only a few, or just one. Yet the *feeling* does not change, nor the sense of fulfillment. In the ancient East, the teacher or guru is counselled to think of his disciple as in actual fact the representative of all mankind, and for the term of the relationship between the two to give him the full measure of devotion which the identification suggests. There is a kind of reflection of this idea when Dostoievsky, in *The Brothers Karamazov,* has Ivan explain that he could never permit harm to one innocent child, even though he might by this means bring the entire world to happiness.

Paradoxical as it may seem—and is—we have no difficulty in understanding this point of view in terms of our feelings, although intellectually it creates extreme difficulties. We cannot reconcile it with the Utilitarian principle of the greatest good of the greatest number. One must argue, therefore, either that our feelings are false or that there is something wrong with the Utilitarian philosophy, or with familiar political readings of its meaning. Actually, Utilitarianism can be rejected only on strong intuitive grounds or on the basis of openly transcendental metaphysics.

The problem is to bridge the gap between our deep humanitarian instinct which is satisfied by nothing less than the good of all, and the brute fact that, at any given moment, and for any foreseeable future, it is absolutely impossible to accomplish the good of all. Of course, the feeling of fitness and proportion of individuals varies greatly in the expression of altruistic longings. One man may obtain complete fulfillment by starting a school and piloting it to notable success as a power for good in the community. Another, say, a Horace Mann, gives his life's energies to planning and bringing into being a program for the education of the children of an entire nation. Each works in the field to which he is drawn, and which is accessible to him. What must be questioned, on Utilitarian grounds, is the serenity which attends a partial achievement. What good, in short, is a good which is not for all?

The practical question, "What else could they do?", has no relevance here. It is a question, rather, of *why* one man's individual resolution of an existential dilemma—doing what and all he can—seems to produce a region of authentic harmony. The rest of the "evil" in the world is not blotted out, nor even made invisible, yet by the effort of this man a field of self-actualization has been created, and it becomes a nuclear force for good.

What we are trying to do in this discussion is compare the inner dynamics of the self-actualizer working as an individual with the "competing" conception of an over-all plan. The difficulty with over-all plans—as we, at least, have experienced them—is that they are always based on Utilitarian assumptions and for this reason grow ruthless in their requirements of conformity, right from the start. Because the kind of planning we know how to do is invariably mechanistic—we have to assume that human beings are predictable, or that we can *make* them predictable—the resulting program, as it gets under way, becomes the enemy of spontaneous altruism. Either you fit yourself into the program or you will be clubbed into submission by the compulsive needs of the Utilitarian ethic.

Yet to be totally without plan seems ridiculous. It is natural to ask: Can there be another kind of planning? Is it conceivable that a deliberate curtailment of mechanistic planning and a conscious effort on the part of some people— even a few, at the start—to foster spontaneous, self-actualizing behavior, would release a new kind of cultural beneficence? Could there be a "plan" that would encompass developments of this sort, and even *rely* upon them as the basis for future social growth?

Now if this is a real possibility—and we may suppose that it is, since every genuine educational community is a gamble of similar description— then we may draw certain conclusions about the potentialities of human beings, generally. We are saying, for example, that the creative resources of individuals need a free environment in order to become operative in *social* terms. We are saying that theories of progress which pay lip service to the promise of individuals, but insist that the correct environment must first be established by a political *tour de force,* are theories which cannot ever be made to work. Ideals of freedom and human development are not well served by coercive techniques; or, to be more precise, when the mechanistic aspect of the plan becomes more important than the spontaneous or free response that is hoped for, the entire project turns into social and individual betrayal.

It must be recognized that all such questions are terribly clouded by the existing shambles of our present social situation, left behind after the breakdown of plan after plan—most of them mechanistic in origin and application. Human beings, we say, are disabled by many kinds of tyranny and manipulation. How can they be expected, *now,* to rise to the standards set for self-actualizers, or really creative people? Surely something must be done *for* them, until they grow strong!

