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NEW-OLD DISCOVERIES

FROM the point of view of the general development of Western man, our epoch seems to be one in which the elements of practical wisdom, of skill in teaching, of ethical responsibility in human relations, and of impartiality in the quest for truth are beginning to get close critical attention, with the result that attitudes and insights which were once only the intuitive endowments of rare individuals are obtaining something like objective definition. This gives the contemporary deliveries of human thought a curious new-old quality. The best of what is being said today often sounds deeply familiar, yet the terms and applications have undeniable originality, and in some cases far-reaching effect.

Take for example the extraordinary fruit of the General Semantics movement, set going by Alfred Korzybski more than a quarter of a century ago. The idea was to liberate people from evaluative cliches, built into familiar forms of speech, which had been largely abandoned by the pioneers of modern knowledge. Words, as symbols of meaning, often contain clots of unexamined assumptions. The uncritical use of these symbols in communication may render mutual understanding impossible. As substitutes for serious inquiry into meaning, they also lead to serious self-deception, so that the relation of language to what it is made to describe may be even an index of the "sanity" of the writer or speaker. Korzybski, you could say, evolved an objective discipline to deal critically with this problem, whereas in the past the choice of appropriate word-symbols had been left to the intuitive wisdom of the writer.

A critic might say to Korzybski: *Of course* you must use the right words in order to communicate; but a chart of the regions of typical breakdown in communication, growing out of the uneven development of Western culture, has been enormously useful, even if not quite the supreme revelation some enthusiasts of general semantics have proclaimed it to be. The championing of a new revelation always creates sectarians, of whom the semantics movement has had its share, but the characteristic fruit of semantic inquiry, today, is an increase in objectivity toward intellectual processes, the value of which is unmistakable. Meanwhile, no regular reader of *Etc.*, the journal of the general semanticists, can have failed to recognize the deepening philosophical tone of its contents, through the years. The primary effect of the experience of semantic analysis is a stimulus to intellectual self-examination. Activity which leads in this direction is *ipso facto* on the side of the angels: it supplies a built-in process of self-correction in the search for meaning.

During the generation since the general semantics movement got going, there has been a great change in the orientation of serious thought. From matters that might be called "academic"—that is, focused on knowledge and learning, per se—attention has turned to questions of life and death, of sheer survival for the human race. It follows that the temper of world culture is changing; concern is moving from intellectual issues to issues of humanity, from technical to existential questions. This man you meet, with whom you seek agreement, or at least understanding—who *is* he? What is his nature? Why does he differ from you on apparently crucial decisions? How can accord be found? Questions of this sort bring inquiry closer to the heart of the human situation. Again, the attempt is made to give objectivity to the elements of practical wisdom—in this case, wisdom in human relations, for the purpose of common understanding.

An article in the London *Peace News* for March 8, 1963, by Dr. Rachel Pinney, gives an illustration of this kind of undertaking. Writing under the title, "Listeners for Peace," Dr. Pinney says:

> The basic idea behind this campaign is to demonstrate a method of communication that works in a situation in which communication normally fails. All of us are familiar with what happens when two

people of opposite views attempt to communicate. One talks while the other is listening with a view to his reply; then, as soon as the speaker has finished (usually before), the roles are reversed, with the result that no real communication takes place.

By way of illustration, I would like to describe an incident at a meeting arranged between a CND [Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament] group and the local Civil Defense officers. After a very good and factual lecture by the senior officer the second officer was demonstrating equipment to the CND audience, at whose request the meeting was held. A reporter from the (Manchester) *Guardian* and myself stood a little back from the demonstration and observed the dialogue between the demonstrator and a CND member. The CND man was addressing the demonstrator with a long speech which started "Don't you think. . . .?" The demonstrator was not listening to the content of the speech—he was waiting till he could politely say his piece without causing an argument. The reporter and I agreed that this could occur on any occasion when two people were arguing and each thought he was right and wished to convert the other. Neither the CND man nor the Civil Defense officer were at all changed. No growth toward the truth had taken place in either of them.

It is for this problem of lack of communication that we offer a solution. It is a new solution, and it has been out on trial for over a year now, *and it works.* When a person who has learnt the "listening" method meets a person of an opposite viewpoint, he invites the other to speak and at the same time states that he holds opposite views but undertakes not to express them, even if asked. The listener undertakes to try to understand the other man and his views and why he holds them. The subject on the agenda is the speaker, his views and why and how he holds them. The subject of the listener, his views, and why and how he holds them is *not* on the agenda.

The listener hears in a way that he has never heard before. Once he has voluntarily relinquished "his turn to speak," he is free to settle down to try to understand the speaker. This freedom is one of the most relaxing experiences I know. It is difficult to describe. For myself, I find it takes about one minute of "listening" before I start to experience what the Christians describe as "the love in my heart" for the speaker. This is true even if he wants to drop three bombs on Japan now. (This is an actual case.) It takes a very short listening session before a common ground is established. After my experimental year listening mostly on the bomb, I would choose to sit on a disarmament conference with many "deterrent" people to whom I have listened, in preference to some of my colleagues who *know* they are right.