We say this, but we don't seem to be able to arrange it. The preservation of a field for free invention, for the coming into being of a wonderful social mosaic of self-actualization through the spontaneous qualities of many human beings—this is far more difficult to accomplish than a tough revolution to take over power and get a "free society" now. Except that we don't get a free society this way; except that the very idea of revolution according to the pattern of the past seems almost insane to contemporary intelligence; except that reliance on this old mechanistic approach bespeaks a willful neglect and ignorance of the new knowledge concerning motivation and human behavior that has been accumulating throughout the twentieth century.

The problem, you could say, is to find an appropriate balance between politics and religion, or religious philosophy, and the two don't seem to mix at all. Even if you decide that religion has too bad a record to be considered as a means to human good, and say that what is wanted is a balance between political (social) ends and the humanistic fulfillment of individuals, the problem is much the same. Humanistic philosophy cannot survive in a mechanistic environment, which means a society ordered by Utilitarian principles. Somehow, you have to get the Ivan factor into the system; somehow, the system has to "stay loose," so that individual patterns of growth are able to develop, so that the mysterious pregnancies of the *individual* human spirit can lead to live births of new enterprises.

What about theory? Is there a tenable conception of further human evolution which would give this general view a rational ground?

So far as we can see, the only process-conception of the human individual that seems to work in social terms, also, is the idea of a being whose actual *identity radius* varies with his development as a man. The fully developed man thinks universally—he feels, that is, his community of being with all the rest of mankind. No more than a Buddha can he accept or enjoy private salvation. Add to this general rule all the complex factors of being human—the various forms of expression, the capacities to build, to originate, to evolve art forms, to typify, symbolize, and to do all these things individually as well as in combination one with another—and some strands of elementary theory about the nature of man begin to emerge.

Any such proposition is of course a manifesto of faith. It assumes that the determination to be a free human being, and to work toward a free society, are acts of faith both possible and necessary to the natural unfoldment of human potentiality. It suggests that each range of self-actualization (if this kind of development can be said to have degrees, it can also be said to have ranges) has its appropriate social correspondence, capable of a "goodness" that is the direct outcome of the qualities of the individuals involved.

We only "dream" about such societies, now, because we have not yet generated the kind of faith that will bring them into being. Involved is a faith in ourselves and a faith in one another. Involved is a recognition that the existential pain of feeling separate and alone, anxious and fearful, yet at the same time feeling the longings of love, the hunger for union and fellowship—that this is a central paradox of the human condition, which is resolved only by conscious realization of the variable radius of the self—a man can be one or he can be all, according to the confrontations and opportunities of life. And there is a good, a joy, a self-actualization, in each relationship. The social vision comes into being, the good society changes from dream to actuality, when men begin to recognize these possibilities in one another. This makes viable the plan for a living society, and abolishes at last the vain hope of devising a successful social machine.

REVIEW
PSYCHIATRISTS ON RELIGION

AMONG contemporary discussions of religion by philosophically inclined psychologists is a paper read before the 1963 meeting of the American Psychoanalytic Association—"Asceticism and Religious Experiences" by Benjamin Weininger, a Santa Barbara psychiatrist. Dr. Weininger's approach goes far beyond the orthodoxies established by the various schools of psychiatric thinking during the first half of this century. While he finds a likeness between some psychotic and some religious states of mind, this is not because he regards mystical or religious experience as a form of illness. William James helps to introduce the view Dr. Weininger develops:

> According to William James, there is one religion for the healthy minded and another religion for the troubled souls. Some of us psychiatrists believe the clergyman can serve his religious purposes best by working with people who have psychological disorders. Such disturbed persons are more ready to open themselves to the essence of religion. The so-called normal persons are more resistant to alterations in consciousness, and if a change in consciousness is needed, something more than the traditional psychotherapeutic procedures is required.

> The point in comparing religious and psychotic episodes is illustrated by the schizophrenic reaction. The schizophrenic reaction is often precipitated by an incident after which the person feels he has disgraced himself beyond hope of redemption. He feels so unworthy that he believes he is rejected not only by another individual, but by everyone—by the whole of society. This sense of being totally exiled is intolerable to the person.

The intent, here, is to suggest that the state of "isolation," while obviously dangerous from the psychiatric point of view, is also a time of great importance—a possible antecedent to transformation of values and attitudes, a kind of "death" leading to a rebirth. Looking at what may be the positive aspects of "isolation" brings reconsideration of asceticism. Dr. Weininger writes:

> Both organized religion and psychiatry have generally frowned on asceticism. The clergy have not been much interested in it—and the reason is not far to seek. The religious mystic is a troublesome person, who insists on practicing literally what the religious organizations hold up as an ideal not related to the practical exigencies of life. Psychiatrists have usually taught that asceticism is a form of masochism, or self-punishment, and is therefore an emotionally unhealthy form of behavior that should be corrected by proper therapy.

> It is true that the flagellation and self-torture of some of the mystics of old must have been masochistic however much the sufferer might proclaim that the pain was worth the gain he experienced during his ecstasy with God. But newer psychoanalytic insights make it dear that masochism is not an essential feature of asceticism.

> Over-indulgence in food, sleep, sex, and hostility tends to make us "soft" as human beings and makes it more difficult for us to cope with life's problems. We need essential nutrition and adequate rest, and most of us need sexual expression. It is not dear that any of us "need" hostile aggression at all.

> Our culture encourages us to over-indulge in these areas. Such over-indulgence tends to lower our tolerance to frustration so that most of us come to "need" to have close at hand materials or persons to satisfy our desires as soon as they arise. One can observe in middle aged persons the sad effect of over-indulgences with the consequent softening or weakening of the moral character. Overweight, boredom, the constant pursuit of entertainment and depression—these are the emotional diseases of over-indulgent members of the affluent society.

Dr. Weininger relates a conversation about celibacy between two priests, both serving as chaplains in the same hospital. One, admitting that his life was not now emotionally satisfactory, anticipated that it would be "glorious" in the hereafter. The other priest said that he found life good *now,* despite his adherence to the ascetic rules of his religion. Weininger suggests that "ascetic practices must yield a sense of increased life now: otherwise, we are probably dealing with masochism."

Although this point is not extensively developed in the Weininger paper, it becomes

clear that self-denial practiced for the sake of "spiritual" rewards—the stance of those Calvinist clergymen who so thoroughly infuriated Emerson—is actually a disavowal of responsibility to live in the present, and it is this subtle temptation to avoid open-minded decision—the existential fact of being human—that supports the sort of religion which William James regarded as a block to self-fulfillment.

An article published by Brock Chisholm *(Social Service Review,* June, 1962) when he was head of the World Health Organization generalizes along these lines:

> We have developed many, many methods of avoiding the kinds of responsibilities that are facing us all now. We can retreat from reality. We do this by retreat from responsibility most particularly in the political field. Of course, we can submit to a dictator, a big strong man, who will do all our worrying for us and make all the decisions and leave us free merely to concern ourselves about our own little matters of convenience or local pleasures. This is one way.

> We can elect a big strong man, preferably a general. This is a very effective symbol of power and decision. A great many countries now are being controlled by generals. Of course, some of them are short of generals and they may have colonels, but then they are also pretty good for some countries. However, generals on the whole will do a little better because they fulfill the symbolic needs a little better.

> We can do the same thing in social ways of all kinds through this same method of avoiding responsibility, by conformity, and demanding that everyone else conform, by criticizing anybody who sticks his neck out or suggests any change, by conforming to the old pattern but not thinking for ourselves. This is an extremely widespread pattern when there is any kind of trouble threatening.

> It can also be done in the religious field. There are large numbers of people who, in just the last few years, have been retreating to relatively primitive religious principles, particularly the kind of religious authority that will take all responsibility, so that one needs only to be obedient and do what one is told and then everything will be looked after, not only here, but in a future life as well, which is, of course, a big reward for not taking any responsibility.