While planning this campaign I expected to find the listener changed, but I was amazed to find the effect it has on the speaker. As soon as he knows an opponent is listening with a view to understanding and is not going to argue at the end, something happens to him that is quite dramatic. His aggression goes, he relaxes, he no longer has to defend a position, he is free to express his doubts, he often speaks at length on the listener's side of the question, and always (with a few exceptions of people with incurably closed minds) the speaker ends up with a better understanding of the listener, even though the latter has not expressed an opinion.

Now what is of particular interest, in this account, is not only the possibility of an actual "meeting of minds," as a result of serious listening, but the fact that Dr. Pinney remarks, as a matter of course, that this is "a *new* solution," and that it "works." Here is the principle which makes communication possible, which is basic to education, and an essential part of ordinary good manners, yet from which our culture has departed so radically that a present-day advocate of its use declares it to be "new"! Apparently, we have become so habituated and adjusted to behavior which ignores this principle that we can rediscover its importance only by acts of the will.

Of course, to speak of "rediscovering" something implies that we once knew and understood it, and there will be those unwilling to concede any such achievement in the past. They will argue that the encounter between people who do not listen and have no intention of listening to one another has always been typical of the relationships between groups, and is to be expected. They will argue that self-interest and loyalty to one's "side" make a calculated deafness necessary, lest the appeal of rational argument should make us weak or "soft" in relation to our opponents.

The conference, in other words, is not really a place for the meeting of minds, but a kind of arena in which the arts of communication are used quite deliberately to betray the ideal intent of an interchange of ideas, and this is justified by the claim

that there is no other way to deal with people who are either wrong, deceitful, corrupt, or all three. The tools of rational intercourse thus become double-edged weapons in a contest that on the surface appears to involve the methods of reason, but which is really entered into and pursued by groups seeking non-rational ends. The use of reason being mostly for show, its cutting edge is, and is expected to be, dull and ineffectual. The real weapons of the encounter, often only carelessly concealed, are techniques of pressure and manipulation, and these are kept razor-sharp.

Why, then, bother to use reason at all? The answer is quite simple. Men prefer to risk being called hypocrites—against which the similitude of reason can construct elaborate defenses—to the certainty of being exposed as barbarians who rely on naked power. This acceptance of hypocrisy as a "necessary evil" in public affairs is, you might say, the tribute paid by power-seekers and self-righteous nationalists to the ideal of "civilization," which they claim to defend. They want to be known as men who believe in the right things; and there is a sense in which they do—for they know that if they do not "keep up appearances," they will lose the faith and support of the less complicated millions "out there," the people who participate in the hypocrisy of statecraft through innocence, ignorance, and a slack tolerance, instead of by calculation.

Occasionally, under the extraordinary pressures of history, you do get men who angrily reject the middle course of careful hypocrisy, and then the world of conventional behavior is horrified to learn that someone dares to say, "When I hear the word 'culture' I reach for my revolver," or that there are those unashamed to advocate deceit and crime as the means of gaining power. Leaders of this sort assemble a curious collection of followers, depending upon the degree of subconscious alienation that has been reached in the population at large. Actually, there is a kind of virtue-in-reverse in the open rejection of civilized standards that have become deeply stained by hypocrisy. The brutal candor of barbarism is welcomed by men who have been victimized by centuries of the perversion of reason in public affairs. (See Hannah Arendt's *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, on the rise of the Nazi movement, and Ignazio Silone's trilogy, *Fontamara*, *Bread and Wine*, and *The Seed Beneath the Snow*, on Fascism.) But when such "revolutions of nihilism" are successful, the leaders quickly devise new moral standards and impose them with puritanical ardor, it being obvious that no social system can hold together without doctrines of positive faith and popular morality. However, after the passing of the "revolutionary love" of the early days, the old dichotomy between reason and practical policy inevitably appears, and hypocrisy resumes its conventional role in public management.

We have reached the place in this discussion where one has opportunity, and even some logical justification, for drawing cynical conclusions, but this is not our direction or purpose. Instead, we went to take a closer look at the apparent necessity for hypocrisy in statecraft. The appeal to reason is routine in the construction of the public image of the modern nation-state. That the appeal to reason is ineffectual is also routine. The appeal to reason must be made, but it must never be taken seriously or relied upon—this is the rule.

Does this exaggerate the case? To some extent, perhaps. In most men, at the bottom of their hearts, there is a faint hope that maybe, some day, an unaided appeal to reason will actually work. The hypocrisy undertaken by leaders has become so conventionalized by long practice that they do not feel especially guilty in using methods which both honor and dishonor reason at the same time. So, in every conference there is a marginal area where reason is released on a short tether and given a small chance to work. This helps to keep up our faith in our own good intentions; "we do," we say, "what we can"; and we look approvingly of ourselves at one another.