> This appeals to very large numbers of people and, of course, it is inevitable that, whenever any one group of people starts to press for change, another group will react to that pressure and become increasingly conservative and move back from even where it was before.

A retreat to mental childhood is not, clearly, a renewal of life but its negation. As Erich Fromm points out in *The Heart of Man,* our greatest danger in respect to a war of obliteration comes not from unusually willful and evil people, but from power placed in the hands of "ordinary minded" people—those who have not begun the process of genuine self-actualization. Dr. Chisholm continues:

> All our institutions, all our values and our attitudes and ways of doing things, including our attitudes about interhuman relationships, have been founded on concepts that have now become obsolete. Therefore these things must be changed if we would have a reasonable hope of survival of the human race, including ourselves.

Are there insights among the precepts of great religious teachers which may speak to us of the quest for autonomy? Dr. Weininger concludes his paper with some thoughts about the sort of asceticism that leads to self-achieved submission:

> When we are mystical, we appear to others to be practicing asceticism. To ourselves, because life is meaningful, we do not feel we are sacrificing anything.

> One can move toward the life taught by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount. My objective life is in many respects removed from any resemblance to Jesus', but inwardly I know that man's development in the foreseeable future must lie in the direction shown by Jesus or the Buddha. It is possible for man to be gentle, loving, to go the second mile, and to turn the other cheek psychologically. It is possible not to cling to resentful thoughts. This goal is not one of perfection, but one of existential and essential human development. To perceive the brotherhood of man is to learn to love.

COMMENTARY

"CHILDREN AND OURSELVES"

THERE is an important distinction to be made between the plans men make for people as ends in themselves, and plans which serve the aims of ideological doctrine. The Albany Community Center (described in Frontiers) will be for the enrichment of life here and now. The Albany nursery school will be for children aged four, five, and six years old, and will not attempt to hurry them along in learning "to read and count." There is a quiet excellence in this week's "Children" article about Albany's projected nursery school. Especially for those of us who have forgotten how it feels to be a child, this account brings awareness of the existential values of childhood. It makes you wonder what kind of a world this would be if all education were to devote itself to a similar restoration, for obviously, there are many correspondences between this view of human needs and wonderings and other levels of experience and learning. A child may look in the mirror and say to himself, "Well, that is what I look like," and get a friendly feeling from the experience. Then, a few years later, perhaps because of fulfillments in early childhood, he may have another kind of encounter—what some have called the "I am me" experience, described by Erich Fromm as "simultaneously the fullest experience of individuality and its opposite." It is, he adds, "not so much a blending of the two as a polarity from whose tension religious experience springs." Dr. Fromm calls this experience "an attitude of pride and integrity and at the same time of a humility which stems from experiencing oneself as but a thread in the texture of the universe." From this stance one is ready to meet the vast variety of the world with at least the fundamental equipment needed in order to survive as a human being.

To push this discussion a little further, it must be acknowledged that the old ways of developing a sense of identity are not very useful in the present. A strong sense of *racial* identity is responsible for the mutilation and pain in the American South, today. A strong sense of *national* identity easily becomes a major obstacle to world peace. National identity may get you a start in life, but where does it end? There is also the problem of learning to do without national identity. The difficulty seems mainly to be that different people wear out the reality in their sense of national identity at different times, and often turn against one another from the various kinds of desperation which may result.

The general psychological uncertainty represented by these questionings is sometimes called "rootlessness." But you could also explain it as one of the results of an education in being human. If an individual begins to find that his sense of identity is rooted in existential reality, he naturally resists reduction to either a racial or a national identity, or to any idea of self that makes him less than what he now feels himself to be.

This is the only resistance movement, we suspect, that will win out in the end.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves
A SIGNIFICANT BEGINNING

[For this week's article we extract from the Albany (Georgia) Proposal for a Community Center (see Frontiers) the section devoted to plans for a Nursery School. Information about the needs of the school may be obtained by writing Mrs. Wendy Roberts, P.O. Box 1641, Albany, Ga.]