But the fact is that what we do is so little that an observer who comes fresh from authentic educational practice to our public meetings, and who attempts to institute in these meetings the simple principle of listening to another man's reason, is able to say that this is something *new!*

Dr. Pinney does not read us a sermon. She does not reproach us for being hypocrites. There is not even an appeal to virtue. She says, simply, that really listening "works." And she found, curiously enough, that some of the people on the "wrong side" were better people, better company, you could say, than her righteous colleagues.

Well, if really listening works, where may it lead? One thing seems obvious: it could lead to the total break-up of alliances based on righteousness. It could lead to a new criterion of desirable ends. It could make the conference turn into a mechanism for discovering and elevating to leadership people who honor the method of reason above all, and who are willing to follow wherever reason goes. It could mean the exposure to impartial criticism of the past acts of nations and interest-groups of every sort. It could mean an end to the hypocrisy which until now has been a principal tool of leadership in public affairs.

What would we be sacrificing, along with hypocrisy? We should have to abandon the justifications of compromise which have required us to pretend to use reason. These justifications say, first, that human beings accept and long for ideals which, in their imperfect condition, they are not yet able to honor by practice. They say that while, initially, social organization marshalled human energy in order to cope effectively with the physical environment, the present function of organization is largely to compensate for the short-comings of men in their pursuit of the good life. Political organization, we argue, provides the matrix in which human development can proceed to a higher level of existence. Since the progress could not take place without the matrix, our hope of future development depends upon the preservation of the matrix. The leaders who take this view are in *loco parentis* to the great mass of people, whose collective immaturities define the dynamics of their social organization. And since these people have natural virtues of loyalty and faith, along with their immaturities, appetites and fears, a judicious blend of appeals to virtue and to fear is necessary in order to maintain order and the possibility of progress. You have to preserve the ideals, because the moral instincts of the people insist upon them, and they cannot be persuaded to undertake odious and difficult tasks unless their ideals are at stake. This gives operative morality a political character and identifies the good life as an *historical* achievement, a *social* enterprise. For if the people do not believe this, the matrix will be threatened, and they will not defend it, and the leaders will have betrayed their trust. Hence the good of the matrix becomes the good of mankind, or a sizeable portion of mankind. And hence the benevolent hypocrisies of the managers of States.

Is there an alternative? For the content of political thought which grows from reliance on reason, on "really listening," we turn to Henry David Thoreau:

> . . . to speak practically and as a citizen, unlike those who call themselves no-government men, I ask for, not at once no government, but *at once* a better government. Let every man make known what kind of government would command his respect, and that will be one step toward attaining it.
>
> After all, the practical reason why, when the power is once in the hands of the people, a majority are permitted, and for a long period continue, to rule is not because they are most likely to be in the right, nor because this seems fairest to the minority, but because they are physically the strongest. But a government in which the majority rule in all cases cannot be based on justice, even as far as men understand it. Can there not be a government in which majorities decide only those questions to which the rule of expediency is applicable? Must the citizen ever for a moment, or in the least resign his conscience to the legislator? Why has every man a conscience, then? I think that we should be men first, and subjects afterward. It is not desirable to cultivate a respect for the law, so much as for the right. It is truly enough said that a corporation has no conscience; but a corporation of conscientious men is a corporation *with a* conscience. Law never made men a whit more just; and, by means of their respect for it, even the well-disposed are daily made the agents of injustice. . . .
>
> The mass of men serve the state thus, not as men mainly, but as machines, with their bodies. They are the standing army and the militia, jailers, constables, *posse comitatus*, etc. In most cases there is no free exercise of the judgment or of the moral sense; but they put themselves on a level with wood

> and stones, and wooden men can perhaps be manufactured that will serve the purpose as well. Such command no more respect than men of straw or a lump of dirt. They have the same sort of worth only as horses and dogs. Yet such as these even are commonly esteemed good citizens. Others, as most legislators, politicians, lawyers, ministers, and office-holders—serve the state chiefly with their heads; and, as they rarely make any moral distinctions, they are as likely to serve the devil, without *intending* it, as God. A very few—as heroes, patriots, martyrs, reformers in the great sense, and *men*—serve the state with their consciences also, and so necessarily resist it for the most part; and they are commonly treated as enemies by it.

If Thoreau is right, the situation is obviously desperate; and Thoreau *is* right, if you permit yourself to "really listen" to reason; and it seems likely, therefore, that Dr. Pinney will have to take her place beside the great subversives of history.

There is nothing novel in this analysis. When Erich Fromm announces that Man is not a Thing, he is making Thoreau's point. It is also the point made by Socrates, as reported by Plato in the *Apology*, by Jesus, in various ways, in the Gospels, and by Dostoievsky, in the chapter on The Grand Inquisitor in *The Brothers Karamazov*.