AN important aspect of the community center will be the nursery school program. We recognize the need for all-day nursery schools in areas where there is a large proportion of working mothers. This need is a desperate one in Negro communities of the South where the majority of women must work and where Negro children are not permitted to enter the already existing facilities for white children. We propose to open an all-day nursery school for fifteen children which would act as a training center to train people from various communities in the South in nursery school techniques. At the termination of the program these people would return to their communities to set up nursery schools. With this training they will be able to provide a service considerably greater than the baby-sitting previously provided by older siblings, aged relatives, and indifferent neighbors.

Parent programs will be a very significant and integral part of the nursery school program. Picnics, barbecues, open-houses, meetings with speakers will be held open to the public. These functions will be held on the nursery school grounds to better acquaint parents and the community with what the nursery school is attempting to accomplish. On certain afternoons extra volunteers will be called in to free the teachers so that they may talk to parents about their children and so parents can see their children in the nursery school situation.

The Albany Nursery School will open during the Spring of 1965 and the first training session held over the summer. We plan to utilize resource people from the North to run workshops in art, music, dance, literature, science, child development, concept formation, perceptual discrimination, structural aspects of the curriculum, room arrangement, routines, and other areas of nursery school education as applied to the Negro child from the rural and semi-rural South. The several or more resource people trained to teach various nursery school techniques would arrive in Albany prior to the students and would utilize the time to determine the order and scope of presentation. The work-study program for the students will be divided between seminars and actual observation and participation in the operating nursery school. At these sessions the need for future communications between the students, to share and learn from each other's experiences, would be discussed. Perhaps this could best be accomplished through a newsletter.

Let us make it clear at this point that the nursery school will NOT be a pre-first grade, nor will it be a kindergarten. In other words, it will not be the purpose of the nursery school to teach children how to read and to count. Rather, the purpose of the nursery school will be to offer an environment where children aged four, five, and six can gain feelings of confidence, pride, and worth in themselves. The activities in the nursery school must be carefully geared to a child's developmental level. They must be geared to enable the child to accumulate feelings of success and a positive self-image. Three learning areas will be stressed: language development, concept formation, and perceptual discrimination.

Language seems to be one of the major deficiencies of many children. The labeling of people, objects, equipment and activities will be stressed. Stories, music activities, trips, nature activities, pictures of Negro children hung around the room and photographs taken of the children in the nursery school engaged in activities will act as basis for conversations between teacher and child and between children.

Developing of concepts is another area which will be stressed. Shape, color, and size are the most important; however, texture (the way things feel), smell, and taste are also important concepts to build. This can be done individually or in small groups with the aid of "feeling" boxes where a child inserts his hand in a covered box and tries to guess what it is that he feels. Similar devices can be used for shape, color, and smell. Stories and other activities will be used. Another important concept to develop is that an object has several characteristics—that an apple is red and is also a fruit, for example.

Activities will be presented gradually to build perceptual discrimination. For example, in art activities at first only one color will be introduced. The child will then experiment with the process of painting—seeing what different things the brush can do. Often if a number of colors are presented to the child he is so overpowered with the colors that he becomes confused going from color to color, and does not really use his brush. As the children become accustomed to one color another will be added, and then another. Later the size of the brush may be varied. Music activities will also be presented in a graded fashion. At first three parts of the xylophone will be introduced, then five and so on. Puzzles will be similarly presented. In the first puzzles that are introduced the individual pieces will represent a particular shape or object. Then more complex puzzles will be introduced, where several pieces are needed to make the same shape or object.

Underlying all activities and experiences will be the idea of instilling a positive self-image. There will be mirrors. Books and stories that relate to real life experiences of the children will be utilized—Dick and Sallie, those plump, pink and blonde cherubs who have marvellous adventures in the big house in the country, will not rear their heads in the school. It is believed that if a child feels confident in himself, if he believes that he can do things himself, the transition to the first grade will be a far more positive one. This will have a marked effect on his attitude in relation to his education and his outlook regarding his possibilities for future success. As things stand now, many children are just not prepared to produce the kinds of results the public schools demand—even in the first grade—and the situation worsens as the child moves from first grade to second and so on up to high school. The child falls further and further behind, teachers pass him to the next grade to get rid of him, his grades are close to failing and often times he drops out of school.

We do not mean to imply that nursery schools are a panacea, but that they are a significant beginning.

FRONTIERS
A Letter from Albany, Georgia

During preparation of the contents for the September 23, 1964 issue of MANAS, the editors received by mail a brief manuscript from Albany, Georgia. Being just the right length, it was used in the editorial space of that week. The article told about the need of the Negro children of Albany for books to read and a friendly place to read them. MANAS readers apparently felt the same as the editors about this project and gave all they could. We now have this letter:

Dear MANAS:

I would like to thank you for your kind cooperation in carrying in your paper a few months ago "Albany Needs another Library."

As results of the article we have received far more than 3,000 copies of books and more than $1,260.00 in money.

I, as almost a staff of one, have been too busy to keep up with all the communications as I should, or as I would like to have done. So will you be kind enough to carry my expressions of sincere appreciation, as soon as time permits?

I would like to share with you a part of what I have been doing and give you permission to use any part of the Proposal you would like to, if you wish to.

Again, I would like to thank you and your staff in advance for this favor.

Sincerely yours,
ELIZA JACKSON

The "Proposal" mentioned in Mrs. Jackson's letter is a carefully prepared and informative prospectus for a community center in Albany, Georgia. The sixth largest city in the state, Albany has a population of 56,000 people, of whom 30,000 are Negroes. While in Albany there are two golf courses, two municipal swimming pools, a complete zoo, three open-air swimming resorts, a YMCA, numerous private playgrounds, nine lighted tennis courts, and seven baseball, softball, volleyball and basketball playing fields, the Proposal states:

There are no playgrounds, swimming resorts or pools open to Negro youth, no YMCA, YWCA, golf courts, tennis courts, or volleyball areas for the non-white population. Negroes are excluded from the use of bowling lanes. Though the local State Park is supposed to be desegregated, every effort is made to discourage Negroes from using it.

The introductory part of the Proposal shows how barriers erected by the white population mask actual conditions in Albany. For example:

The official unemployment figure for Dougherty County is 2.6%. However, this figure in no way reflects the true rate of unemployment among Negroes in this area. Official figures are drawn from those people who come in to register for work. Most of the Negroes who use the State Employment Service never go inside and register, but stand outside to be hired as casual labor. Very few register, as they know the futility of this and are also discouraged by the treatment they receive from the officials.

The low unemployment rate has made the area ineligible for Manpower Development Training Act programs, which would increase the number of skilled persons in the area.

The main jobs open to Negro male workers are as nonskilled employees for construction not covered by unions. They are paid the minimum wage of $1.25 per hour, including inclement weather. They usually average $35.00 a week. The main jobs open to female Negroes are as domestics. Approximately 90% of the employed female Negroes are domestics and are paid weekly salaries ranging from $10.00 to $20.00; the average being approximately $15.00 weekly. . . . It has been an unwritten policy that industries located in Albany follow the existing practices suggested by the Chamber of Commerce, in which we are systematically excluded from most jobs above porter and more menial levels.

As you read this proposal, it becomes obvious how the community center will help to raise the level of morale in the Negro population. For one thing, among the activities planned is the establishment of a number of employment offices which will be able to reach persons who would normally wish to register for training for better jobs, as suggested by federal programs, but are discouraged from doing so at the local State Employment Offices. The concerted attempt to

keep Negroes from bettering themselves has disintegrating effects on the young, as the following causes of school drop-outs by Negro youth make plain:

> 1. The low "ceiling of aspiration" in the Negro community because almost 100% of the professional Negroes in the Albany community are teachers and there is unemployment among teachers here. Practically no other jobs are open to Negro professionals.