Why, then, spend so many words belaboring the obvious? Why take pains to explore the horns of an ancient dilemma? Is this only another cry, one more exhortation to the few to become "heroes, patriots, martyrs, reformers in the great sense, and *men"?*

Or have we here, just possibly, another case of the coming into wider currency of a sort of feeling and thinking that once belonged only to the few? Is there, now going on, the slow but sure invasion of politics by a sense of existential reality in human beings? Is it too much to hope that the progressive realization of the uselessness of absolute power should be accompanied by an awakening to another kind of absolute—the need to behave as best we know in all relationships? Our habitual funding of moral obligation and the assignment of our consciences to the State—how much longer can we tolerate the resulting dehumanization? When will we say, with Thoreau: "As for adopting the ways which the State has provided for remedying the evil, I know not of such ways. They take too much time, and a man's life will be gone."

It is natural to ask: Can "mere reason" be stretched to support such declarations of extreme independence as this? But true reason is not "mere"; it is the last and greatest resource of human beings; it is all that makes us men. We have this instruction from our hearts and our consciences, but being both convinced and unconvinced, we reply with the compromise of hypocrisy, telling one another we are practical men who have patience along with other virtues, and who know how to provide for the future. So now we are getting the rejoinder, not from our hearts, not even from the founders of our religions, to whom we did not really listen, but from the harsh and uncompromising rationalism of the historical process, which meets every hypocrisy with insoluble dilemma and makes it evident that every increase in power on the part of a great nation is an equal increase in folly and self-delusion.

So the game of virtuous pretense is almost all played out. The margin where, reluctantly and fearfully, reason was given its way, has been too narrow, and our hope for a miracle only foolish conceit.

But to look for a great change in human affairs from learning to listen to one another, not because we are right and they are wrong, or we wrong and they right, but because both are human, and because reason makes a common ground—that would end the habits and devices of pretense and begin building a foundation on the only stable reality we know.

REVIEW
NO WINNERS, NO SURVIVORS

THE job of trying to penetrate the minds of people with the facts and horrible reality of nuclear war continues. The effort seems grand and futile: grand because it serves to extend the borders of the remnants of what is real and idealistic; futile because, as a world, we are stubbornly looking away from these horrible facts; we euphemize nuclear war, we persist in trying to abstract the intolerable reality into a tolerable fantasy.

In the United States the political dialogue—instead of' focusing on the urgent possibilities of peace or war—reaches the "heights" of Barry Goldwater's standard response to every question: we must stand firm. With the political logic founded on an easily bored and superficially aware electorate, Nelson Rockefeller bets his political future on the smile and the hand-shake—and on getting back to the basic foundations of our country (which he never bothers to define—so everyone can fill in this blank with his own hopes and prejudices?).

Throughout the world, men are horrified for the wrong reasons (threats to the sovereignty of France, to the status quo in Panama, to the free-enterprise system wherever it may be, even to the possibility of closing down a few obsolete shipyards), while staring without blinking—or comprehension—at the truly horrible: the unchecked nuclear arming of the nations of the earth, the unchecked starvation (slow but sure) of over half the population of the world, the unchallenged reliance on force to solve problems which proliferate in the face of force and the threat of force.

Secretary McNamara reassures the nation over Senator Goldwater's politically motivated remarks about the unreliability of our missile force by stating that we could annihilate the "enemy" (who is the enemy; is not "enemy" a reverse euphemism for mankind?), even if we had to sustain a first strike—we could still win. And instead of feeling the chill and terror of unreality such a statement should arouse, we sigh with relief and pay for our sense of security with our reason. And the U.S. Civil Defense Council assures us (in a speech made by then Deputy Secretary Roswell L. Gilpatric, outlining civil defense policy to the Council on March 12, 1962) that 50 million people could be saved if we had an adequate fallout shelter program. This sounds good until you realize that 130 million would be casualties—no winners, no survivors—unless you have other answers to Herman Kahn's shocking question: "Will the survivors envy the dead?"

The world-mind is like that of a borderline psychotic who uses what reason and rationality he has left to verify his hallucinations.

Some exceptions to this dismal picture are worth mentioning, although one can judge how influential such exceptions may be by how little one hears about them. *Let There Be a World* (Fulton Publishing Company, Box 191, Palo Alto, California, $1.00) by Felix Greene (author of *Awakened China, What's Really Happening in China,* and *China—the Country Americans Are Not Allowed to Know*) is as simple and direct a statement against nuclear war as this reviewer has seen. It even looks like a magazine; it is almost all pictures; it should have wide appeal, although the cost (low as it is—60 cents in lots of 100 or more) will probably limit its circulation.