> 2. The high rate of unemployment, with the Negro being the last hired and the first fired.

> 3. The feeling of no power (nothingness) among Negro youth.

> 4. The fact that often the Negro youth, before he enters a school, never has the opportunity to hold a pencil, color a picture, or turn the pages of a book and is often behind by the time he reaches the first grade and continues to fall further and further behind.

> 5. Teenagers often have to leave school to help the mother support large families of children.

> 6. The high rate of illegitimacy among Negro teenage girls, due to lack of adult supervision in the home while parents work and they are left home to care for smaller children.

> 7. No one to check on the child and he plays hookey.

The community center will offer a recreation program conceived to enrich the lives of the people, with a variety of undertakings designed for all age groups. Year-round activities will provide mental stimulation, physical exercise, opportunity for individual achievement, and social contact. The Center will seek coordination of services through co-operation with Boy and Girl Scouts, college and religious organizations, fraternal and society groups, and clubs. Readers interested in the over-all plan for the Albany Community Center are invited to write to Mrs. Eliza Jackson, Post Office Box 1641, Albany, Georgia, for a copy of the Proposal. Meanwhile, the section on the nursery school planned for Albany in connection with the Center is reprinted in this week's "Children . . . and Ourselves."

A Plea for Grandmothers

I DON'T remember much about the death of my Grandmother because I hadn't seen her for many years prior to her death. She could neither read nor write, mainly because she had been the only girl in a family of boys whose father had fled Germany to protect his seven sons from being conscripted into the Kaiser's army; she had been the sole help to her overworked mother and consequently had never gone to school. When I was very young I remember my Grandmother most because she liked to play dominoes and had beautiful wiry salt-and-pepper hair. As I grew older I could not communicate with her very well, and upon the death of my Grandfather (who could write) I began to hear less and less of her, and then she died. I don't recall any emotional feeling about her death—just a certain loss of someone who was once in my life.

This morning I opened a letter and as I took out a batch of clippings I wondered what was their importance to me. Most of them were old clippings I had sent a friend and she had merely returned them as I had asked. I put them aside and began to read her letter: "Just a note . . . feeling so sick about Alice Herz. (Clipping enclosed, in case you haven't seen.)" I turned quickly to the clippings and found this one:

> (AP) Detroit, March 18. An 82-year-old woman [Alice Herz] was near death Wednesday from burns suffered when she turned herself into a Buddhist-like human torch in protest of U.S. policy in Viet-Nam. . . .

All the feelings that had been so buried when my own Grandmother died welled up in me. All the many letters of encouragement that Alice Herz had ever written me came to the surface of my memory . . . all the dollar bills and small checks tucked into her letters to help my various projects for peace and civil rights . . . rushed up to confront me in an overwhelming sadness.

I wondered how I could reach out to others and touch their hearts as Alice had touched mine. We live in an age which sees much horror and

violence. We have become immune to horror unless it speaks directly to us. How could this act of an 82-year-old woman touch the spring that lies in each of us to awaken our sleep and see that no more Grandmothers, whether black, white or yellow, need burn themselves as human torches to light up the small black corners of our deadened emotions?

In the U.S.A. our Christian religion doesn't have any torch-burning martyrs. When the Buddhist monks burned themselves in Vietnam we could look at it as a pagan, primitive act. But how does one look at the burning of a Grandmother, in the U.S.A., and a good Christian?

As a Grandmother, myself, and the mother of a boy soon of draft age, I implore us all to look into our hearts and seek a change. When American Grandmothers have to burn themselves to death to call attention to world disorder it is time the people rise up and demand a reassessment of the U.S. foreign policies in Vietnam. In memory of Alice Herz I stand up to be counted. . . . I am 100 per cent against my government's policies in Vietnam—for whatever their reasons. These are mine.

VIRGINIA NAEVE

Jamaica, Vermont