The book leads the reader logically and gently by picture and word to a series of building ideas: life is a process based on the functions and design of the single cell; genes are an integral part of each cell and are "templates" for the forms of life; nuclear radiation disrupts and injures genes; children with damaged genes may be born dead, mentally incapacitated, deformed, or blind. This section ends with a statement about how little is known about the effects of radiation; the words are underscored by photographs of babies born of women who survived the Nagasaki bombing. These pseudo-human forms—like some sick joke

about infancy—are not quickly forgotten: one looks like a frog, another has a head and one leg and that is all. The same method—with photographs taken in Hiroshima shortly after the bombing—is used to lead to a series of simple but comprehensive points about the reality of the world's present condition. After two pages of facts about nuclear war with quotations from General Omar Bradley and Albert Einstein, Greene ends the book with:

> In Our Confusion, Some Things Are Not Confused . . . These Propositions Appear To Us As Self Evident:
>
> That freedom cannot be preserved by sacrificing the lives of half our population. No freedom, no democracy, could possibly be salvaged from such national mutilation.
>
> That a continuation of the arms race is certain to end in a world catastrophe.
>
> That this moment in history when the future of mankind balances on a razor's edge, is not the time to taunt and belittle our enemies, however provocative we consider them to be.
>
> That an acknowledgement of our common humanity and a measure of humility will serve our interests better than a blind reliance on military power—remembering that we are never more likely to be wrong than when we feel most self-righteous.
>
> That "wanting peace" simply not enough; that the basic causes of our rivalries must be understood if the present direction is to be reversed.
>
> And most important of all, that those of us living today are but the temporary trustees of an unimaginably long evolutionary process; thus no national purpose however urgent, no political or economic necessity however pressing, can possibly justify the risk of bringing all human history to an end.

We can only add that we wish Mr. Greene could personally hand a copy of this book to everyone in the world.

Some may be offended by the lack of scientific evidence presented in *Let There Be a World.* For them, two books of recent publication will provide all the graphs and statistics anyone could hope for. The conclusions are the same: a nuclear war would be intolerable—no winners, no survivors.

The Fallen Sky . . . Medical Consequences of Thermonuclear War, edited for Physicians for Social Responsibility, by Saul Aronow, Ph.D., Frank R. Ervin, M.D., and Victor W. Sidel, M.D. (Hill and Wang, 1963). The book is a selection of articles written by and for physicians, but the ideas presented are easily understood by the intelligent layman. The doctors are clear about what they are trying to do:

> The physicians who wrote these articles are members of Physicians for Social Responsibility, an organization formed to increase the awareness among physicians and the public of the technical and ethical implications of the arms race and of modern warfare. The statement of purpose of this group says in part: . . . there are situations in which prevention is the only effective therapy. The physician charged with responsibility for the lives of his patients and the health of his community must begin to explore a new area of preventive medicine, the prevention of thermonuclear war.
>
> The aims of Physicians for Social Responsibility are to provide for the medical community and the general public the scientific data on which political decisions must in part be based; to alert physicians to the dangerous implications of the arms race, to involve physicians in serious exploration of peaceful alternatives; and to develop support for programs promoting effective disarmament and peace.

Each article concludes with this same refrain: the only way to survive a thermonuclear war is to prevent it. One might wonder, parenthetically, what the American Medical Association is doing to support the activities of the Physicians for Social Responsibility?

For the reader who prefers monographs to books, there is the turgid and self-limited product of a "Scientific Working Party" gathered into symposium under the auspices of the NATO Defense Committee: *Exposure of Man to Radiation in Nuclear Warfare,* edited by John H. Rust and D. J. Mewissen (Elsevier, 1963). In their effort to make a statement which no member of the symposium would dispute, the "Working

Party" has come up with a nearly worthless book. After declaring a series of blindly optimistic assumptions (such as that civil defense will work, for example), the symposium still has the temerity to make statements like the following:

> The feeling was repeatedly expressed [by dissenting members of the "Working Party"] that we were making a mistake to recommend that genetic injury and the possibility of leukemia should not enter into the decision-making process. . . . In the particular situation of civil defense; it is likely that we will not have unanimity about the report on radiation exposure in an emergency, but that we will have to accept the opinion of a majority [this is "science" by majority fiat] . . . . In our discussions, perhaps fortunately, political issues kept intervening. In drafting the report, we tried very hard to eliminate purely political considerations. In fact, we attempted to express ourselves as if there was no prospect that the report might influence political decisions. . . . I hope we have succeeded in our objective which was to produce an educational document, and not a piece of propaganda.

Are not controversy and political realities legitimate aspects of "education"? But the monograph is explicit in one aspect: not much is known about the immediate or lasting effects of nuclear radiation to human beings, nor about the relationship between disease and the level of exposure to radiation.

COMMENTARY
RESPONSIBILITY FOR WHAT?—TO WHOM?

IT is an index of the times that the conscientious members of professional groups are uniting for purposes which go beyond the scope of their specialties. The Society for Social Responsibility in Science was organized a number of years ago, and now we learn of a similar group formed by physicians (see Review)—Physicians for Social Responsibility. The first big step in this direction was taken by the founders of the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists,* a journal consistently filled with dissent from official U.S. policy and from government interpretations of the bearing of scientific knowledge on the national interest.

One might even claim that if a scientist works for the government, he is obliged either to keep silent or to express opinions which are likely to be at odds with those of the leading men in his field. No doubt there is room for differences of opinion in some areas, but what is said in Review concerning the monograph on radiation by the NATO "Scientific Working Party" is evidence of the severe strain put upon men of science by political responsibility. And when agreement is sought among men representing various political interests, or views, the result tends to be abortive for science. Obviously, we live in a time when scientifically informed social responsibility increasingly runs counter to the dictates of political responsibility. How we shall resolve this morally explosive contradiction remains to be seen.

The writer of this week's Review, thinking along these lines, found in Martha Gellhorn's *The Face of War (* 1959) a passage which gives climactic expression to the dilemma:

> . . . this is our final chance to learn. The Second World War was an evil that men could stop, the unknown nuclear war will have no end. No peace treaty will stop the interminable invisible poison dust. The war of the universe would be carried on by the wind. War is a crime against the living and always has been; no one can begin to imagine the size and shape of the crime of nuclear war.
>
> We are told that speed is all—the mammoth surprise attack, the instant mammoth retaliation. In the absolute chaos after the rain of bombs, who is going to bury the estimated 800 million dead—whole shattered, flaming cities of corpses; who will nurse the unestimated millions with the open sores on their burned bodies; who is going to watch over the lingering tormented deaths that will follow? Where will the survivors be, outside the limits of civilization, not worth immediate killing—and what can they hope for, what can they create again to the honor of mankind, knowing that the earth and the air and the water are incurably tainted, and that they have nothing to hand on to their children and their children's children except disease, a withering end to the last of the race?
>
> To preserve freedom? What freedom? For whom?

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves
PERSPECTIVES

A SHORT word-sketch by a MANAS contributor, Ralph S. Pomeroy, who teaches art and speech at the Davis branch of the University of California, embodies the mood of the point made by Erich Fromm in "Man is not a Thing." Fromm wrote that "if man is to develop into what he potentially is as a human being, he must continue to be born; he must proceed from one act of separation to the next; he must give up certainty and defenses and take the jump into the act of commitment." Mr. Pomeroy evokes awareness of the beginnings of this process as they manifest in a child:

> Sunset. A sidewalk. A boy.
>
> He has forgotten his neighborhood, his busted bike still in the repair shop, the taller, tougher boy around the corner, the other boys at school, the girl he hopes he'll be seated next to at the party. Out of his mind for the moment is the broken jack-knife with the pearl handle that he'll never get another like, the short Saturdays, the long Mondays, the way some things never quite happen but only get talked about, the way some things keep happening over and over.
>
> What is there to do, where is there to go, what is there to be for a boy on a sidewalk at sunset? It's past afternoon, it's only evening, it's not even night. It's nothing and he's nowhere: he has forgotten his neighborhood.
>
> A boy. Nothing. Nowhere now.
>
> And if it all changed, if some genie climbed down from the cloud ladder and made it change, where would he be? And what? And doing what? If the bike was out of the shop, the tall boy moving to another town, with different boys at school and the girl at the party moving next door, then what? If the jack-knife somehow, anyhow, was mended, if Saturdays didn't race and Mondays didn't shuffle, if—most of all—everything, *everything*, EVERYTHING happened once, once and only once, where would he be? And what?
>
> Nowhere. Still a boy. Nothing.
>
> But if he could repair the bike himself, or fight the tall boy and make him move or even just (almost as good) want to move, or meet just one new boy at school (someone no one else had met yet), or walk home with the girl after the party (ask her himself and she wouldn't have to ask why), or mend the jack-knife with something stronger than solder, and if Saturdays and Mondays moved about the same way (not like the same day but more like two parts of the same day), and if most things happened sometime to someone somewhere (not only to him, no, but anyway to someone he could know about), then where and what would he be?
>
> Still a boy. But somewhere. And something.

The problems of inner orientation are always the same, regardless of age or condition. The "hero," in man, moves out of a stage of quiescence and begins to realize that he can, after all, *do* something.

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A great deal of thinking followed the senseless assassination, last year, of the President of the United States. And a great deal of meaning can be seen in the apparently meaningless when the shock is great enough to open doors to corridors of the inner life. Here and there, throughout the classrooms of the nation, teachers felt called upon to bring their beliefs into focus, to say *something*, however inadequate, to their students. One of the more successful efforts at communication of this sort came to us from a MANAS reader, who provided a report of the remarks of Harold J. DeBey, of San Jose State College, at the opening of a class in biochemistry:

> Since our last class meeting, we have all been shocked and most of us have felt a real sense of loss and personal sorrow because of a series of tragic events. After the initial feeling of "It just couldn't happen," and "Not in America," we have come to the realization that it did happen—there were two murders committed. While the two individuals who are dead were vastly different, some aspects of both murders are similar. Both of them were acts of violence—motivated by intense hate—in a country which professes to believe that hate and violence and the taking of a human life are among the greatest evils, but a country where even the youngest children play at killing each other and where the current opiate of the people is not religion, but television—a medium on which hate, revenge, and violence are probably the most consistent ingredients.
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> It is easy to deplore the lack of security, the gullibility of the Dallas police, to blame everything

upon the "Birchers" or the "Communists," but it seems to me that it is much more profitable, after the initial reactions of shock and a time for mourning, to think about the serious implications of these tragic events in our own lives and our own behavior.

It is easy to blame a "sick mind," but the more important questions are: "Why was this mind—or these minds—so sick?" "How did this intense hate develop?" "To what extent are we all responsible for allowing persons to feel so rejected, so mistreated, so alone, that they cannot love, but can only lash out in blind hate at some real or imagined threat to themselves?" Some of these questions are for the psychological investigator, but they are also for everyone who claims to be human.

Another question that seems to me to be worth asking is, "Granted that there was a sick mind, who was responsible for channeling of the hate of these men?" "Who told them the half-truths or outright lies that led them to believe that one man was responsible for their miserable condition?" "Why is it that when we find our egos or our ideas questioned, we must respond with an attack against a person?" When our beliefs or statements are questioned, why do so many of us find it necessary to attack the character of the questioner rather than try to discuss the issue under question? How many of us blame the cop—it's really his fault—when he catches us speeding?

Why are so many people so eager to blame their frustrations and unhappiness on the Jewish, Negro, Communist, Catholic "conspiracy" without looking for other, more relevant causes in themselves (which provides a source that is much more logical and also one that is much easier to modify)? How many college students are willing to excuse their actions by insisting that "the police had no right to break up our little, drunken riot—they even used dogs. . . ."

Those who advocate violent action and those who distort facts seem to be increasing in our country today. They range from the comparatively harmless television huckster to those who insist that President Eisenhower was a Communist and that we should impeach Chief Justice Warren. It's easy for an educated person to dismiss these people as harmless cranks, but the death of uncounted numbers of Jewish people and the gross injustices to many Negroes can at least partly be blamed on those well-educated people who did nothing to oppose the rise of that crank named Hitler or on those who won't give voice to their convictions.

As has happened to many other cultures in the past, our real freedom as Americans will probably not be lost by our being conquered by some foreign power so much as it will go by our letting it slip away, bit by bit, because we knew what it was—or what it demanded of us. Most living things either grow a little or else die a little every day. Our freedom, our American Constitution and Bill of Rights, our form of government, these are too precious to be allowed to die from apathy and indifference.

More of us are going to have to say, "What you have just said is irresponsible . . . it is not true . . . you may do great harm by saying it." It takes courage to do this because it immediately makes us a target for personal vilification. Freedom of action and of speech does not mean that we have a right to trample our neighbor's flowers or to cry "Fire" in a dark and crowded theater. Our democratic principles, however forbid our preventing persons who want to do these things by acting violently ourselves. We must try, instead, to restrain them. The most potent type of restraint, and also the most difficult to make effective, is education.

In the speech that President Kennedy was to have made in Dallas, the following remarks are recorded. "In a world of complex and continuing problems, in a world full of frustrations and irritations, America's leadership must be guided by the lights of learning and reason—or else those who confuse rhetoric with reality and the plausible with the possible will gain the ascendancy with their seemingly swift and simple solutions to every world problem." His speech criticized those who believed that "vituperation is as good as victory and that peace is a sign of weakness." "We cannot expect that everyone, to use the phrase of a decade ago, will 'Talk sense to the American people.' But we can hope that fewer will listen to nonsense."

One of the fruits of education, it may be said, is the power to "restrain." But if we are to restrain without violence, we must depend upon our capacity for understanding; we must not only transmute the violent impulses in our own natures, but recognize that the violence done by any man is an act for which we have a measure of personal responsibility. Education in its broadest sense "restrains" because it makes visible the alternatives to angrily reactive behavior.

FRONTIERS

Self-criticism for Christianity

PAUL TILLICH'S four lectures on World Religions, delivered at Columbia University in the fall of 1961, seem to us the most instructive writing for the layman which this eminent Christian scholar has produced. Now published by the Columbia University Press under the title, *Christianity and the Encounter of World Religions,* this book makes it easy to understand why Dr. Tillich is a controversial figure in ecclesiastical circles. For instance, he is impelled to present the central event of Christ's life—upon which historical religion depends—as only one of various manifestations of spiritual force, a view which elevates the essence of religion altogether beyond specific events.

We are tempted to use such words as "psychological" and "metaphysical" to characterize Tillich's approach, and, indeed, William James's prediction that the synthesizing psychology of the future would have a metaphysical orientation is fulfilled, in part, by Dr. Tillich's analyses. Take, for instance, a passage in the fourth lecture, headed "Christianity Judging Itself." Here one is invited to extend the conception of Christ's incarnation to something more than an entirely unique event. Tillich sees the Christ as both a particular and a universal being. He writes:

> What is particular in him is that he crucified the particular in himself for the sake of the universal. This liberates his image from bondage both to a particular religion—the religion to which he belonged has thrown him out—and to the religious sphere as such; the principle of love in him embraces the cosmos, including both the religious and the secular spheres. With this image, particular yet free from particularity, religious yet free from religion, the criteria are given under which Christianity must judge itself and, by judging itself, judge also the other religions and the quasi-religions.

Tillich believes that "the main characteristic of the present encounter of the world religions is their encounter with the quasi-religions of our time." He continues:

> Sometimes what I call quasi-religions are called pseudo-religions, but this is as imprecise as it is unfair. "Pseudo" indicates an intended but deceptive similarity; "quasi" indicates a genuine similarity, not intended, but based on points of identity, and this, certainly, is the situation in cases like Fascism and Communism, the most extreme examples of quasi-religions today. They are radicalizations and transformations of nationalism and socialism, respectively, both of which have a potential, though not always an actual religious character.
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> One may ask whether these are the only examples or whether liberal humanism as dominant in most Western countries can be understood as a quasi-religion of equal power. This is not only a theoretical question of the capability of the West to resist the onslaught of the quasi-religions in our present world. Liberal humanism and its democratic expression are fragile forms of life, rare in history, and easily undermined from within and destroyed from without. In the periods of their heroic fight against the absolutisms of the past, their quasi-religious character was obvious, as was their religious background. In the periods of their victorious and mature development, their secular character became predominant, but whenever they had to defend themselves—as in matters of scientific autonomy, educational freedom, social equality or civil rights—they showed again their quasi-religious force. It was a struggle between faith and faith; and the quasi-religious faith could be radicalized to a degree where it undercut even its own roots, as, for example, in a scientism which deprives all nonscientific creative functions, such as the arts and religion, of their autonomy. If in the foreseeable future a total defense of liberal humanism against Communism or Fascism should be necessary, a self-defying radicalization would take place and the loss of that very liberal humanism which is to be defended would be almost unavoidable.

There is no doubt about the fact that Christians throughout the world feel more comradeship with representatives of other religious traditions than with the aggressive "quasi-religion" of communism. And this provides for Dr. Tillich's point of view a natural hospitality in the minds of many who would otherwise be largely occupied with attempted demonstrations

of their own theological superiority. With this opportunity for fellowship in mind, Tillich writes:

> In relation to Hinduism, Buddhism, and Taoism, we should continue the dialogue which has already started and of which I tried to give an example in the third chapter. Not conversion, but dialogue. It would be a tremendous step forward if Christianity were to accept this! It would mean that Christianity would judge itself when it judges the others in the present encounter of the world religions.
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> But it would do even more. It would give a new valuation to secularism. The attack of secularism on all present-day religions would not appear as something merely negative. If Christianity denies itself as a religion, the secular development could be understood in a new sense, namely as the indirect way which historical destiny takes to unite mankind religiously, and this would mean, if we include the quasi-religions, also politically. When we look at the formerly pagan, now Communist, peoples, we may venture the idea that the secularization of the main groups of present-day mankind may be the way to their religious transformation.

The concluding lecture is the most provocative of the series. Here Tillich addresses himself to what he calls "the last and most universal problem of our subject":

> Does our analysis demand either a mixture of religions or the victory of one religion, or the end of the religious age altogether? We answer: None of these alternatives! A mixture of religions destroys in each of them the concreteness which gives it its dynamic power. The victory of *one* religion would impose a particular religious answer on all other particular answers. The end of the religious age—one has already spoken of the end of the Christian or the Protestant age—is an impossible concept. The religious principle cannot come to an end. For the question of the ultimate meaning of life cannot be silenced as long as men are men. Religion cannot come to an end, and a particular religion will be lasting to the degree in which it negates itself as a religion. Thus Christianity will be a bearer of the religious answer as long as it breaks through its own particularity.
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> The way to achieve this is not to relinquish one's religious tradition for the sake of a universal concept which would be nothing but a concept. The way is to penetrate into the depth of one's own religion, in devotion, thought and action. In the depth of every living religion there is a point at which the religion itself loses its importance, and that to which it points breaks through its particularity, elevating it to spiritual freedom and with it to a vision of the spiritual presence in other expressions of the ultimate meaning of man's existence.
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> This is what Christianity must see in the present encounter of the world religions.

For those of us who have long been hold-outs from identification with Christianity as a partisan religion, this presentation is bound to encourage the greatest respect. While Dr. Tillich embodies and represents liberal Christianity to an encouraging degree, he is also saying that the aim of any religion—including the Christian—is to "negate itself as a religion." This is no more, but also no less, than saying that the proper work of the educator is to broaden the categories of knowledge to the point where the categories finally disappear. Or, in another context, this is the philosophy of government which holds that success is to be measured by the extent to which government becomes less and less necessary, or even useful.